

the COOPERPOINT

The Evergreen State College Student Newspaper | January 18, 2017 JOURNAL



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HOW WE WORK

The Cooper Point Journal is produced by students at The Evergreen State College, with funding from student fees and advertising from local businesses. The Journal is published for free every other Wednesday during the school year and distributed throughout the Olympia area. Our content is also available online at www.cooperpoint-journal.com.

Our mission is to provide an outlet for student voices, and to inform and entertain the Evergreen community and the Olympia-area more broadly, as well as to provide a platform for students to learn about operating a news publication.

Our office is located on the third floor of the Campus Activities Building (CAB) at The Evergreen State College in room 332 and we have open student meetings from 4 to 5 p.m every Wednesday.

WRITE FOR US

We accept submissions from any student at The Evergreen State College, and also from former students, faculty, and staff. We also hire some students onto our staff, who write articles for each issue and receive a learning stipend.

Have an exciting news topic? Know about some weird community happening? Enjoy that new hardcore band? Come talk to us and write about it.

We will also consider submissions from non-Evergreen people, particularly if they have special knowledge on the topic. We prioritize current student content first, followed by former students, faculty and staff, and then general community submissions. Within that, we prioritize content related to Evergreen first, followed by Olympia, the state of Washington, the Pacific Northwest, etc.

To submit an article, reach us at cooperpointjournal@gmail.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We want to hear from you! If you have an opinion on anything we've reported in the paper, or goings-on in Olympia or at Evergreen, drop us a line with a paragraph or two (100 - 300 words) for us to publish in the paper. Make sure to include your full name, and your relationship to the college—are you a student, staff, graduate, community member, etc. We reserve the right to edit anything submitted to us before publishing, but we'll do our best to consult with you about any major changes. Thank you!

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Chief of Police Stacy Brown was hired at the beginning of the year but recently set to be sworn in. SHAUNA BITTLE.

Evergreen “Welcomes” New Chief of Police

CHIEF BROWN DISCUSSES PROTESTS, FEARS, AND PLANS FOR FUTURE

By Jasmine Kozak-Gilroy

On January 11, 2016, the new Evergreen chief of police, Stacy Brown, was set to be sworn in. Brown, who graduated from the college in 2006, was hired out of the Lewis County Deputy’s office where she had been working for 20 years, the last seven of which she spent as the chief deputy of Special Services. On the afternoon the administration planned to hold a welcome reception for Chief Brown, minutes before the program was set to begin, students took the microphone and created a loud disruption so the event could not go forward. Along with air horn like noise makers, students yelled “Fuck the Police!” and “Death to Pigs”.

When it seemed clear that the students were not going to quiet down or surrender the microphone and podium, Evergreen president George Bridges, chief of police Stacy Brown, and the other members of the administration putting on the event left and the reception was effectively cancelled. In an email sent out by Wendy Endress, VP of Student Affairs, she recounts that, “We cancelled the event, due to a few people taking over the podium. They blew a piercing air horn, and one individual forcefully took the microphone from me. Later, they took all the donated food from the campus pantry in Police Services and defaced a vehicle.”

The administration also can-

celled a Cops and Donuts event where students could meet campus police officers, that was scheduled to take place a few days later. While in the email to students announcing the cancellation no reason was provided, Brown says of the event, “It was canceled after a lot of people determined what was most prudent for the safety of the entire campus. It was cancelled because we had some information that there were plans sabotage that event.”

Brown appears to have been referring to a Facebook event titled “COFFEE NOT COPS”, the event description of which reads, “The Evergreen State College will be hosting ‘Cops and Donuts’... So we will be next door with free coffee and

zines. Our coffee is stronger and our lit is danker. Come hang out and get caffeinated and educated [heart emoji]”. It is possible the administration believed that those involved would also take steps to more actively disrupt the Police Services event.

When asked whether Evergreen police monitor student activity on social media, Brown insisted that while the campus police lack sophisticated surveillance, “We do have basic functions like looking on Facebook—and we do have a lot of supporters, and people tell us if something is brewing because they are concerned about the safety of campus.” Regarding surveillance in general and whether or not surveillance

cameras were part of her ongoing plan to streamline policing at Evergreen she said that, “as police officers of course we would always like to see more cameras,” but that is unlikely to happen due to funding.

Brown, who graduated from the Evergreen State College in 2006, says that in her time as a student here she never saw anything like the protest that occurred at her swearing in, saying, “I never would have imagined that would come from the Evergreen State College I mean we’re peaceful, right?” and that, “It’s very challenging to come to work and see a sign that says all cops are bastards.” Of the yelling that occurred she said, “I didn’t see anything like that when I went here—heated discussions, sure, but they were always civil.” Brown mentioned that she understood that there are students who had previous bad interactions with law enforcement, saying, “even though this is my profession, I know that there are bad apples in every bunch, whether it’s teachers or doctors or cops.”

Despite animosity towards the police force on campus, Evergreen’s new Chief of Police remains committed to community policing and community engagement, something she touched on several times during our conversation. She expressed interest in developing a program modeled after the Olympia Police Department’s roundtable Community Conversation events, conversations that she hopes will be “something that goes a little deeper”, adding, “I am not here to preach at anybody, I am here to talk to students who are smart young thinkers and say what are some things that we could do as law enforcement? Give us some ideas.”, although when asked if she had plans in place to communicate with students who do not want there to be cops on campus, like the protesters who set up shop in the library lobby touting alternatives to policing, she replied that, “If people aren’t willing to communicate with me in a civil manner I don’t know how we can communicate,” elaborating that, “some people don’t think there should be law enforce-

ment anywhere in the United States—like there shouldn’t be cops at all. It should just be—I don’t know how else to say it, lawless.”

While discussing students who feel uncomfortable with armed police officers on campus, Brown made it clear that not only is it a state requirement for police officers to carry guns, but that she feels it is a moral issue of her being able to protect herself when there may be people around her carrying guns or knives, arguing that, “the hatred that is spewed at us sometimes escalates and we’d have no way to protect ourselves.” She also said that not having guns puts officers at a disadvantage handling even peaceful gatherings do to officers getting overwhelmed, stating, “If it was just one officer you are going to see a taser or shots fired, you just don’t know.”

According to Brown, even peaceful protests can cause problems for law enforcement due to escalation and the sheer mass of participants, “Sometimes that crowd mentality you can have someone there who is there to be peaceful but then something happens and the crowd mentality the changes and then some bad choices are made and that action causes our reaction.” Often, Brown said, “It’s peaceful and then it’s not and then it is too late.” The alternative to campus police carrying guns is the Evergreen Police calling on the Olympia Police Department or the Thurston County Sheriff’s Office for help, something that happens anyways on campus due department’s small size. When asked specifically what her policy towards involving outside agencies in on campus policing, Brown responded saying that it is a complicated issues to be sorted out on a case to case basis.

Despite her fears regarding an inability to keep peaceful protests under control and her discomfort regarding recent protests targeting police, Brown insists that, “we need people who will stand up and try to make change in the world” saying that, “a lot of great has been done in this country through protests.”

News

Police Program to Shed Light on Campus Safety

SAFER STEPS PROGRAM DESIGNED TO BRING AWARENESS TO POLICE PUBLIC SERVICE

By Chloe Marina Manchester

Safer Steps is a new program designed to raise awareness of the public services offered by campus police, such as unlocking doors, jumping cars, and escorting students who are afraid to walk alone around campus. Prior to the program, police already offered many of these services, performing more than 500 of these public services in the last year. They have started this program to try to encourage students to feel more comfortable reaching out to campus police for help.

However this program is not perfect, there are marginalized students who are fearful of police, specifically students of color who are subject to systematic racism from the police on a national scale, and these students are unlikely to call the campus police for an escort if they already felt unsafe walking around on campus.

Marginalized students are also more likely to be those who are feel most threatened walking around campus after dark and those students are also more likely to be apprehensive of police in general. As one student, who wished to remain anonymous, said, "Police do not make me feel safe. If the situation on campus feels so unsafe that I need a police escort something's really wrong because the police themselves make me feel unsafe to begin with. I would have to really be in immediate fear for my life to counteract that fear of police."

This new program was designed by the Evergreen Police and Residential and Dining (RAD) Services, not only to raise awareness, but to shed light on the gaps in services offered through student responses to the program, to alert the police and RAD to areas in student safety where they are falling short.

In discussing the issues marginalized students might have with police, Stacy Brown, the new chief of Evergreen police, and Sharon Goodman, the di-

rector of RAD services, made note of two possible solutions. One of which is trying to address students fears of police through encouraging students to spend time around the campus police and get to know them as people. That solution is not necessarily perfect as they themselves admitted because students who have already had bad experience with police would not attend such events. Another solution they were supportive of after it was mentioned, would be a student group starting their own "I'll Walk With You" program. Though they mentioned there are problems with that as well, as some could sign up to be a student escort with bad intentions.

Safer Steps seems to have another gap that Brown and Goodman didn't consider until asked. If a student was intoxicated on campus residence and felt unsafe walking back to their own, would they still be able to call the police? The short answer is yes, since campus police don't make arrests of turn students over to Olympia Police Department when it comes to underage drinking and similar things. The longer answer is that there are times, if the police knew the student had a substance abuse problem, for example, when they would alert Student Conduct



Trump Inauguration Prompts Protests & Demonstrations

WHAT'S GOING DOWN IN OLYMPIA

By Felix Chrome

Nationally and locally January 20 seems to have the potential to be a wild, action filled day, with a wide variety of events planned. There have been calls for protests and demonstrations of various forms to take place across the country on inauguration day, many using the moniker #DisruptJ20. Olympia has a somewhat confusing tangle of events planned, however in our small town it's likely these will merge into a general atmosphere of protest, with loosely affiliated groups participating in differing actions simultaneously.

There is a general strike called for the day, with many posters emblazoned with slogans such as "Nobody Works. Nothing Moves." "Everything stops. No work. No School. No Cops. No Trump." and "Sabotage the machinery of the state before fascists seize it" spotted on campus and around town.

At 9 a.m. on Jan. 20 there is a youth-led rally against Trump at the state capitol, near 416 Sid Snyder Ave SW. A coalition of Washington State students is leading this events and writes, "Come stand with us on inauguration day to protest hateful policies and offer support for affected minority groups." The event is billed as a rally that will feature speakers, music, and "an opportunity to make a positive change in our community."

At noon there is a protest and march planned, starting at the capitol. This appears to be the big event of the day, with multiple groups expressing differing plans beginning at the same time and place. You can expect there to be a march through downtown Olympia that contains multiple factions and a variety of tactics.

One groups dubbed "Re-Occupy," a reference to the Occupy Wallstreet movement, expresses interest in occupying and blockading space on Jan. 20, with possible plans into the future. In one event page they write "Prepare for a long term Occupation!" Telling participants

"Bring your tents, stories, drums, opinions, signs, emotions." Others, also planning to meet at the capitol at noon, say only "BRING YOUR FRIENDS YOUR LOVE AND YOUR RAGE." They also restated the national callout for action on January 20, originally posted on anarchist news site It's Going Down, "#DisruptJ20 will be the start of the resistance. We must take to the streets and protest, blockade, disrupt, intervene, sit in, walk out, rise up, and make more noise and good trouble than the establishment can bear. The parade must be stopped. We must delegitimize Trump and all he represents. It's time to defend ourselves, our loved ones, and the world that sustains us as if our lives depend on it—because they do."

Besides events on the day of inauguration, Student-Worker Organizing Committee, an anti-capitalist student group, have also organized a walkout on January 19, the day before the inauguration as to not interfere with the general strike. Students will walk out of classes at 10:45, meeting on Red Square at 11, if you want to attend you are encouraged to bring signs or banners and be prepared to march. While this protest is clearly in response to the election of President Elect Trump, it intersect with many issues. As organizers write on the facebook event, "Walk out against Trump. Walk out against ICE or Border Patrol on campus. Walk out

against capitalism. Walk out against Racism, Sexism, Cissexism, Gender oppression, cultural erasure, white supremacy, xenophobia, and all other forms of oppression on and off campus."

On Jan. 21, there will also be a march in Olympia, coordinated with the National Women's March in D.C. For this event people will be gathering at 10 a.m. at the capitol building, where there will be a rally with speakers, then a planned march to heritage park and back. It appears likely this march will be very large, but relatively calm, with a pre-approved and permitted march route and an emphasis non-violence. The national event that this march is part of states their mission is to "send a bold message to our new government on their first day in office, and to the world that women's rights are human rights." They continue, saying that this march goes beyond just women's issues, "We stand together, recognizing that defending the most marginalized among us is defending all of us."

There are sure to be more protests, marches, and demonstrations to come in the weeks and months ahead. Along with these independent political actions, Evergreen is hosting a workshop and lecture series concerning the election, inauguration, and presidency of Donald Trump.

Campus Inauguration Events Kick Off

EVERGREEN HOSTS PANEL ABOUT ELECTION'S EFFECT ON MUSLIM AMERICANS

By Sylvie Chace

On Tuesday, January 10, a panel titled "Psychological and Political Impacts on Muslim Americans" was held in the library lobby. This event was the first lecture in a Evergreen-sponsored event series "Empowering Our Communities Through Knowledge and Action." Evergreen professor and academic dean, Therese Saliba, opened the lecture with introductions of the two speakers, Lamise Shawahin Ph.D. and Sarah Eltantawi Ph.D.

Shawahin is a former Evergreen student, and is currently completing a post-doctoral fellowship in Chicago. She returned to our campus to share her research on anti-Muslim prejudice and mental health, a topic that is widely erased by popular media.

Her talk began with data on the diversity that exists within Muslim populations, stating "African-American Muslims are the foundation of Muslims in the US." Shawahin went on to state that this narrative is erased in the media, Muslim-Americans are extremely diverse, yet we only hear of one 'type' of Muslim in the US, which is Arab-Americans. This dominant narrative leaves out the various diversities within Muslim communities, such as

ethnicity, sexuality, and gender.

Shawahin argues that the connection of the Muslim identity with mental health lies in the discrimination that Muslim people face. Since 9/11 hate crimes against Muslims have skyrocketed, and now, since Donald Trump's nomination, that number is only getting higher. The shared experiences of discrimination and marginalization based on identity have a direct impact on health. Shawahin backs up this claim with data in the disparities in depression, anxiety, PTSD, etc within Muslim-american communities.

To end her talk, Shawahin furthered the connection between oppression and depression by describing how depressive symptoms can directly

relate to the specific oppression Muslim-Americans face. Shawahin pushed for counselors and therapists to pay attention to Muslim communities and to educate themselves on these issues as well as promote an awareness for the mental-health needs of Muslim americans, as well as the diversity that exists within Muslim communities, as many marginalized identities overlap.

To follow Shawahin's talk, Sarah Eltantawi an author and Evergreen professor, listed what Trump did this week in the news. She stated how she feels it is important as an educator to inform people on these issues whenever she can, especially when a microphone is present. Eltantawi went on to read a blog post she wrote

for a series titled "Contending Modernities" for University of Notre Dame. Her piece, "The Trump Administration Incognita for American Muslims", sparked controversy within the Muslim-american community as she feels it is important to critique flaws within the community itself, as well as external forces that affect the community.

The piece itself spoke of a binary in which the religion of Islam is meant to fit into. Either one where it is a religion of violence, or a religion of peace. Eltantawi argues that both ends of this binary are harmful, as the notion that Islam is exclusively a religion representing peace depoliticizes Muslim people and leaves room for political domination

from outside forces. Additionally by claiming Islam is exclusively a religion representing war is a means to justify violent oppression of Muslim people.

The panel ended with a facilitated Q&A between the two speakers and students. Both speakers encouraged positive alternatives for Muslim-americans through active organizing and advocating for diversity. The week ahead holds more events for post-inauguration community dialogue at Evergreen.

This panel is part of an ongoing series of events at Evergreen discussing the election and how to move forward. Below is a calendar of these upcoming events.

BEFORE & AFTER

THE INAUGURATION

EVERGREEN EVENTS CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY 1/18

"Continuing the Work We've Done" with Fabian Romero

Longhouse 3:30 p.m.

Queer, Indigenous, poet, performer, and activist, Fabian Romero, will lead a discussion on how to strengthen our communities and support one another in the wake of the election.

THURSDAY 1/19

Empowering Our Communities Through Knowledge & Action

Library Lobby 12:30 p.m.

A panel featuring Evergreen faculty and students discussing possible impacts of the Trump administration, especially on immigration policy, and suggesting strategies for resistance.

Creative Self-Care and Poster-Making

RADAR 7 p.m.

Quinn Russell from Student Wellness Services will lead a workshop on self-care practices and the intersection of self-care and community support. Following the workshop will be a self care based artistic exercise and poster making supplies for attendees to use.

FRIDAY 1/20

Inauguration Day on Democracy Now! Coverage, Debrief, and Self-Care

Lecture Hall 1 9 a.m.

There will be a viewing of the inauguration episode of Democracy Now, followed by a debrief and discussion with students and faculty.

MONDAY 1/23

Water is Life: A Coming Together Discussion

Longhouse 3:30 p.m.

This panel led discussion will explore the against harmful effects of energy extraction on the earth, and the work that is being done

to combat that, especially by indigenous communities such as the Standing Rock Sioux tribe fighting the Dakota Access Pipeline.

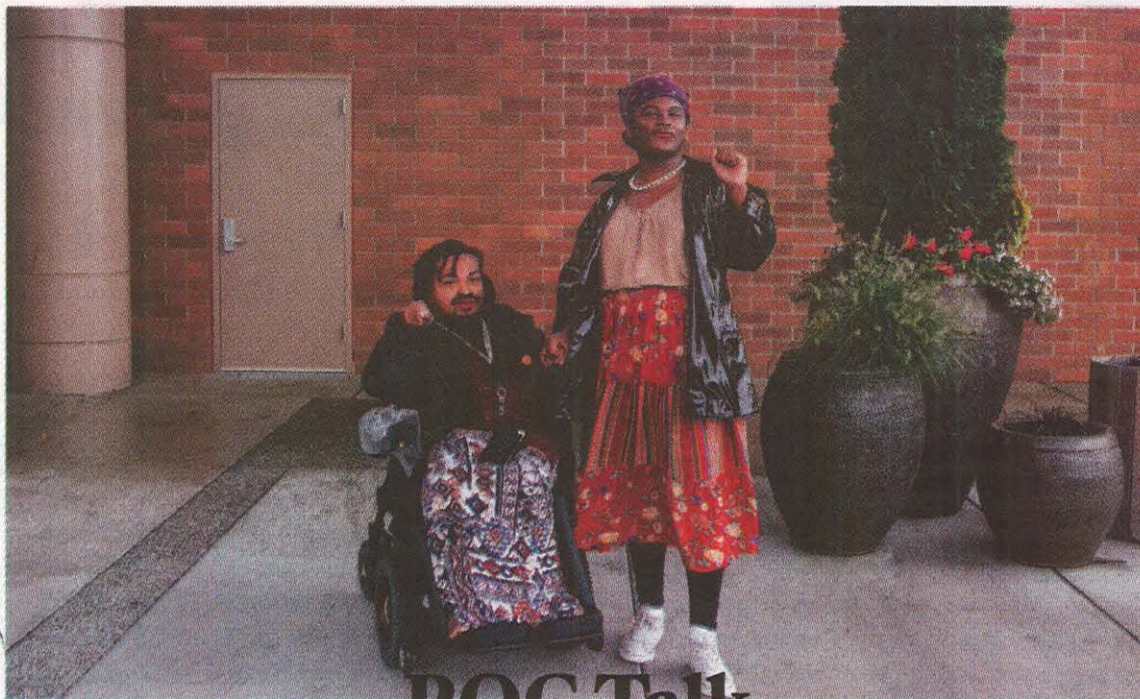
TUESDAY 1/24

Creating Your Self-Care Map: Leading Together

CAB 301 3:30 p.m.

Academic Advising Associate Director, Cholee Gladney leads a workshop on self-care through reflective writing and mapping of plans for dealing with stress.

Community



POC Talk

STUDENT CONDUCT CODE VIOLATIONS USED AGAINST DIRECT ACTION

By Georgie Hicks

Recently there has been several instances of direct action at Evergreen involving the interruption of planned school events, including the protest at convocation, the opening of Purce hall, and more recently the welcome reception Evergreen's new police chief. AR Rushet and Lawrence Walker III are two queer and trans disabled/nonable normative, femmes of color, who are involved in direct action in response to the school's handling of issues of diversity and equity for students. There is a consensus among many minority students that the school is great at issuing statements and creating task forces but tends to lack any sort of follow through or action that changes the experience of minority students on campus.

Rushet and Walker were interviewed by my colleague Tari after the convocation disruption as to why they felt that action was needed. Their responses resonated with me as a student of color; that there is an overall feeling that the school does not listen. Rushet and Walker are currently under investigation by the school for two instances of student code of conduct violation including obstructing or disrupting an event, in relation to the disruption of the Purce hall opening ceremony, and failure to comply with the direction of a college official. Punishment for code of conduct violations could include suspensions, which would include loss of on campus housing.

The school didn't shut down these students while they were protesting—they waited several months to investigate and issue student code of conduct violations. The student code of conduct specifically prohibits "Conduct that obstructs or disrupts any college learning, teaching, research, administration, adjudica-

tive process, public service functions or college-sponsored events or activities." It also prohibits students from non-compliance when faced with direction from faculty or the command to identify yourself to a college or public official.

These definition are so broad it effectively makes any sort of meaningful direct action against the school a punishable offence. Rushet and Walker admit the fact that they did disrupt these events, however they are passionate about the fact they did it with a purpose and a reason. They feel that "The school talks in radicalism, but governs in fascism." They feel their direct action is a result of lack of action or understanding from the administration.

Evergreen claims to support diversity and equity, even listing "social justice and diversity and equity" in it's core themes on the school's website, and yet punishes students who are the most passionate and outspoken about social justice as it relates to the school and administration. Direct action is a main tenet of

social justice and one of the most effective ways to create change. How can Evergreen be for social justice but not for direct action? How can they be for direct action but only as long as it is not directed at them?

The school's diversity statement says: "our community of faculty, staff and students work together to ensure an environment that embraces differences, fosters tolerance and understanding and celebrates a commitment to cultural, ethnic and racial awareness." The students staging these disruptions are trying to bring to the school's attention that they are not doing their job of "work[ing] together to ensure an environment that embraces differences, fosters tolerance and understanding and celebrates a commitment to cultural, ethnic and racial awareness."

Evergreen is a place that draws people prone to or committed to social justice and destroying the status quo, it is supposed to be a place that fosters diversity. Over the last year, we have seen many

cases of direct action at Evergreen and the world at large and a common response is for some people to shake their heads and say this is not the time and place. The student code of conduct allows the school to officially hold this position, stating when and where they think student protest is acceptable, and stop or at least discourage students from focusing direct action against the school.

All of this makes me wonder why these specific students are being disciplined and whether the code of conduct rules are being enforced unfairly. There were approximately 50 students who participated in the disruption of Purce Hall and to our knowledge Rushet and Walker are the only two being faced with a code of conduct violation.

One of the main issues they have with Rushet and Walker's participation in this disruption (mind you they are two of many) was that they used uncivil language while protesting. "Civil" (read: silent, peaceful and respectful of white supremacist/academic standards) protest is the easiest to ignore and by expecting students of color to hold each other to respectability politics they are asking us to jump twice as high when just asking to be treated equally at this school. There are serious racist undertones involved with even using the word civil, in relation to protest by students of color, at all. The school seems to not understand that what the students are protesting against is in itself "uncivil" treatment disguised under official and academic language.

While the school has taken action against these disruptions, there are a continuous stream of anti-abortion protestors who are allowed to remain on campus, shouting things that could very well be considered hate speech. Students have been vocal about the fact that these presences on campus make some students feel unsafe but because red square is a public place, as opposed to the library lobby which is considered private, they are allowed to continue.

The school is basically saying you are allowed free speech as long as it doesn't affect us or potentially cost us money. And what it really seems to come down to is money. When you're disrupting Board of Trustee meetings and planning actions that the school would probably deem

embarrassing that could lead to loss of students and their tuition, such as the convocation and the Purce hall disruption, they will come after you for a code of conduct violation. While it may be in their right to do so, it seems retaliatory, especially since they appear to be only coming after some of the protesters, often ironically students who need the most support and understanding from the school in the first place. The school is pushing back against students who are rightfully angry about the lack of action the administration is taking, and instead of listening to their concerns and actually changing things for the better, they are punishing them for speaking up. They seem to be more concerned with the frequency of these events than the reasoning behind them. To which I say if it seems like these types of actions are occurring too frequently or at every school planned meeting it is only because the school still hasn't listened. If the school is losing money because of these interruptions it's because that's the point, anyone who has participated in protests or boycotts knows one of the the best ways to create change is to hit them where it hurts, their wallet. Nobody wants to be put in a position that calls for direct action. Nobody wants to put themselves in a place where they can be punished by the school, especially since this school has a history of going after and tracking student activists.

Personally, I think maybe we need to rethink the application of the student code of conduct as a school so as to allow for students to do social justice work without being punished. If found to be in violation, punishment ranges from a warning to expulsion. In my opinion even a warning is too much, why are you warning students not to stand up for themselves in anyway possible, or be punished. Students well being should be more important than the bureaucracy and in this case it seems the school may choose to take a stick to the rules approach. This doesn't seem like the appropriate way to react when faced with direct action from our most vulnerable students. This system of code of conduct violations doesn't seem to be working for us in a way that promotes diversity and understanding.



cover artist

A S H L E Y M I L L E R

IV. I leave the mess. Piss stains color paper, and cd cases crack under my heels. I put on nice shirts and look in the mirror. Two weeks later I carry the mess to the dumpster. I ask about my blood in the jar. You say you poured it in the dirt. He says he misses seeing it in the fridge. I do not believe you.

I lie awake all night. My body fights to stay still like it fights to float in water. Get out, to the porch. Lay down my cheek on unfinished wood and watch the light come into the sky. I will find a way back to you

Call your name. Call your number. Call your mother. Call. Swallow it. Drip rose water on my head, then around the room. Make a list. Stretch. Return, to the floor. Arrange a grouping of rocks. Put the floor on my back and the book on my knees and hold her up.

V. until the mess no longer holds my attention and must be done away with.

I begin by making a mess

VI. A book of picture riddles

VII. Start with a pile.

VIII. I can only remember the presence of it. The outermost objects. Mostly papers. Twists of fabric. A wooden box stacked on something. A ball of foil in a clear plastic bag and a string and the shape of a flash.

I tried to imagine the pile and what was inside/under the surface but nothing came to mind. The shape of the surface was a mound with uneven edges, like seeing your head casting shadows. And all the silhouettes of strands, the hair blurred at the the crown.

IX. The shape of a flash. A special occasion. All the girls in white only. Small threads, intricate & tightly gathered. The person with pinched fingers goes with the needle through the white cloth.

Finger pinches

Over over and and under under

And and over over and and under under

—Written by Mitra Vahdati, TESC '16. View more of Ashley Miller's still life series at Caffe Vita through January 31st or at ashleymillerphoto.com.

Arts & Culture



Sam Miller will host the upcoming Olympia Comedy Competition. TARI GUNSTONE.

The Necessity of Laughter

AN INTERVIEW WITH LOCAL COMEDIAN SAM MILLER

By Tari Gunstone

I went to see a friend compete in an improv battle in Portland one night and Sam Miller performed for the intermission. I know very little about comedy, but I knew enough about the so called norms of comedy etiquette to be caught off guard, along with the rest of the room, by his fast paced, powerpoint slideshow about his addiction to methamphetamine. It was vulnerable and brashly honest, but didn't linger the moralizing tropes stories of overcoming addiction often contain. It was unapologetic, as if he was saying, "no beating around the bush, here I am, and it's okay for you to laugh at it." Through his unique approach to comedy, Miller has made a name for himself in the Northwest, especially in Olympia where he hosts the well-loved weekly standup gig, Vomity, at Le Voyeur.

Up next in his hosting career is the Olympia Comedy Competition, a monthly show where ten local comedians have six minutes to strut their stuff. The crowd votes, sends the top three onto the final round in April, and all the proceeds of the preliminary rounds go to charity.

A native to the Olympia area and currently an Evergreen student, Miller's a self-described "townie," whose wide range of personal experiences has opened up friendships with a diverse variety of

individuals. From the coffee shop where we met to the mini mart we popped into later, he stopped to chat with almost every other person we passed.

Miller tells me he's extroverted but has anxiety, so while performing comedy for a room full of a thousand people sounds like a good time, an awkward encounter involving a failed joke with a grocery clerk can feel defeating. "Making people laugh makes the world easier to live in," Miller tells me. "Laughter developed in primates," he continues, "so

that something that's threatening is not as threatening as it seems. It stops you from wasting time and energy with worry."

Simply put for Miller, laughter is part of survival, or at least a reliable shield. I've certainly felt that to be truer than ever in light of the current political climate; A scary, threatening storm collecting overhead where all we can do for it to not feel threatening is to make jokes about it. Miller's right on board with his comedic timing. The face-

book handle for the Olympia Comedy Competition is Make Olympia Laugh Again. "With all this Trump shit, if you do comedy, you kind of have to be in or out," says Miller. He tells me how at Vomity the day after November's election, he walked up to the mic and played "Mad World" by Tears for Fears on his phone for the audience. He went on to do a set with all election-result-related jokes, getting great feedback from the energy of the audience, "because everyone needed to laugh so fucking bad."

There's some unpredictability for comedians with how this new administration will affect comedy, but it has made Miller ask himself, "Is mine a voice that really needs heard right now?" So many of his fellow comedian community members are people of color, trans, or queer persons that he believes have a more important voice in the matter. He tells me he's working on figuring out, "how to keep promoting myself while not being a total piece of shit."

One way he plans to do this is to continue creating a parallel between comedy and activism. Miller shares how he was an activist before he took up comedy but that comedy helps one's voice go much further. A past involving substance addiction and incarceration has given him a lens into systems of injustice that informs how he sees the world today. He's studying alternatives to incarceration at Evergreen (and graduating this term, congrats Sam!), and uses humor to both wedge hard facts in for his audience as well as to change the narrative surrounding certain stigmas.

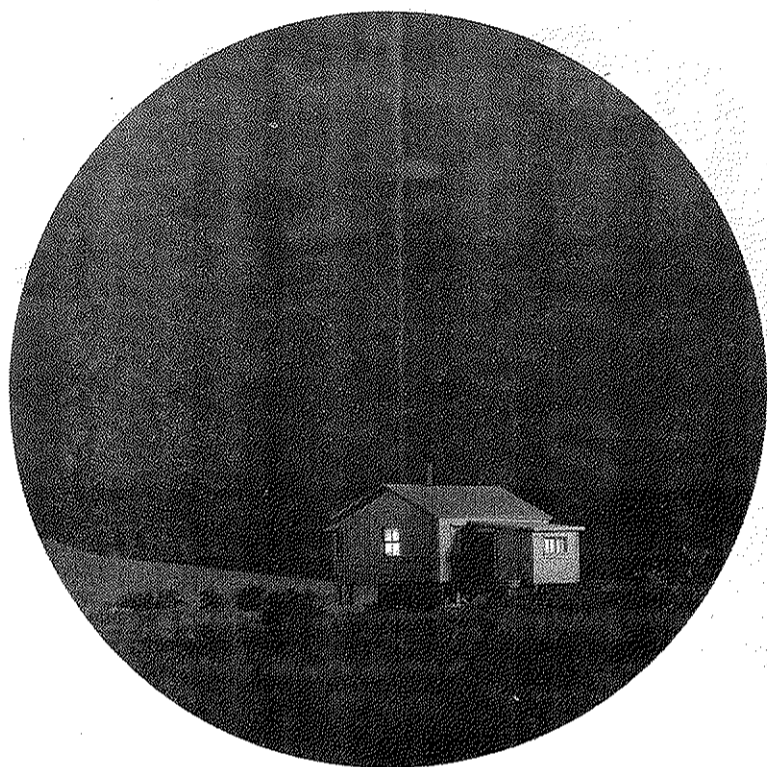
When he began pursuing comedy, he realized that he could shift his identity from a jail person to a comedy person. That's why Miller's all about the work being done through Youth Sound, the non profit organization that will receive the proceeds from the Olympia Comedy Competition. Youth Sound is an advo-

cacy program that helps train at risk youth to work in leadership positions within the very systems that affect them. He's done and hopes to do more comedy workshops with Youth Sound.

Miller identifies stand up comedy as an empowering tool that aids greatly in public speaking skills, which he says makes dealing with capitalism and its systems easier. While Miller never said comedy saved his life, it has greatly permeated his way of interacting with the world. He scrolls through 504 joke ideas on his phone to pull up one he wanted to share with me and records another that he came up with during our interview. He draws inspiration from the person in front of him in the checkout line, or the dude playing frisbee by himself on Red Square. Turning those observations into jokes to make people laugh allows him relate to those around him. Miller tells me that, "Laughter helps me understand the world better. I know that if somebody laughs at something I say, they understand me."

Sometimes his jokes don't work, they are too dark, too rough, or hit too close to home. In response to overhearing people say they don't like Olympia's homeless population downtown, he shared this joke on stage; "If you're rich and you don't like poor people, you should kill yourself so you don't have to see poor people anymore." It didn't go over, but Miller stays true to what makes him happy and devotes himself to the great experiment of stand up comedy.

If you want to check out the Olympia Comedy Competition hosted by Miller, head to Rhythm and Rye this Thursday, January 19, at 8 p.m. \$5-10 sliding scale donation at the door.



Voyager Opens at Galerie Fotoland

By Ruby Love

It's officially the start of winter quarter, and if you're like me and spent the break in a haze of rich food and existential dread, coming back to school has been a welcome change. Coinciding with the start of the year two thousand and seventeen (oh boy...we're in the future now...) is a new exhibit at Galerie Fotoland which looks at the nature of time and space using photographs of deceptively cute dioramas.

Voyager is the work of Seattle-based photographer Bill Finger, who utilizes techniques learned from his career working around film sets to build miniature worlds. The sets built by Finger vary from lonely country houses, seen at night, to the view of a crater from the window of a plane, to images of space exploration and satellites.

Translated through the medium of black and white photography, Finger's sets take on new meaning, blurring the line between reality/intellectual knowledge and dream/magical thinking as the audience is asked to suspend their disbelief and immerse themselves in the artist's complex worlds. The photographs were smaller than expected, and each is housed in a clean white frame, surrounded by a circular mat. They are deceptively simple, and after my first walk through I found myself returning again and again, nearly pressing my

nose to the glass to catch some previously unseen detail.

Recalling the charm of movies before special effects, Finger's work doesn't fully obscure the details of its manufacture - that's not its goal. Moving from image to image, I found myself oscillating between appreciating that these were tiny sets, painstakingly built by the artist, and getting lost in the scenes before me, despite being able to "see through" them.

The exhibit runs until February 28 at Galerie Fotoland which, if you don't know, is outside of Photoland on the first floor of the library building. I highly recommend stopping by to take a look!

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RUBY THOMPSON



By Sylvie Chace

It's a new year, a new quarter, and a fresh start for all the signs! However, 2016 is not so easily left behind. There are things still lingering on our minds and the recent full moon in Cancer on the 12th illuminated what our true feelings are. With planet of communication, Mercury, in goal-oriented Capricorn, and passionate Mars in sensitive Pisces, there is an inherent duality happening. There is a deep desire to put our lives in a solid direction for the new year, however, our emotional selves are taking over. What is it that is really driving you forward? Where does your true motivation lie? Struggling between external success and internal understanding seems to be weighing on all the signs.

ARIES 3/21 - 4/19

A new opportunity is arising. It may not feel like it, but with hard times comes new lessons for growth. You are seeking something tangible, something closely related to financial matters or life at home. Something doesn't feel quite right and now is the time to fix it. Reach out into the world and see what you bring back with you, a new space or a new job might be exactly what you need to feel like your life is on track.

TAURUS 4/20 - 5/20

Amidst the chaos there is a comfort found within you, Taurus. Leave it to you to find a way to make peace in a dark time. You have everything to gain so go out and learn everything you can, invest your time and energy into things that fill you up and fulfill your life and enrich you. Give yourself permission to live luxuriously.

GEMINI 5/21 - 6/20

You may have been feeling like you've reached rock bottom, nothing could possibly get worse. Don't be so hard on yourself Gemini, this is still a season of new beginnings. Let the old die away and make room for new-ness. Be it a new relationship, or a new friend, start investing time in people that hold you close. If you truly feel that the worst has happened, then know that you can only go up from here.

CANCER 6/21 - 7/22

Your foundation has been feeling shaky lately, something in your life feels uncertain and for someone like you that can take control over all areas of your life. You are powerful in that you know how to take care. So take care of yourself in this situation and know that the uncertainty won't last forever. Be careful in your decision-making, uncertainty can lead to irrationality so stay cautious, Cancer.

LEO 7/23 - 8/22

You've had a lot on your mind lately. It's made you a bit isolated which is so against your social nature. Know that with deep emotional processing comes a great change in our lives. Something big is coming. Whether you've decided to stop a certain behavior, or decided that maybe it's time to start some new habits, positive changes are on the horizon and it's up to you to see them through.

VIRGO 8/23 - 9/22

If 2016 was the year of realizing things, you have certainly become more aware of your inner power. Maybe you've used your voice more, or expressed feelings you usually feel too afraid to share. Something has shaken you up, Virgo. It's a good thing, allow yourself to be loud and imperfect, use your wonderful power as a force of good. With a new year beginning, your planning skills have been put to good use and it's making you feel unstoppable.

LIBRA 9/23 - 10/22

You've been letting go of control lately. It's overwhelming to grab life by the handlebars, so ironically maybe letting go is what will ultimately steer you in the right direction. You're not one to carry a planner at all times, so find ways of organizing that works for your needs. You don't need to act like you're someone you're not, so let this new year be a fresh start to living your life by your standards.

SCORPIO 10/23 - 11/21

You're trapped in some sort of situation, be it an unsatisfying living situation or a job that you just can't stand anymore. Something out in the world has got you caged and you're antsy to break free. You may not find answers to all your problems so easily, but finding out the truth is what can help you most. Knowing who is loyal to you, and who truly holds you dear can be healing when feeling stuck in a sticky situation.

SAGITTARIUS 11/22 - 12/21

2016 left you feeling powerless in more ways than one. Searching for feelings of power in external surroundings has proven less-than satisfying. However there's been a change in you, Sagittarius. It's as if you've awakened to the power that was in you all along. Now is the time to start planning something big, or dive into a new project. You are now more than ever ready to face a new year.

CAPRICORN 12/22 - 1/19

For someone so focused on consistently moving forward your head is stuck in the past. There's something nostalgic that's got you trapped in a cycle of thought. What is it about the past that you're remembering now? An old memory is trying to teach you something about the present. It's important to keep going at all costs, but ignoring your past won't make it go away, the memories will always find you.

AQUARIUS 1/20 - 2/18

You've been feeling a sense of purpose recently. Your sign is actually known to be quite the humanitarian and with a new year you've been feeling a need to take action. Start by creating a balanced atmosphere in your life. Understand where you are needed and what tools you have at your disposal, the motivation is excellent, just remember to take everything in moderation.

PISCES 2/19 - 3/20

You may be holding in a secret, or you may have a suspicion that someone is hiding something from you. Paranoia can be devastating to someone with your kind of intuition. It's always important to remember that honesty is always the best policy. Don't be ashamed or afraid to tell someone what truly lies inside you. If you feel that someone isn't being honest with you, approach people with compassion and understanding. Deep feelings are not easily revealed.

LOAFEDBREAD by Kaya

My Finest Moments Since Starting School at Evergreen:



Crying over someone in the yogurt aisle of Safeway



Blowing my nose on an old Panera receipt in Flot while the car next to me was getting hotboxed

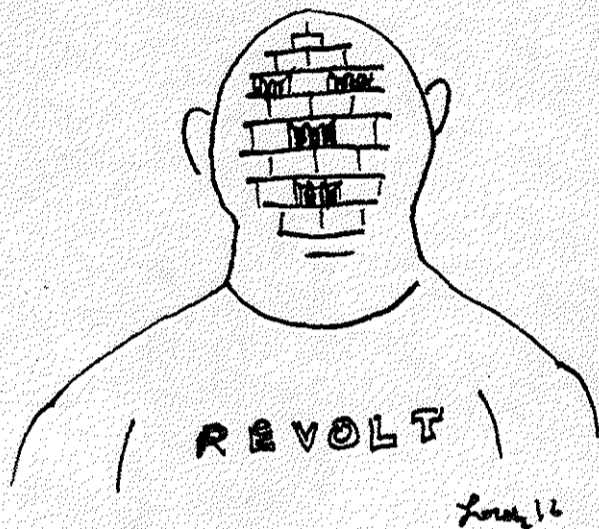


Blowing my nose on a forest leaf while trying to find a dumb forest party

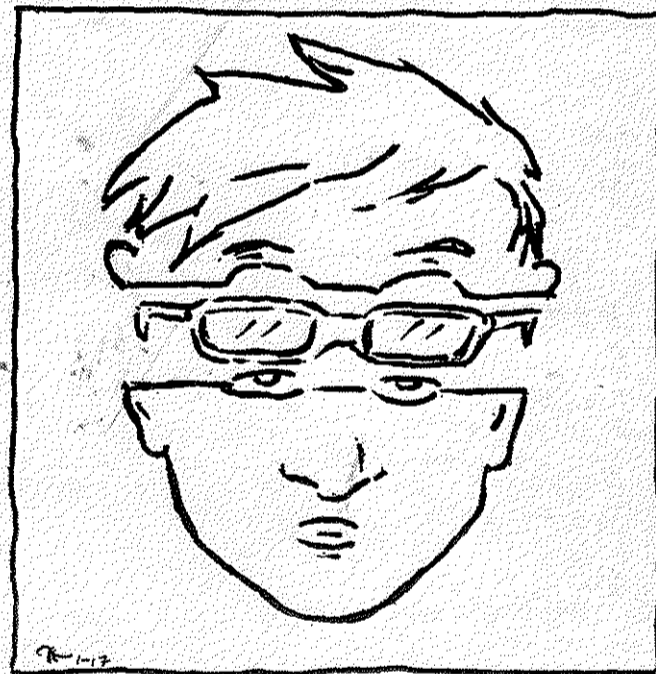


Finally realizing that I will never stop paying the price for shaving my toes everyday in middle school

FACE FACTORY #5 by Lortz



DOGGY TOYS by Gary Patrick H



DÜBER GAL by River Gates



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