

the siren

summer_2005



MISSION STATEMENT: to advocate for the best educational and working environment for the women at the University of Oregon. We accomplish this by working toward societal change and the end of oppression and by supporting personal growth.



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PHOTO BY
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Becoming a Midwife

by Amanda Garlick

caring for women and reclaiming a practice that has been lost from mainstream America. Midwifery may also be political, not only because it addresses the state of women's health care in this country and how women and babies are treated, but also because its very essence concerns the rights of women to control their bodies and their choices of where and with whom to birth.

Cheyney and Hansen stress it's not simply hippies who are choosing to give birth with midwives. Midwifery is growing and becoming more accepted in many parts of the country as a legitimate way to give birth and as another option to childbearing families of every class and background. Bumper stickers abound on midwives' cars with the saying "midwifery is catching," a play on words to address its growing popularity and the use of the word "catch," which is another word for delivering a baby.

For many midwives, it becomes necessary to have another job or partner to help supplement income because midwifery, even for busy midwives, is not a moneymaker. How does one plan a life that continually hinges on the lives of at least two others?

"You almost always have warning," says Missy Cheyney. "Then you rearrange your life for the next several days." Even if this means you may miss anniversaries, weddings, graduations, and other important or unimportant social events. "I don't know how the midwives with toddlers do it," adds Elise Hansen, Cheyney's partner.

For Hansen, midwifery intersected with long-held beliefs and practices. She worked as a women's health



_Missy Cheyney,
midwife

They lead the busy life of a midwife: prenatal exams, consultations, newborn check-ups, classes, granting interviews, editing midwifery articles, second jobs, and making time for the family and a life of their own.

Elise Hansen and Missy Cheyney, who met in midwifery school a few years back, came together and created a midwifery practice called "Ten Moons Rising Midwifery" where they dedicate themselves to the art and science of attending women in pregnancy and birth.

A Midwife will guide the woman through natural childbirth at home or in a birthing center and will facilitate informed choices regarding labor and delivery options and also work to empower the family in the birthing process in hopes of achieving the best possible outcome with little intervention.

Cheyney informs me that midwifery has a romantic allure and many women approach her about becoming midwives after learning about it through one of her lectures. But it is more than the notion of catching newborn life; it is about

educator in Eugene at the White Bird Clinic during the 70s. She also led do-it-yourself gynecology workshops where women learned to understand their bodies and maintain ownership over them. She had already birthed four children of her own naturally. One of them was a footling breech, feet first as opposed to the head, delivered in France – a situation that in a United States hospital would have probably ended up in a cesarean birth (a.k.a. C-section). Hansen also works as consultant and copyeditor for Midwifery Today, a popular magazine in the field.

Cheyney came to midwifery as a curious anthropology student, doing research for her dissertation. She believed a great way to do research was to become a participant observer. She joined the culture of homebirth and midwifery through first training to become a doula, a birth attendant. She hopes this will help her understand the answers to her questions about the current obstetrical practices in America, “in terms of the rising

rates of technological intervention with no associated improvement in outcomes and in terms of how women experience them.”

Both of the midwives gained experience by interning in high-volume birth centers. This is a popular choice for many because it affords the opportunity to get a high number of births in a short amount of time. Cheyney interned at a clinic in Texas, while Hansen interned in Jamaica. “I could have been in Tunisia for all I saw of Jamaica, I didn’t sleep the whole time I was there,” she said referring to the intensity of the experience of working in a high-volume birth center.

In 2001, Ten Moons Rising Midwifery was formed and the midwives are now busy with their growing practice. They also offer a midwifery study group and teach children classes. For more information on the midwives, please visit their website at <http://www.tenmoonsmidwifery.com>.



Elise Hansen,
midwife

WHAT IS A MIDWIFE AND WHAT IS MIDWIFERY?

A midwife -- literally “with woman” -- attends to a woman and her family during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period. The birth may be at home, in a birthing center, or a nurse-midwife may attend a birth in the hospital. Midwifery is different from traditional medicine because they operate under the midwifery model of care, which stresses the importance of mother, baby, and family centered, holistic care throughout the childbearing year and strive to minimize technological intervention and trust the natural process of birth.

IS HOMEBIRTH SAFE?

Statistics suggest that homebirth is as safe or safer for low-risk pregnancies than hospitals. Midwives are experts at normal birth (the majority of births) and will transport to a local hospital if it becomes necessary due to complications, staying with the family if the family so desires. Currently, 90% of births are attended in hospitals by O.B.G.Y.N’s. Cesarean births in the United States are estimated at 25% of all live births, a number higher than in many other industrialized countries where midwives are the primary care providers. Midwives attend less than 5% of the total births in America.

IS MIDWIFERY LEGAL AND/OR REGULATED?

In Oregon, and many other states, midwifery is accepted and embraced. Some states have laws directly addressing midwifery and providing regulations, while others have no laws at all. These are considered unregulated states where midwifery is legal. A few states have explicit laws against certain birthing situations or types of care.

For resources on midwifery, please check out the Midwives Alliance of North America, www.MANA.org, and Citizens for Midwifery, www.cfmidwifery.org.

Midwifery today magazine:
<http://www.midwiferytoday.com/>.



Lois Youngen
photo by J. Carr

A League Of Her Own

By Stefanie Loh

By fall of 1942, with WWII raging on, many minor league baseball teams had disbanded because of a sudden dearth of young able-bodied men who had all been drafted to help support the war effort. To keep America's favorite pastime going during the war years, Phillip K. Wrigley—magnate of the Wrigley chewing gum empire—decided to found and fund a girl's professional baseball league. Thus, the spring of 1943 became the inaugural season of the All-American Girls

Professional Baseball League. The AAGPBL would eventually run through a total of 12 seasons.

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It's been half a century since Lois Youngen, 72, played in AAGPBL. From 1951-1954, Youngen was a catcher and an outfielder with two different AAGPBL teams—the South Bend Blue Sox, and the Fort Wayne Daisies. Yet to look at her now, it's not hard to visualize her all decked out in the short tunic and baseball cap that was the uniform of the league, crouching behind home

plate with her small frame obscured behind a full array of catcher's equipment as she squints down the mound at her hurler, just waiting for the pitch.

Once an athlete, always an athlete, Youngen still moves with the easy gait of someone who dedicated more than 50 years of her life to the pursuit of sporting excellence. Standing at a diminutive 5'3, with curly silver hair and round wire-framed spectacles, Youngen is the epitome of the term 'young at heart.'

"A newspaperman once told me that I had a personality 'as big as a ballpark!'" Youngen says, in reference to her younger self. That description still applies. Youngen has not lost a single ounce of that ballpark-sized personality in her twilight years. Instead, she bops around resonating a sense of raw enthusiasm that people half her age would envy.

Youngen got her start in the league when she decided to try out for a spot on the Fort Wayne Daisies' roster after watching a Daisies' game in Indiana one night in 1951. "I saw a Fort Wayne team play one night and just thought 'I could do that,'" said Youngen. "So I tried out, and the next spring, they sent me a letter inviting me to spring training in Alexandria, Virginia. I was a senior in high school at the time. I made the team, came back, graduated, then got on the bus and went to Fort Wayne to start my baseball career."

There was little glamour associated with the AAGPBL in the 1950s. Despite the fact that it was a professional league, the women who played in it got little recognition for their accomplishments until Columbia-Tristar Pictures released *A League of Their Own* in 1992.

Directed by Penny Marshall, the film starred Geena Davis, Tom Hanks and Lori Petty. It went on to become the seventh-most successful sports movie of all time, pulling in a total of \$130.5 million at the box office. *A League of Their Own* also propelled the AAGPBL out of its obscurity and into the national spotlight—where it has stayed ever since.

"People talk about fifteen minutes of fame. Well, I've had almost fifteen years of fame since the movie came out," said Youngen who has been showered with a steady stream of letters and autograph requests from fans of the movie over the last thirteen years.

With all the hype stirred up by the movie, Youngen and the rest of the veteran AAGPBL players became celebrities. They were finally given the recognition that should have been accorded to them years ago. Lois Youngen was a pioneer. She was a member of the very first generation of professional female athletes.

Yet, the women of the AAGPBL never played the game with fame or money in mind. Back then things were simpler, without the politics that seem to have infested today's professional sports arenas. The women of the AAGPBL played simply because they loved it. As Youngen acknowledged, "At the time, I didn't know I was going to be a part of history. I was just busy being my age, playing ball and having fun. At the time, we'd rather play than eat. Playing ball was great, and we actually got paid to do it. I can't think of any better way to spend the summer than play ball and get paid to do it."

Women's Pro Sports

Till this day, the AAGPBL still holds the distinction of being the longest-lasting professional women's sports league in the history of sports in the United States. However, that may change in the near future.

Spearheading the women's sports revolution is Val Ackerman, the first female president of USA Basketball. Prior to her appointment as president of USA Basketball, Ackerman served as the founding president of the WNBA from its inception in 1997 right until she resigned her post in February 2005.

Ackerman is one of the biggest advocates for professional women's sports leagues around. "There is definitely room for professional women's sports in this country," said Ackerman, who cited softball and soccer as two sports which could benefit from a professional women's league.

"Women's sports just has to find its niche. I think we're a generation away from the wave

that will revolutionize professional sports for women. When the women who benefited from Title IX and who played sports in college grow up and finally hit the big time, they will start the movement towards professional women's sports," said Ackerman.

As a former college basketball player at the University of Virginia, Ackerman herself is one of those women. And from the boardroom for the last ten years she has dedicated herself to doing for women's basketball what Mia Hamm has done for women's soccer on the field. The WNBA is now 9 years old and going strong. Ackerman is responsible for that. And thanks to women like her and Hamm, the female athlete's future has never looked brighter.



Val Ackerman, president of USA Basketball. photo courtesy of Val Ackerman

Mena

Saying Goodbye to Vice President Ravassipour

By Katherine Gagnon
Photos by Julia Carr



_Mena Ravassipour

For ASUO Vice President Mena Ravassipour and her staff, it has been a rocky year; from a drinking scandal at an early finance retreat, to the possible PFC de-funding of the Oregon Commentator, to office personnel issues, Ravassipour said this year has been a test of what she can accomplish. “Some of the issues that raised have tested me,” she said. “I’m really stretched like an elastic band and I’m just pulled to the extreme.”

This year, under Ravassipour’s leadership, the executive office established Eugene’s first housing standards, registered over 7,000 students to vote, and got rid of a “sketchy scheduling penalty” that fined students for dropping classes within the first week.

But as with most leadership positions, not everything came easily. Born in Houston, Texas, to a Caucasian mother and Persian father, Ravassipour identifies herself as Persian-American. She said being a person of color and also a woman made certain situations more difficult. “There’s been instances where I will go into a room of all male and I am the only female. My voice is heard, but I don’t necessarily feel its been acknowledged.”

This year while discussing policies with school administrators and administrators from other universities, Ravassipour said, “I’ve walked in and they’ve said, ‘This is the exchange student I was telling you about.’ Or, ‘Your English is very good.’” Although such demeaning comments are hurtful, Ravassipour’s good nature and humor always shines through. “I usually say, ‘Well, a lot of people think Texas is a foreign country, but



giving up she thinks back to a time when whole continents and the Atlantic Ocean separated Ravassipour from her family and the life she loved. At 16, Ravassipour studied abroad for a year in Germany. She lived with a host family and attended a local German high school. She knew very little German. “(When) you are in another country and you’re completely take away from everything you know and the family you have, you just have to learn to create a

family the most. But during this lonely time, a turning -point where most teens would decide to return home, Ravassipour decided not to give up. “I thought, ‘why? You can get through this.’ I remember making a conscious effort to make the most of it and be happy.” After this, Ravassipour know if she could get through that, she could get through anything.

She said she hoped she left a legacy after her time at the ASUO: one would be students having the opportunity to come talk to the people who serve as the student’s voice. “Open communication is very important,” she said. “I think when you are friendly with someone, they’ll reciprocate that and step out of their boundaries and be nice to the next person.”

On June 11th, when Ravassipour graduates from the UO she will leave behind a legacy. Her presence will not only be remembered at the ASUO, but her thumbprint will be left on many of the students and institutions at the university. Petkun said, “Mena has a presence in every room she walks in.”

English is my first language.”

Ravassipour said she was lucky and grew up in a loving and supportive family. She said her skin color was never an issue, until after September 11th. “I heard people say things to my dad and to myself.” But the demise of discrimination could not penetrate Ravassipour’s shell. In dealing with such situations, she said, “[my parents] taught me to be a good person and to stand up for myself and be confident in what I am doing.”

When times are hard for Ravassipour and she feels like

new life,” she said.

Now years later, Ravassipour can say her year in Germany was a “wonderful experience that opened [her] eyes to a different lifestyle and helped [her] grow up a lot.” But Ravassipour said there were times in Germany when she doubted her ability to cope with her surroundings and wanted to come home. “After 3 months, I knew the language, I knew the routine; I was ready to come home.”

She said the most difficult time came around the Christmas holidays, when she missed her

After graduation, Ravassipour plans on attending law school, where she hopes to become a human rights attorney in order to “help the underdog out.” Ravassipour believes that people can do whatever they want. “You don’t necessarily have to be the best person out here to make a difference. You don’t have to be the most articulate, you don’t have to be the smartest, you just have to have passion and drive and desire, and you can accomplish anything. It doesn’t matter your race, your gender, anything.”

Mother Kali's: A Feminist Bookstore

By Jolene Guzman

Feminist Bookstores are an endangered species. Since the 1970's when there were over a hundred, now Mother Kali's Books is one of approximately forty feminist bookstores left in the nation. Twenty nine years ago, three women opened Mother Kali's Books -- named for mother goddess Kali Ma for her creative force-- in Eugene with \$500 and a vision to create a women-centered community resource.

Creativity is all over the store, not just in the feminist, gay and lesbian, sexuality, parenting, travel and spiritual literature, but also in the historical ambiance.



Creative but fierce Goddess, Kali Ma

A rainbow colored *pace* (Italian for peace) flag on the wall has been used twice in protests: first, in the early 1960's as a symbol against nuclear energy, and later in protest of the war in Iraq. A dark blue flag with earth in the middle hangs next to the pace flag in an undeniable statement of the connectedness of all human beings.

Prayer banners decorated with images of ancient deities dance in the gentle breezes that come through the door. A nine-foot tall, fiery red, naked goddess statue towers over customers who walk through the door. For bookstore manager Karen Luna, both political

activism and seeing people through personal crises is at the heart of her work inside Mother Kali's.

Luna moved to Eugene from California in February 2004 and started working for Mother Kali's. She has kind eyes, an irrepressible smile and glasses that are just as often pushed back into her mid-length brown hair as they are in front of her eyes.

The work of progressives in the 2004 election campaign inspired Luna. She recalled young women and men participating in their first presidential election and recognized a political sentiment she thought had been lost. She compared the atmosphere in Mother Kali's during the election campaign to the political activism of the 1960's and 70's. People believed changing the world was firmly in their hands and were not content with waiting for someone else to make change for them.

Karen Luna is part of that activism. She doesn't just work for a progressive/feminist bookstore, she is very much involved in the progressive and feminist movements. Luna commits her energy to making a better future for women and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community (LGBTQ). She organizes a newsletter with a monthly calendar providing resources for diverse communities. It lists activities within the store and around Eugene that affect the progressive and feminist movements.

After store hours, Luna and the

staff at Mother Kali's host events and classes that showcase women artists and activists, empower teenage girls and their parents, and educate on goddess spirituality. Reaching out to younger women is especially important to Luna because women's rights to choose that were won in past decades are now in danger of being reversed. She thinks it is time to gear up for another fight, "Our hard won rights to choose...about our own bodies are in serious danger of being lost," she said.

Outside of the store Luna is involved, and encourages others to get involved in the effort to make gender identity part of the Eugene Human Rights Code. In May's newsletter, Luna calls for all the progressives to join in this fight alongside the transgender community, "We all have to walk into the future together, embracing what we share, fighting for what is right and refusing to allow ourselves to be divided by semantics and surface differences. Because ultimately, all this is about sexism. It's about people being forced into roles they neither want or fit into by a patriarchal society."

Staying faithful to the spirit and history of Mother Kali's, Karen Luna is always ready to jump into the fire of the next battle. Luna knows that history is made through action now. She believes that the most important goal, inside and outside of Mother Kali's is to have all disenfranchised groups work together to improve the future. She says, "It is fresh in every moment. It's wonderful to have history, but you are creating it in every moment."

Rockrgrl: For Women who Rock

By Sheldon Traver

It was the straw that broke the camel's back.

Rolling Stone Magazine had just interviewed women in music about what perfumes they wore but not about their music. Carla DeSantis, then a bass guitar player in an all-female rock tribute band, was tired of people constantly asking if her band lip-synched during concerts. She was angered that national music magazines would put half naked women on their covers but speak little about their talent.

"Why do people think women can't play music," DeSantis asked. "It bugged me." With this fuel as motivation, she set out to make a difference in the way women in music are portrayed. Using her own money and labor, she created *Rockrgrl*, a magazine focusing on women in music. Her first issue was a 'zine, a cheaply produced, self-published magazine, copied at Kinko's in January 1995. Since those initial 50 copies, she has single handedly published and distributed 6 issues per year and now has a circulation of about 15,000.

"It was defiantly a process of trial and error," DeSantis says. Unlike major publications that begin with a startup cost of about 3 million dollars, she used the money in her pocket and has never taken a loan to publish the magazine.

"It's never been about the money but the mission," DeSantis says. "I'm trying to reach the underground

16-year-old girls." She says the most interesting culture is in the underground, not the mainstream. She added that Hollywood has discouraged young girls from getting involved in the music scene. They make fun of the 'Plain Jane,' so girls get involved in sports or other activities instead of music. After starting high school, she says many girls simply lose hope about being able to make music.

One of her goals is to empower these young women to have confidence. "To feel entitled," DeSantis says. This was one reason she felt compelled to hold the first *Rockrgrl* Conference on Nov. 2000 in Seattle, Wash. "When you go into a room and you're with women who do what you do, you're empowered. You know you're not alone," DeSantis says. Several hundred people attended the conference that featured musical performances and guest speakers such as Ronnie Spector, formerly of the Ronettes, and Amy Ray of the Indigo Girls, talking about their experiences as women in music, helping attendees gain knowledge by providing resources and extending mutual support.

Every aspect of *Rockrgrl* is designed to encourage women not only in music, but also in life. Even the advertising is held up to careful scrutiny. She recognizes that advertisers pay the bills, but she draws the line when companies want to promote equipment or clothing that use women simply as 'eye candy' or create ads that make



women appear inept.

_Carla DeSantis

"Don't dumb down women," DeSantis says. "Show equipment for what it is and let women choose."

While difficult, she says the work and effort she has put into *Rockrgrl* has been rewarding. When she hears about women that have been inspired to pick up an instrument and play after reading one of her issues, it fuels the fire and keeps her going. She encourages all women, regardless of their stage in life, to pursue what they believe is right.

"When you go into a room and you're with women who do what you do, you're empowered. You know you're not alone."



TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

By Emily Charrier

This year's Twenty seventh annual Take Back the Night Rally began in the EMU amphitheater Thursday, April 28th. An electrical energy of anticipation filled the air, like a storm brewing. The spring evening smelled like flowers and empowerment. Booths of local support services lined the walkway, Sexual Assault Support Services, Planned Parenthood, and WomenSpace to name a few.

The beginning of the rally was like a big party. The empowering voices of Ani DiFranco and En Vogue echoed from the PA system to the crowd of women, men, children and dogs. People sang and danced. Energy was high and voices were loud.

The tone shifted as Women's Center Director Erin O'Brien spoke about being raped. "For some people it is more important to maintain the façade and pretend that rape, sexual assault and domestic violence can't and doesn't



_Erin O'Brien
photo by Crispin Young

happen in communities of color or in the queer community or among women. But it can happen and it does happen," said O'Brien.

She fought her personal battle and joined the fight against violence. "I wrote, I cried, I went to therapy and I got involved," she said to a crowd of a few hundred. "I spoke up and I spoke out!"

The energy of the crowd grew as the Radical Cheerleaders took the stage and chanted: "We're sexy, we're cute, we're radical to boot. We're angry, we're tough and we have had enough!"

The march began in twilight on

University Street. People carried candlelight down the street. For these moments, the streets were safe. Flashing blue and red lights of police escort stopped traffic for women's rights. "Racist sexist anti-gay, you can't take our streets away!" Is one of the many chants that could be heard from about 300 hundred voices in the march.

It ended in the darkness of night when everyone prepared for a powerful speak out at 8th and Oak. Drums pounded, cowbells rang. People danced under a tent surrounded by signs that read "self-identified women's space." The energy was high and the air smoky with burned out candle wax.

Soon the speak-out began and things grew quiet. The cold of night took over and some people left on a shuttle back to campus. Over twenty-five women took the stage to tell their histories of abuse. Bruises heal, but pain from sexual violence and rape lingers. For those few hours, the problem no one speaks of, the problem often overlooked had a face, a name, a voice.

"It's a very empowering celebration I wanted my son to be apart of," said Priscilla Quakenbush, a marcher and advocate. "He's the next generation."



_Marching at night.
photo by J. Carr

The 10th Annual Women of Color Conference

By: Ma Vang



This year's conference was held on April 1-3, 2005 at the University of Oregon. The theme was "Dialogues

About the State of Women's Rights as Human Rights," which encompassed multiple competing workshops, a keynote speaker, cultural performances, an open mic session and a reception.

Some of the goals for the conference included creating visibility for women of color issues, beginning the long process to engage in dialogue in addressing these issues and creating a safe space for women of color to mobilize.

We were fortunate to have Ninotchka Rosca as our keynote speaker who brought a much needed global perspective to our work around women of color issues. It demonstrates the connection between the local to the national and international. In addition, Alison De La Cruz and UO student and

activist, Jana Schmieding, shared their moving works in the cultural performance.

About 100 people attended the conference throughout the weekend, and we were able to get some media coverage as well. Organizing around concerns of women of color such as visibility and coalition building is a work in progress that will continue to require investments from students and staff/faculty.

The implementation of the Women of Color Retreat as another avenue for women of color to have conversations was a great program to work on issues centered around women of color and operating within an intersectional framework. Some of the initial discussions about the concerns of women of color at the retreat were crucial to the planning and framework of the conference. Engaging in dialogue is an important way to create and implement change.



ABOVE_Jasmin Guera,
singing at open mic.
PHOTO BY Erin O'Brien
ABOVE RIGHT_Keynote
speaker Ninotchka Rosca

Anti-Choice Activists Targeting Eugene Clinics

By Jan Carter

Although Eugene is often thought of as a “liberal” community, it is not immune to mounting anti-choice activity. Earlier this year, the Bours Clinic in Eugene reported an increase in protesting action. Nan Robinson, receptionist at the facility, says although it has been relatively quiet for years, early in 2005 anti-choice activists initiated new protests against the clinic. Originally ignoring the orderly protesters, the clinic took action when one of the demonstrators entered the building and, according to the staff, was “assertive and obnoxious.”

The clinic contacted the Portland affiliate of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL). Ms. Treasure Mackley, 28, Field Director of NARAL, Pro-Choice Oregon responded by initiating a local program to train clinic escorts. Mackley explained, “What NARAL tries to do is eliminate any interaction and ease the negative atmosphere—making it easier for young women in this difficult decision.” The first training session was held March 25th and about twenty-five locals as well as volunteers from adjacent communities attended.

Once trained, the volunteers position themselves at clinic entrances on the days abortions are scheduled. The escorts are taught not to interact with the protesters but rather to serve as a deterrent, seeking to eliminate harassment and interaction between the

demonstrators and the clients. If necessary, escorts will often use props such as umbrellas to shield clients or boom boxes to mute the taunting with music. Escorts (who for obvious reasons prefer to remain anonymous) report that the protest groups vary from day to day. At times the protestors just quietly pray and chant; at other times they can be loudly judgmental or patently nasty. Clinic escort work is not for the faint of heart. Unfortunately, it has become necessary. Therefore, NARAL will continue to offer volunteer escort training sessions in Eugene; the next is scheduled for June 4th.

This anti-choice activity right in the University’s backyard should be a wake-up call to all young women who have long enjoyed the freedom of choice. Young women should be personally prepared to deal with an unwelcome pregnancy. A first step is a frank talk with your doctor. It can be disconcerting to discover a doctor is anti-choice just when you need their support. NARAL offers suggestions on its website for young women, questions to ask when choosing a doctor.

Pro-choice young women can also be attentive to state and federal legislative actions, supporting candidates and laws that will protect women’s rights. Currently, a bill in Oregon’s state Senate committee would require pharmacists to provide the Emergency Contraceptive Pill [Plan B] on demand, without a doctor’s

prescription. The ECP is not an abortion method but rather prevents fertilization if ingested within 12-36 hours of intercourse; it eliminates more invasive procedures.

While Oregon is one of ten states receiving an “A” rating from NARAL for supporting women’s reproductive health, the anti-choice elements within the state’s legislature are active. Much of the anti-choice legislation introduced thus far has been thwarted by Oregon’s pro-choice senate and governor. However women cannot be complacent. As long as there are foes of women’s rights in places of power and there is need of escorts wearing bright orange vests to guard clinic entrances, Roe v Wade is not secure.

WHAT TO ASK BEFORE CHOOSING A DOCTOR

Are your services covered by my insurance plan?
Will you diagnose and treat a full range of STD’s?
Do you offer a full range of birth control options?
Will you prescribe Emergency Contraception upon request?
Will you phone in a prescription to my pharmacy for an EC?
Are you pro-choice?
Will you perform abortion services or refer for abortion services?

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVES OREGON STATE SENATE BILL SB849

This bill would allow women urgent access to the Emergency Contraceptive Pill by authorizing pharmacies to prescribe and dispense emergency contraception without requiring a doctor’s visit. ECP’s are most effective if taken within 12 hours and eliminate the need for more invasive procedures. This bill is being reviewed in the Senate Rules Committee.

“What NARAL tries to do is eliminate any interaction and ease the negative atmosphere—making it easier for young women in this difficult decision.”

2004-2005 Women's Center Staff Testimonials



ABOVE_ From left to right: Melissa Ballard, Jessie Genter, Stacy Borke, Erin O'Brien, Amanda Garlick, Sarah Wells, Ma Vang, Nicole Peasley. Photo by J.Carr

AMANDA GARLICK, NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT ADVOCATE:

I have worked at the Women's Center for two years. It has become not only a place of work but also my home on my campus. I am thankful for the confidence the Women's Center has given me to believe in the possibility of change that every moment contains. I can hardly imagine what these years would have been like without it. The Women's Center has allowed me to surround myself with women who inspire and teach me about how to be honest, how to work for your goals and for change, and lead a life that is fulfilling. The Women's Center, to me, is provocative and has led me to more questions in response to my questions. I have learned how often change is born of conflict and confrontation. I have seen women cry with disappointment, frustration, and happiness. The Women's Center holds a place of high esteem in my heart, and I'm thankful I made the wise decision to apply back in my freshman year.

NICOLE PEASLEY, EVENTS COORDINATOR:

The impact that the Women's Center has had on my

life has been two-fold; not only did it help me become more educated about others, but even more drastically, it helped me become more educated about myself. I have been a member of the Women's Center staff for seven months, yet in terms of the knowledge I have acquired, it seems more like years. Through each of our events, I felt like I gained an entirely new education about different forms and intersections of oppressions, areas of cultural competency, and just the sheer strength of a united, progressive and empowered community of women. Until I began my work at the Women's Center, I considered myself a feminist, even though I never really knew what that meant to me. Even though I'm still working that out and probably will be for the rest of my life, I know that at the very least being a feminist to me means identifying, recognizing and taking ownership of my own privileges, working to counteract

those privileges through attempting to be a good ally, and admiring, appreciating, and nurturing differences rather than "accepting" or "tolerating" them. As for my work at the Women's Center, I can only hope that I was able to develop the same sort of learning environment through my events that I found at all of my peers' events. It has been an inspiring, awing, and humbling year, the likes of which I can only pray to experience again. Thanks ASUO Women's Center, I love you!

ALLISON PRASAD- OFFICE GODDESS:

I have worked at the Women's Center since Nov 2004 as an office assistant. I have a great time working at the Women's Center the positive atmosphere and incredible staff always makes it an enjoyable place to be. I can honestly say that if I am having a good or bad day I always look forward coming to work because I know that when I leave I will be feeling happier than when I first came in. The Women's Center I feel is a safe space for all people and I am very proud to say that I am a part of this great organization. Stefanie Loh, Public Relations Coordinator I never considered myself particularly political or a social activist of any sort. And



for your college, take a step back. If you are white, take a step back. If you are straight take a step back. All of a sudden, there was a lot of space between myself and my coworkers. It made me feel guilty and depressed. "Now how are we going to get back to the line?" the director asked. That's why we're here, I realized. Oppression separates us, and we need people to bring us back together. That's what the Women's Center has taught me in the two years I've been here. We are the type of people working tirelessly to bring everyone back to the same line in the sand.

STACY BORKE, LGBTQ ISSUES COORDINATOR: Working in the Women's Center has been a first hand experience of seeing the different lives that women lead. I have only begun to understand the intersecting oppressions that women face, and I am amazed at the strength and perseverance of the women I meet. I have worked at the Women's Center for one year, but it feels like a decade. Downtown Lori Brown, Swells, Diddy Kong, Princess, Mel C, Allison in Converse, Swanless, Julia Ghoulia, Stef with one f, Vag Mons Nicole, Ma the Amazing, The Great Garlick, and Erin who has done it all...thank you.

LEFT_Jessie Genter
Photo by J.Carr
BELOW_Amanda Garlick

when you don't concern yourself with issues like these, you don't see that they're there. This year, working at the WC has opened my eyes to new ideas and made me actually think about social issues. So I guess the most significant change is that I've become a more socially aware person, and have taken a few steps out of my own little enclosed bubble. I'm more aware of issues like sexuality, sexual assault, bias and so on. Being around activists everyday has changed the way I see the world and the way I see myself.

JULIA CARR, SIREN EDITOR IN CHIEF: Wherever you go, there you are. This is my experience with the Women's Center. Within each woman on staff this year, I found a piece of myself. Pieces that would have gone undiscovered without them. Pieces that I found sometimes through anger and frustration, and other times through laughter and relief. Dedication to a common cause binds spirits and for that I am grateful.

SARAH WELLS, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COORDINATOR: This summer the staff of the Women's Center stood in a line in the sand at our annual retreat, shoulder to shoulder. To illustrate the notion of privilege, our director asked us to take steps forward or steps back depending on what applied to us. If your parents pay

MA VANG, DIVERSITY COORDINATOR: This is my first year working at the ASUO Women's Center and I have been in the Diversity Coordinator position for about six months. Working at the Women's Center has enriched my life in multiple ways, making my last year at the University of Oregon more busy, but very memorable. The skills in organizing and events planning as well as relationships with the wonderful people on staff are invaluable experiences. Organizing around women of color issues and creating change for the women of color on campus has been a challenging but rewarding process, which has a tremendous impact on my life. Through this process to begin to address the needs of women of color, I learned to structure





RIGHT_Melissa Collier and Melissa Ballard

most. The women I worked with at the women's center lead me to new perspectives that I might have never encountered had I not opened myself to this experience. I can truly think of no better finishing touch to my senior year.

**MELISSA BALLARD,
OFFICE GODDESS:**

When I first walked into the Women's Center almost three years ago, you would probably not believe that I was a moderate in my political opinions. The Women's Center changed that. Through experience, conversations, visitors and fellow staff members, I changed into a liberal. There has been a lot of pain from working in the

the work in an intersectional framework in order to address the diverse ideas and issues that inform our lives. Being a part of the first Women of Color Retreat and the 10th Annual Women of Color Conference was both amazing and precarious because the stakes are high to achieve visibility for women of color. The Women's Center space enabled me to thrive creatively in my work, and its changing space will continue to support women at the university.

MELISSA COLLIER, OFFICE GODDESS:

I have worked at the Women's Center for two years. I love my job. During this time I have had the opportunity to meet and work with so many great people that I might not have ever known. I'm so grateful for that. It's not just the people though. I truly feel that my job has purpose, and that purpose is a cause which is incredibly important to me. Thanks to the Women's Center I have broken down some of my walls of ignorance, stretched myself, marched, protested, and even acted. I count myself lucky to have had the experiences I have with the Women's Center.

**STACY WANLESS, VISUAL DESIGN
COORDINATOR:**

Being a part of the Women's Center has been an experience I am very grateful for. College is more than what they teach you in lecture--in fact it is often the lessons you learn outside of class that mean the

Women's Center, due to a variety of circumstances, but also a lot of joy. I like to think they will balance each other out. From working here, I found that my heart is in social justice and that I will spend the rest of my life fighting against domestic violence. I can still remember when we had the old office and a woman walked in needing help. Everyone pitched in, but no one had the same passion about the subject that I did. That is the reason I stayed here for so long, the thought of being able to help someone was exciting, but now my time here has ended and I gladly step away, though the Women's Center will always hold a place in my heart.

JESSIE GENTHER, SEXUAL VIOLENCE

PREVENTUION AND EDUCATION COORDINATOR:

The Women's Center has employed some of the most motivated women I have ever met. The Women's Center impacted my life by showing me an environment where empowered women work together not only to put on rockin' events, but to support each other in doing the best we possibly can. I've never been in a work place where every single employee was cheering me on and pushing me to do well. The environment the Women's Center staff has fostered is parallel to no other in terms of strength and challenge. I have never been so proud to be on a team of activists as I have been of this group. Thank you to everyone who worked in the Women's Center this year, providing conversations ranging from appropriation and power hierarchies to the damn candy dish and nose rings. It's been grand!!! ...Um... Lori... I have a question.

SEXUAL WELLNESS ADVOCACY TEAM

SWAT Workshops

Sexual Wellness Advocacy Team (SWAT) is a group of students committed to educating others about consent, sexual violence, and healthy relationships. SWAT offers interactive, fun, sex-positive workshops using theater as a tool for social change. SWAT facilitated 24 workshops reaching 450 students and participated in four regional and statewide conferences. SWAT has nearly tripled the number of workshops they have done in the last year.

Comments from workshop participants include “Consent is a lot easier with words and continual communication is good.” and “Excellent conversations about defining consent and how to make it sexy.” One student described the workshop as “Very interactive and engaging. The monologues were extremely relevant and recognizable—I think many of us have heard stories like this and it is helpful to have the opportunity for discussion.” Another learned that “Yes isn’t always consent when under pressure.”

SWAT Members Responses (End-of-term evaluations)

“I learned a lot about these issues, I met some absolutely amazing people, and I have found a greater sense of self and personal satisfaction. I also like that I can say I’m out there trying to make a difference.”

IntroDUCKtion

SWAT performed at all 6 IntroDUCKtion sessions, reaching 3000 incoming first-year students. Using a combination of traditional theater and interactive activities, SWAT addressed issues of sexual assault, partner violence, and stalking, setting the tone for new students. Some students reflected on what they learned. “It’s never too late to say no.” Consent is when. . . “no one feels guilty, the two people say ‘yes’ to each other and each feel safe in the situation.” “Just because you’ve had sex before, doesn’t mean it’s not rape if you say no.”



Community Engagement Project

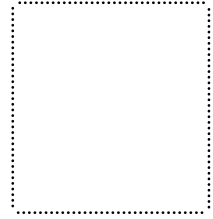
The basic premise of the CEP is that the engagement of community members in the process of assessment, planning, development, and decision-making invests participants with a renewed sense of ownership in ending sexual and partner violence and instills a belief in their role and their ability to make change.

First year students in Hamilton Hall created a DVD about consent titled “How do you define _____?” and designed shirts with the same theme. Students asked fellow residents how they defined terms like “hook-up,” “long distance relationship,” “rape” and “consent.” At a hall-wide movie night, the group screened the film for their friends and neighbors and co-facilitated small-group discussions with SWAT members. CEP members liked “people from different years in college and staff working together” and that “SWAT there to back us up on resources and facts.”

The next CEP, starting Fall 2005, will engage students of color in addressing sexual violence issues. In order to interrupt violence against women of color on campus, the CEP develops community leaders who identify and challenge social norms on the campus. Project could include starting an INCITE! chapter.

ABOVE_Megan
Thompson and
Erin McGladery

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