

the cooper point journal



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The Cooper Point Journal

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Our Weekly Meeting

Wednesdays at 2 p.m.

COVER ART BY

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FROM THE ARCHIVES Evergreen students intern at a hospital, spring 1973. Courtesy of the Evergreen photo archives.

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.cooperpointjournal.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 Evergreen State College in room 332 and we have open student meetings from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. every Wednesday. Come early if you'd like to chat with the editor!

WORK 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.

Student groups pack boxes at Thurston County Food Bank, 2018. SHAUNA BITTLE. Courtesy of Evergreen photo archives.



Report on Student Food Insecurity Hunger Problems Widespread

By Daniel Vogel

Washington Senator Patty Murray has decried rising student food insecurity following the publication of a Government Accountability Office Report she commissioned.

“Being able to afford food is not an issue that affects few,” said Murray on a recent conference call. “It’s clear from this study, federal action needs to be taken to address college hunger.”

The report focused on students who are eligible for SNAP benefits but don’t participate. “Almost two million students are able to receive SNAP benefits but aren’t,” said Murray. The report recommends campuses provide more information to students about their eligibility, especially through their financial aid office.

A co-author to many of the studies cited in the GAO report, Dr. Sara Goldrick-Rab, echoed these concerns. “This really is a problem, that a lot of people think they’re non-eligible,” said Goldrick-Rab, which in part comes from “the small American bureaucratic tragedy known as the FAFSA.”

“A big part of people not using their SNAP benefits — seniors, or working people, whatever the population is — usually it’s how difficult the application process is,” said Samuel Chu, National Synagogue Organizer for MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger.



“Starving during college is treated like a normal thing. Eating ramen everyday is treated like a normal activity.”



Evergreen graduate student Pamela Ronson argued that increasing student access to EBT would do little to solve on-campus hunger. “Every time I come to campus I cannot

buy food with my EBT card,” said Ronson. “I have to leave campus to buy food with my EBT card.”

The GAO report lauded the spread of on-campus food pantries, of which there are now 650 in the United States.

“Our satellite food system typically closes down during breaks,” said Ronson. “Students are extremely food insecure during breaks.”

Ronson chairs the Food System Working Group under Evergreen’s chapter of WashPIRG, which is circulating “a petition for EBT cards to be accepted on campus,” said Ronson. “I’m trying to eat and go to school.”

Goldrick-Rab also pushed against the “starving artist” stereotype imposed on college students. “Starving during college is treated like a normal thing. Eating ramen everyday is treated like a normal activity,” said Goldrick-Rab.

“Students today are not the same students we think of 20

years ago,” said Chu, who stated that 71% of college students today would be categorized as “non-traditional.”

Chu said the US currently spends \$122 billion a year on financial support for students. “If those students are unable to complete their credentials, then we’re wasting that investment,” said Chu.

Goldrick-Rab highlighted three main findings of the GAO report: (1) Previous on-campus food insecurity reports have only studied local sites, and the report affirms that the issue is widespread; (2) Food insecurity most directly affects student parents, students of color, and foster children; (3) It is increasingly an issue for students classified as “middle class,” indicating a general decrease in wealth.

“College right now is not affordable for many people, and it’s causing them to make significant compromises,” said Goldrick-Rab.

Chu and Goldrick-Rab both recommended more initiative from college administrations. In particular, Chu said Financial Aid offices should automatically notify students about their eligibility.

“There are many administrative staff on campus that are a critical point of campus that can be trained and take up this role to connect students and benefits,” said Chu. “Starting a food pantry is a great first step.”

Goldrick-Rab argued that student action was the best method for students to decrease food insecurity on campuses.

“One of the things we’ve seen in many cases is that administrators have been inspired to action by students.” She cited two historically-black colleges in Atlanta, Spelman & Morehouse, whose students successfully leveraged hunger strikes to force their on-campus food provider (Aramark) to implement meal-swipe sharing programs.

People of all ages get creative at Hummingbird Art Studio. AMY BRIGGS.



Local Art Studio Advocates for “True Community Inclusion”

By Marta Tahja-Syrett

On Feb. 2, Hummingbird Studio held a grand opening ceremony in honor of its move to Adams Street SE. Hummingbird Studio is a free art studio, described on Kokua Services’ website as a “space where art belongs to everyone!” The numerous, beautiful images hanging against the freshly painted white walls of Hummingbird Studio illustrate the organization’s extensive and important presence within the Olympia community.

Hummingbird Studio’s grand opening event attracted an exuberant crowd, bringing an atmosphere of excitement to the studio prior to its official opening. Colorful, swirled cupcakes arranged beside candied paintbrushes greeted event-goers as they walked into the naturally-lit studio adjacent to Gallery Boom. The concrete floor beneath innumerable pairs of shuf-

fling feet was no longer colored grey, stained now in beautiful shades of galaxy-tones and decorated by twinkling stars. Two tables, placed above churning purple nebulas, presented the public with markers and plain paper for drawing and doodling. The gently floating balloons outside, attached to the Hummingbird Studio sign, seemed languorous in comparison with the bubbly energy that found itself inside.

Hummingbird Studio initially opened in 2015, operating as an organization of Kokua Services, “a nonprofit agency that provides residential support services to adults with disabilities in Thurston County.” According to Kokua Services’ website, the LEAD (Literacy and Education for Adults with Disabilities) program also functions under their agency. Within the LEAD program, adults with dis-

abilities are paired with students from several local colleges for regular tutoring sessions. Kokua Services, in conjunction with The Center for Community Based Learning and Action (CCBLA), established the program at The Evergreen State College in 2011. Kokua Services’ website notes that since 2011, LEAD has expanded to St. Martin’s University and South Puget Sound Community College.

Randi Miller, the Community Programs Coordinator for both the LEAD Program and Hummingbird Studio, said that keeping these non-profit organizations open serves as a challenge at times. “It is a combination of individual donations, business support, grant writing, and fundraising and it never ends! As the programs grow (and both have grown a lot), our expenses have increased,” said Miller. “We

hope that as the programs grow, so will awareness of what we are doing and the impact they have on both the disability community and the general population helping us to generate more community support and leverage additional revenue.”

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“Artists with disabilities did not have an inclusive accessible space to make art in our community, and we wanted to provide that opportunity.”

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But the difficulties that come with funding do not surpass the joys that these services bring forth. Miller, speaking of Hummingbird Studio, said “We believe that art is vital to the health and vitality of all

communities and is a powerful and healing outlet for many individuals.”

As stated on Kokua Services’ website, Hummingbird Studio was only open for two art sessions per week at its original location. Now the studio, located in a space reserved solely for the Kokua-run organization, is open for six sessions per week. At each art session, participants are provided with an abundance of supplies, such as watercolors, markers, and collage materials. During the hour and a half long sessions, those at Hummingbird Studio are given a suggested theme, but it is not required that the theme is followed. Everyone is free to make what they wish; to enjoy their experience devoted to personal creativity.

Miller said that Hummingbird’s creation was initiated by previous issues of inaccessibility. “Artists

with disabilities did not have an inclusive accessible space to make art in our community, and we wanted to provide that opportunity. Hummingbird Studio was born from the belief that art belongs to everyone! We believe that integrated art programs benefit the individual artists and the community as a whole. Inclusion promotes empowerment, acceptance, compassion, and enrichment," said Miller.

gests people with physical and mental disabilities remain excluded from many people's social or work life."

By providing the community with accessible spaces and inclusive environments, organizations and programs such as LEAD and Hummingbird Studio help to bridge this aforementioned divide between lived experience and societal perception. The mission statement on Kokua Services' website specifically addresses the incorporation of everyone into communal contexts, stating that "we advocate and work toward true community inclusion." As reported by Inclusive Social Development, exclusion produces drastic effects, and "Persistent exposure to discrimination can lead individuals to internalize the prejudice or stigma that is directed against them, manifesting in shame, low self-esteem, fear and stress, as well as poor health." But the inverse of this occurs when people feel accepted. "Evidence also shows that belonging to a community and feeling connected leads to better mental health, wellbeing, and productivity," VicHealth reports.

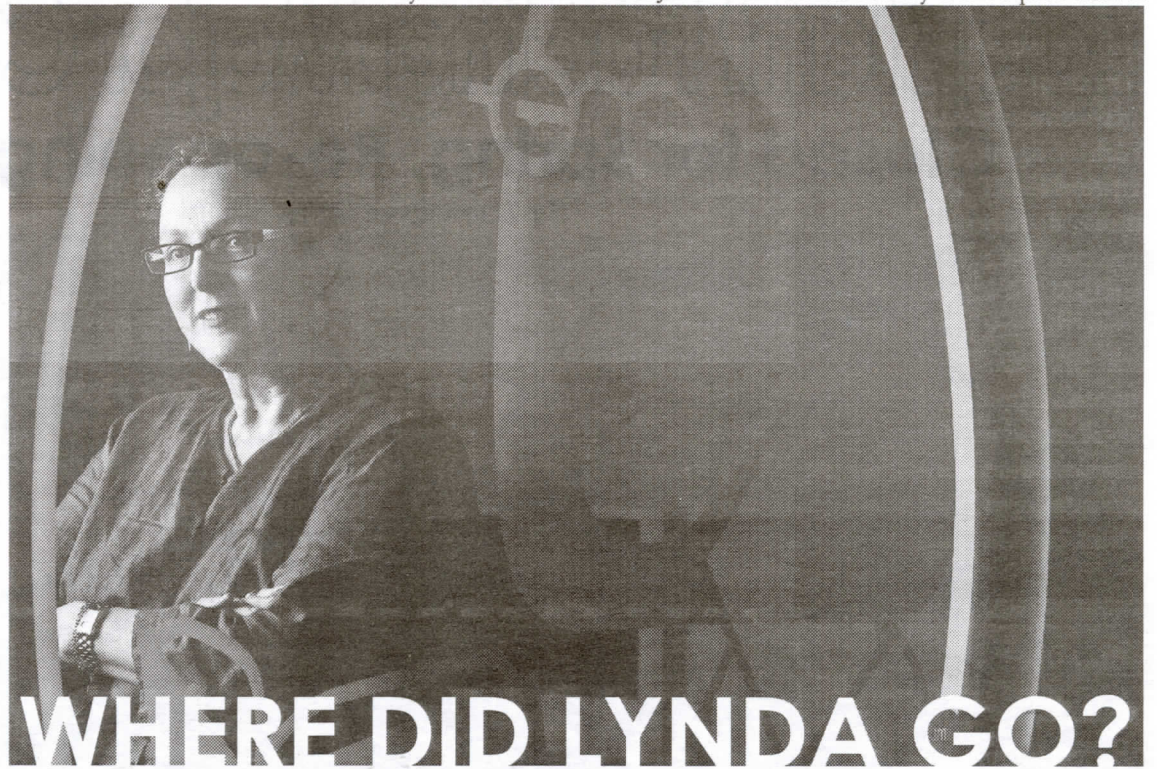
Community members who are interested in supporting Hummingbird Studio can do so by donating their resources and time. "We accept both monetary donations and in kind donations of art supplies," says Miller. To be a volunteer, it is required that you are aged 16 or above, pass a background check, "have an open heart and mind, and love art and the creative process." The public can also show support by attending events put on by Hummingbird Studio. This year the studio, located at 514 Adams Street SE, will be apart of Olympia's Spring Arts Walk. Arts Walk will take place on April 26 and April 27.



"We believe that art is vital to the health and vitality of all communities and is a powerful and healing outlet for many individuals."



Resources such as Hummingbird Studio are extremely valuable in a world where both social and physical barriers often cause individuals with disabilities to feel excluded. As reported on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website, some of the barriers that hinder people with disabilities from accessing resources include physical obstacles, discriminatory attitudes, ignorant legal policies pertaining to accessibility, and communication limitations. Also, according to a study published on the BBC's website, social views surrounding disability differ greatly from the treatment that people with disabilities actually interface with. The BBC reports that "The Scope survey, based on a sample of more than 2,000 adults across Britain, suggests public support for the rights of disabled people to be part of mainstream society is not matched by everyday experience. It sug-



WHERE DID LYNDA GO? LYNDA.COM NO LONGER A FREE STUDENT SERVICE

By DJ Pfeifle

Until recently, Lynda.com was a service given freely to Evergreen students, under an agreement with the founder and Evergreen alumni Lynda Weinman. Sometime this year, however, after a recent buyout of the website by LinkedIn, the agreement was dropped and the service no longer available.

Lynda.com is a website that offers video tutorials in many different disciplines, such as computer science, writing, and art, among others. The software training website was offered to students free of charge under the community section upon logging into My Evergreen, but the link now says the website is "no longer available as a free resource." The website is now known as LinkedIn Learning, and offers the same services as before the buyout.

Staff only realized the resource wasn't working after students reported the issue. Director of Academic and Enterprise Technologies Rip Hemingway explained, "We discovered it after LinkedIn had shut us down." He said that he was unsure whether a broadcast message announcing the change was sent to students,

and the Journal could not find an announcement.

Hemingway said the website functioned "on the periphery of an official paid service [and] was shut down without any warning by LinkedIn." There was potential for the service to remain available, but after conversations between LinkedIn and Evergreen, LinkedIn offered the college the ability to continue services by purchasing an institutional license for a paid annual subscription. At that point, the service was determined by senior staff to be too expensive to maintain for the time being.

The school is looking at potential resource-sharing with other groups that already have paid contracts for the service, like Timberland Regional Library. Students who have Timberland library cards can currently access the resource with their library account information. Hemingway said that other similar resources have been mentioned, but there is no specific timeline for when something like Lynda.com will be directly available through the school.

Senior student Finian Gallagher shared how he valued Lynda.com, saying, "I used to

be in INS and I would help my classmates with their excel graphs. I'm not in the class anymore, but I'm still helping them with stuff that I've learned with Lynda."

Another student, Matthew Lowdermilk, has used the website to learn independently for years. "I used it for learning Backbone, a JavaScript framework, and Lynda was a quality resource," he said.

Lowdermilk also explained how the site can be a source for students struggling to learn at the pace or in the style of a professor's way of teaching, saying, "If that doesn't fit you so well, finding another perspective, another way of being taught, that is very helpful."

As far as alternatives beyond the Timberland library, there are many free websites and apps that offer similar services. Khan Academy is a well-known and popular service that is free to use. Khan Academy also offers interactive tutorials so you can test your skills in real time. Coursera is another resource that aims to bring free quality education to anyone who seeks it. There's also always YouTube tutorials to help out with whatever it is you are looking to learn.

Eggplant Facing Major Changes Closed for Spring, Re-opening in Fall

By Zainab Ummie Sillah



Painted eggplant sign outside the CAB. MASON SOTO.

Is this the end of the Flaming Eggplant Café, or a new beginning?

A press release was sent out by Kayla Mahnke on Thursday, Feb. 8, discussing the Eggplant's budget crisis and announcing the closure of the café. That same day, the café had its busiest day of the entire quarter. Students and faculty shared memories over a bite in the eatery.

Rumors of the café's closure first circulated in December of 2018, however, the issues that are prompting the closure date back a decade ago. Evergreen has had a decline in student enrollment since 2008. Lower enrollment means a decrease in the student fees normally paid in tuition costs, which feeds Student Activities annual budget, including funding for the Eggplant.

"Student Activities has always been a strong supporter of the Flaming Eggplant," Mahnke reflects on the relationship between Student Activities and the café. "We have advocated for the Flaming Eggplant for

the past ten years. What is happening right now does not change the relationship between Student Activities and The Flaming Eggplant. We are going to continue to support The Flaming Eggplant through this process of transformation."

The Flaming Eggplant recently celebrated its tenth anniversary Oct. 11, 2018. The café began with a volunteer based student group serving quality food to the Evergreen community on Red Square. With aid from the office of Residential and Dining Services, the student group expanded their business model to a food truck. A one-time student fee was used to purchase the 900 square foot space in which the Eggplant exists today. "What students want and expect has changed over the past ten years," says Jeanette Smith, Director of Student Activities. "The Flaming Eggplant just celebrated its golden birthday. Going into its eleventh year of operation, we can expect many changes and new implementations to the café."

Since the enrollment decline, Student Activities has been making necessary cuts and adjustments to sustain programs. In this period of time, the Flaming Eggplant has accrued a debt of \$155,000.

More than half of the debt was accrued over the past three years due to external pressures the café has no control over. The raised minimum wage, added benefits, resources, and products, along with student enrollment decline has exacerbated the gap. The café currently operates on a loss of \$1,200 per week. "This issue with the Eggplant has been going on for so long," Kayla Mahnke, the Eggplant's Advisor, states. "Student Activities felt they cannot keep trying to maneuver the situation while cutting corners in other areas. Something has to be done at this point to correct this debt and move into a positive trajectory."

In reaction to declining profits, managerial aspects of the café are at an incline. Last January, Wendy Endress, Vice

Provost of Student Activities, assigned Jeanette Smith, Kayla Mahnke, and Andy Corn to draft a course correction plan. The three have worked intimately with the collective in formulating the Fiscal Health and Sustainability Proposal for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

Mahnke brought the proposal to the collective for discussion during the first week of December. Members of the collective reached a consensus by Dec. 10 on how to address its budget crisis and implement long-term program improvements. A formal letter released on Jan. 7, 2019, outlined the decisions as follows:

1. Reducing café operations from 5 days to 4 days per week for Winter Quarter 2019.
2. Continuing current efforts to increase pricing and kitchen efficiencies.
3. Forming a working group of students, staff, and faculty dedicated to developing a new model for the program with stronger campus partnerships and fiscal responsibility.

4. Focusing academic objectives of the current collective towards the working group objectives.

The collective formed a Disappearing Task Force following the letter. Members met weekly to discuss menu development, community outreach, the formation of a Board of Advisors, and learning opportunities to be offered as curriculum in future courses. The group acts as a liaison between Student Activities and the larger collective, working on a course correction outline that suits the needs of the collective while reforming its operational model.

The café plans to pause all operations on Friday, March 22. A course correction plan is set to unroll this spring continuing into fall. A response to the course correction proposal states, "The work the collective has put in over the last year has had some positive momentum toward fiscal sustainability." The Flaming Eggplant hopes to reopen in fall of 2019.

"When they reopen in the fall, I think you are going to see a program that's more responsive to the current population while still upholding those values around food justice and community. We're going to see a stronger business and governance model that better serves our students and faculty. Part of [Student Activities'] role is to [aid the collective in] processing through grief, because this is a loss."

As the quarter comes to an end, current collective members reflect on their work at the Flaming Eggplant Café thus far. Mel, an Eggplant collective member says, "working with the Eggplant has enriched my time at Evergreen immensely, and working in a collective has taught me skills I would not have been able to learn at a 'regular' job." When asked why they value the café, they explained, "The Eggplant is indispensable to Evergreen students, and I hope that it can continue to function as a collective and serve the Evergreen community as well."

The Journal will have more news to come on this story as it develops.

Zainab Sillah is a collective member of The Flaming Eggplant and a staff writer for the Journal.

Eggplant collective members in Fall 2018. GEORGIE HICKS.

FLAMING EGGPLANT PRESS RELEASE:

Students Take Steps to Renew Cafe Flaming Eggplant Cafe Temporary Closure

(OLY, WA, February 06, 2019)- The Flaming Eggplant Cafe, a student-run cafe on the campus of The Evergreen State College, will temporarily pause Spring Quarter 2019 operations while the students work with campus stakeholders to re-envision a more fiscally sustainable operation model and supportive governance structure.

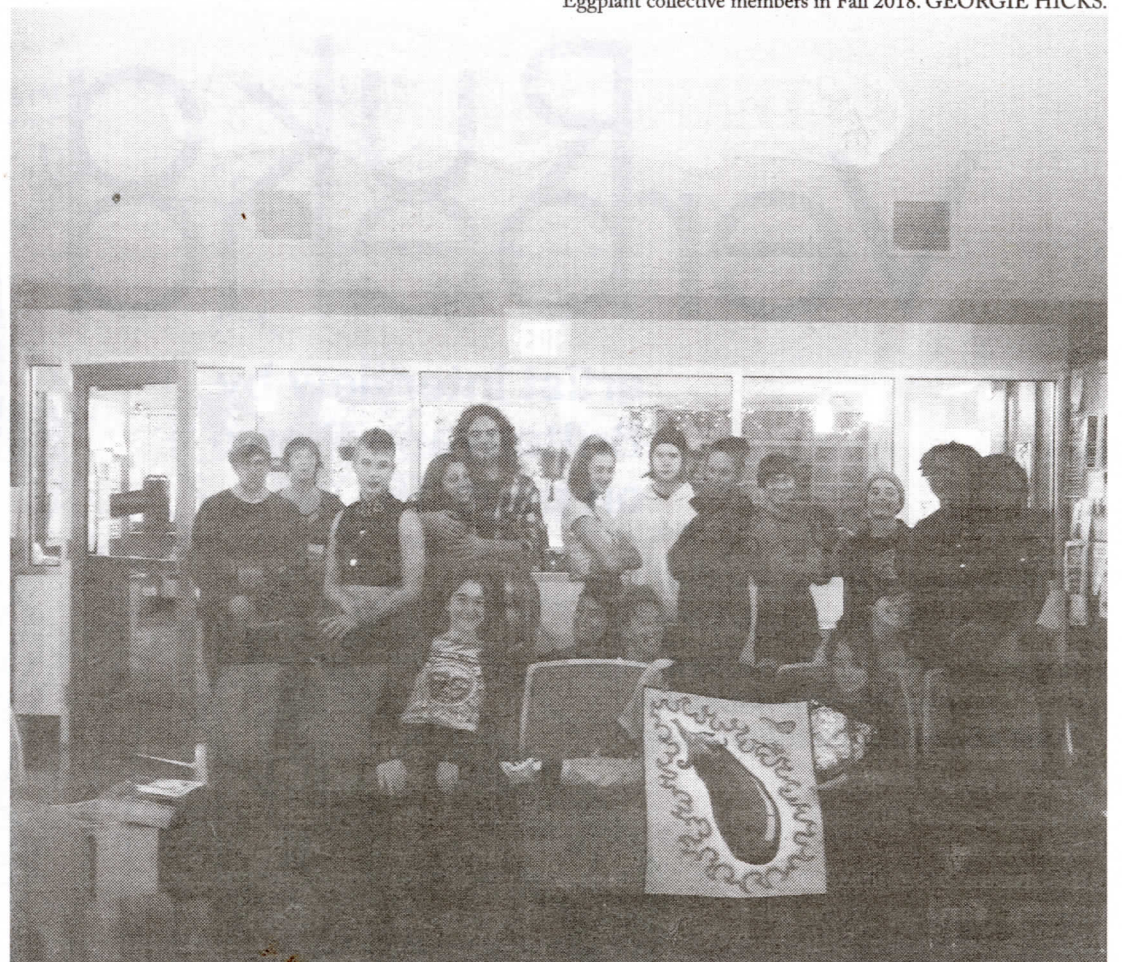
The cafe will pause operations beginning Friday, March 22. Students employed by the cafe have been provided five weeks' notice and offered support from the Academic and Career Advising Office and Student Employment as they seek other opportunities. A committee comprised of students, staff, faculty, and community is forming to take on the exciting work of strengthening the academic ties to the program, developing a fiscally sustainable operating model, and re-envisioning a cafe governance structure that supports the needs of the current student population.

The cafe has weathered student leadership staff administrative transitions as well as increases in the minimum wage. As food production costs rose over the last several years, the cafe remained true to their values of serving lo-

cal, sustainable food options at an affordable cost to their patrons. Evergreen staff put the cafe on notice a year ago to allow time for the students to work with their advisor in addressing sustainable operations. Working with CoFed, a non-profit with a mission to support campus food cooperatives, several changes in staffing and pricing slowed the budget drain, but could not stem it.

The beloved campus eatery began 10 years ago as a student group serving food to the Evergreen community on Red Square. The students formalized what once was a volunteer-driven event by collaborating with the office of Residential and Dining Services to purchase a food service trailer; where they served sustainable food at low prices. Thanks to a one-time student fee, the trailer evolved into the current 900 sq foot space inside the College Activities Building. With a goal of re-opening Fall Quarter 2019, opportunities for students, staff, faculty, alumni and community to offer support and feedback will be available in the next few months.

For more information contact: Kayla Mahnke at 360-867-6220.



A Letter From The Flaming Eggplant

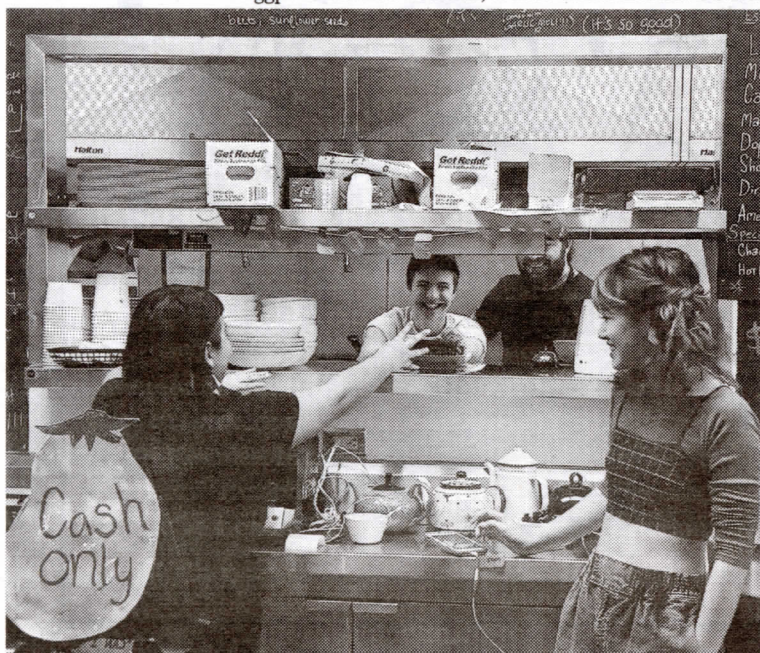
Dear Evergreen Community, The Flaming Eggplant Collective and Cafe will be taking a hiatus in Spring of 2019, with the intention of reopening Fall 2019. Due to the current college financial situation and under-enrollment, the Eggplant has been unable to access the support needed to operate in a financially sustainable way. This hiatus will give the collective the opportunity to reboot, develop new structures, and build upon the legacy of student work that has made the Eggplant what it is today. This work will be undertaken by an intracampus democratic committee that will include representatives of the Eggplant, student representatives, staff and faculty representatives, and members of Student Activities. This work will happen over Spring and Summer and into Fall Quarter.

While we regret the need to halt cafe and collective operations for spring, we firmly believe that this brief pause in operations will allow us to focus on the structural work that is necessary for the cafe to be a resilient and perennial part of Evergreens community. The cafe and collective were born of student desire, organizing, and action for a non-corporate organic and local eating option on campus. Since that initial organizing drive a decade ago, the cafe has evolved, striving to be a radically inclusive safer space, focusing on feeding people healthy, affordable food. The cafe and collective have a rich legacy of student work to draw from and build upon and add to. The work of the democratic committee to reboot the Eggplant will involve a deep dive into all the governing documents that are cur-

rently part of the institutional knowledge the Eggplant. Over the next few weeks, the collective will be drafting a document that the members on this committee will take with them forward into their work. We invite public comment and input to this document from the larger campus community. If you would like to contribute ideas of what you would want to see in the Eggplant in the future, feel free to contact us at flamingoutreach@gmail.com, or fill out our survey in the cafe. In the meantime please come eat with us, share our space, and tell us how we can best serve you in the future. We love you, and we see all students as part of our collective. Thank you.

Sincerely,
The Flaming Eggplant
Collective

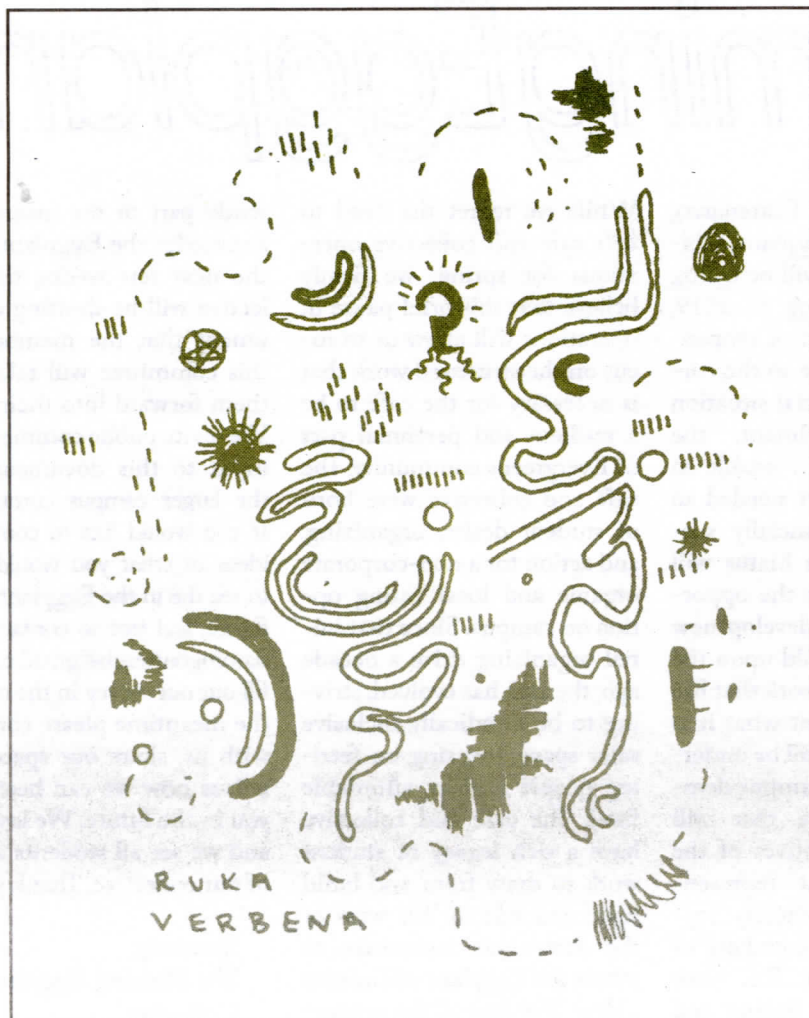
Eggplant members in action, Winter 2019. MASON SOTO.

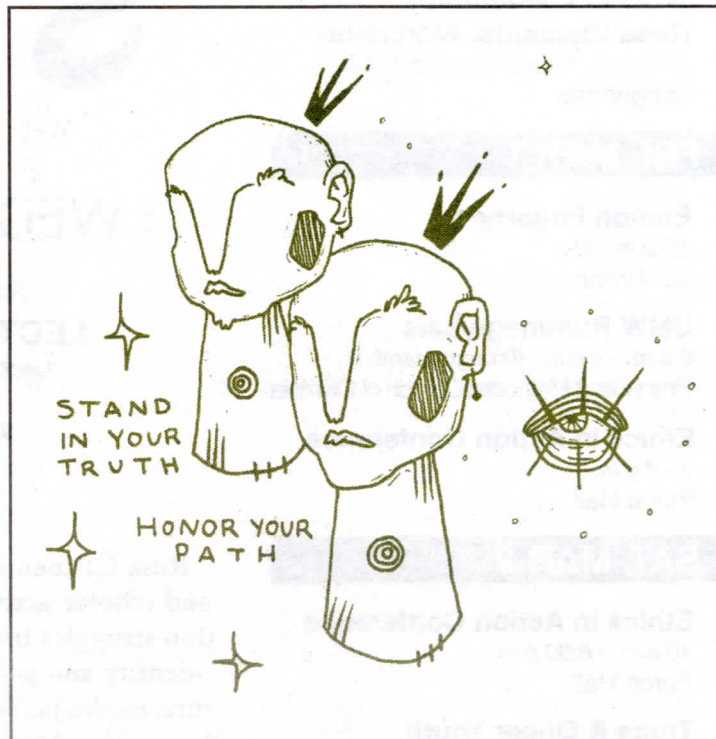
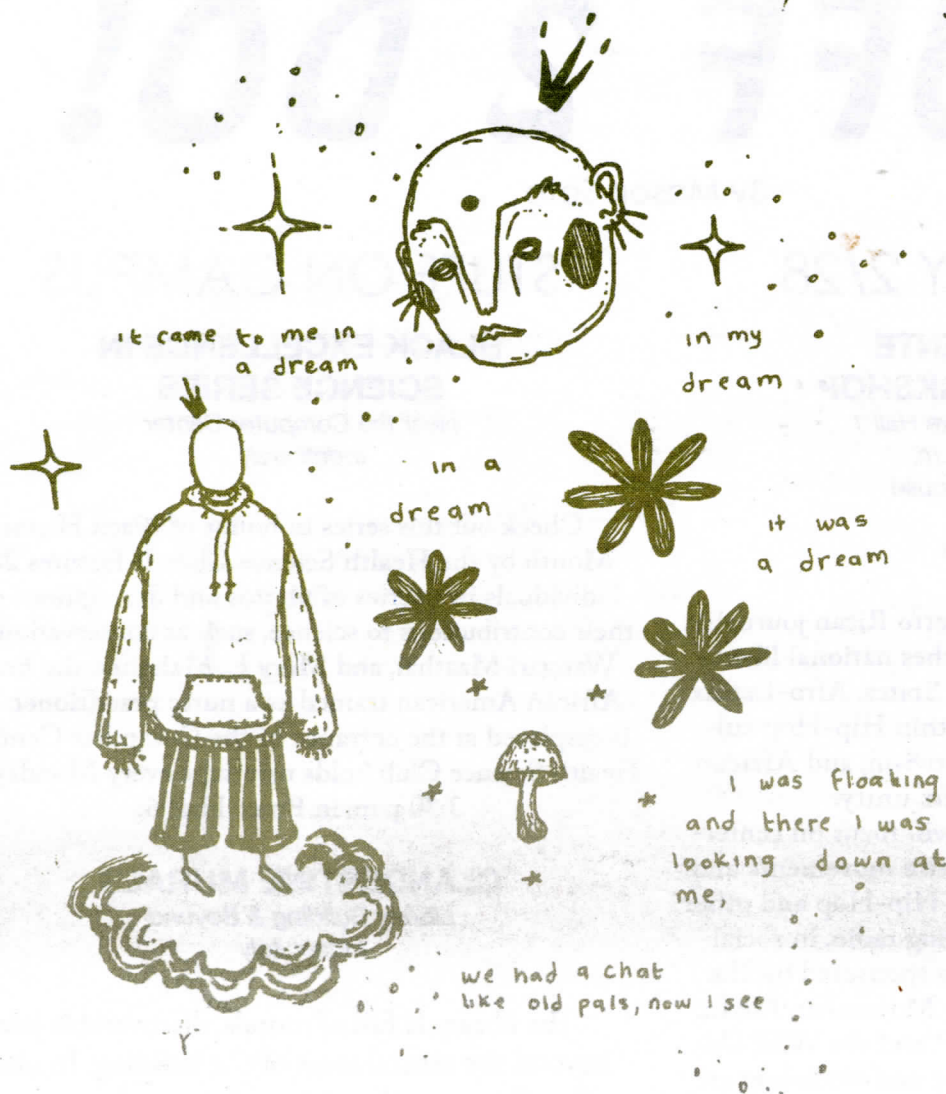
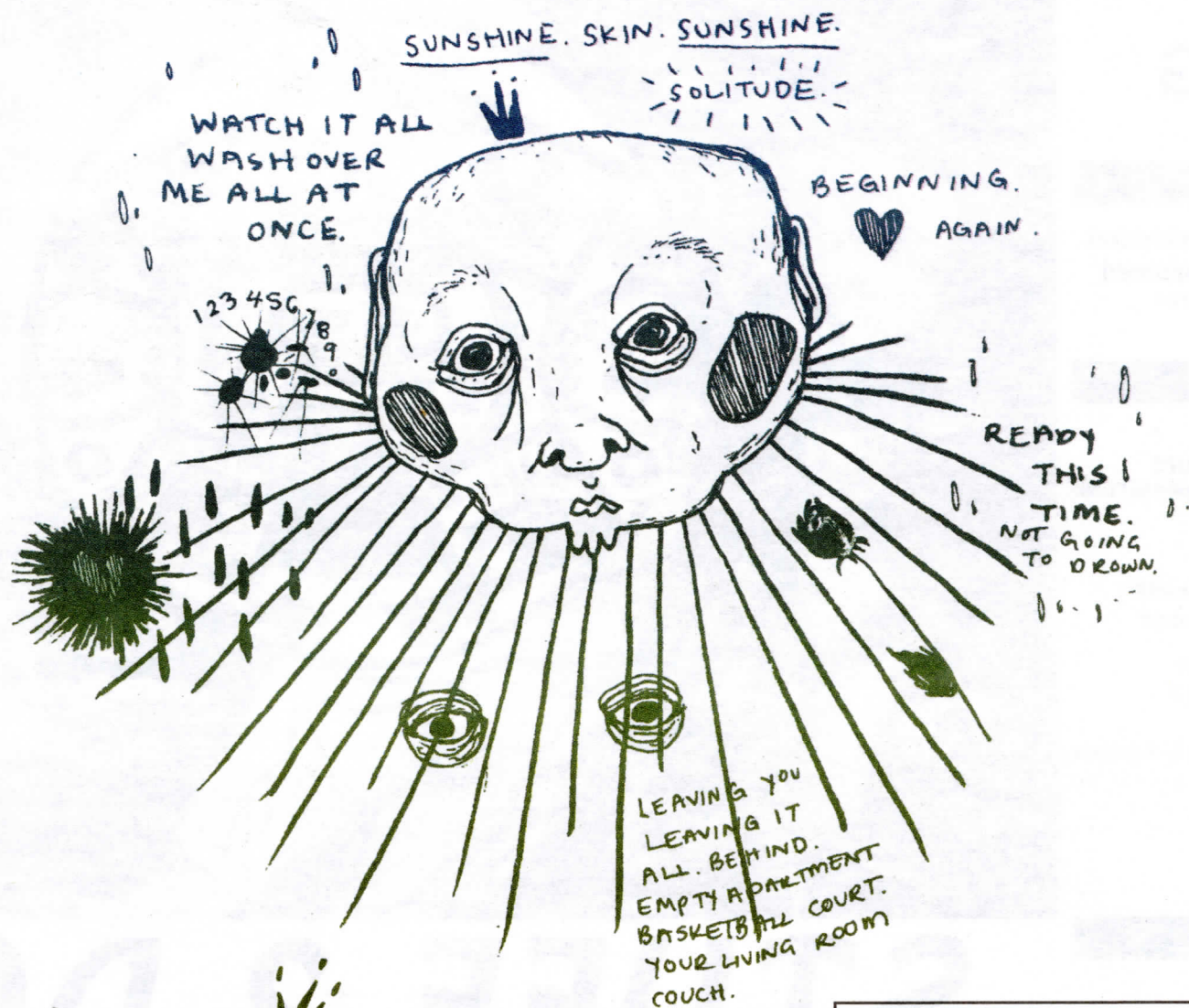


VerBena Ruka

artist interview by
Brittanyana Pierro
on page 13

*"My dream is to have a safe space,
a home. Where queer people of
color, mothers of color, can come for
counseling. My little dream. It's
still blossoming, it's still blooming."*





Stuff 2 Do

Details of mural in library basement. MASON SOTO.

UP & COMING

TUE. FEB 26

BHM Presents: A Celebration of African American Women
8 - 12 p.m., \$5 suggested, 21+
Rhythm & Rye

WED. FEB 27

WOC in Leadership:
Rosa Clemente, Lecture
11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Free & Open to Public
Purce Lecture Hall 1

Gateways Open Mic
6 - 8 p.m., \$5 suggested donation
Student Equity & Arts Lounge

Tenants Union of WA:
Rent Control Day 2019
12 - 9 p.m.
Olympia Capitol Building & Campus

IWW Gen Ed Union:
Victory Social
1 - 3 p.m.
The Flaming Eggplant

THU. FEB 28

WOC in Leadership:
Rosa Clemente, Workshop
3 - 5 p.m., Free & Open to Public
Longhouse

FRI. MAR 1

Eamon Fogarty
10 p.m., 21+.
Le Voyeur

UMW Rummage Sale
9 a.m. - 4 p.m., through March 2
First United Methodist Church of Olympia

Ethics in Action Conference
6 - 8 p.m.
Purce Hall

SAT. MAR 2

Ethics in Action Conference
10 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Purce Hall

**Trans & Queer Youth
Legal Rights Session**
4 p.m. - 6 p.m., all ages
Stonewall Youth Oly

TUE. MAR 5

Where is the Water
5:30 - 8 p.m., recurring
Olympia Center



STUFF 2 DO!

By Mason Soto

WEDNESDAY 2/28

ROSA CLEMENTE LECTURE & WORKSHOP

Lecture: Purce Lecture Hall 1
11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Workshop: Longhouse
3 - 5 p.m.
Public & Free!

Rosa Clemente is an Afro-Puerto Rican journalist and scholar-activist who researches national liberation struggles inside the United States, Afro-Latinx identity and politics, sexism within Hip-Hop culture, media justice, Hip-Hop activism, and African American and Latinx unity.

Rosa's lecture and workshop will focus on centering women of color in social justice movements and their leadership, as well as, using Hip-Hop and other forms of art and media, including radio, in social justice movements. The event is sponsored by The Women of Color in Leadership Movement, Media Island International, KOWA-LP, and the Willi Unsoeld Seminar Series. The lecture and workshop are free and open to the public.

STUFF ON CAMPUS

BLACK EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE SERIES

Near the Computer Center
Indefinitely

Check out this series in honor of Black History Month by the Health Science Club. It features 28 individuals in a series of photos and descriptions of their contributions to science, such as conservationist Wangari Maathai, and Mary E. Mahoney, the first African American trained as a nurse practitioner. It is displayed at the entrance of the Computer Center. Health Science Club holds meetings every Monday at 3:30 p.m. in Purce Hall 6.

CLANDESTINE MURALS

Library Building & Beyond
Indefinitely

The library is full of murals, discoverable just beyond the central areas of the building. In one stairwell, nearest the main entrance, a long amorphous dragon winds around the bends of the steps,



...and some weird murals

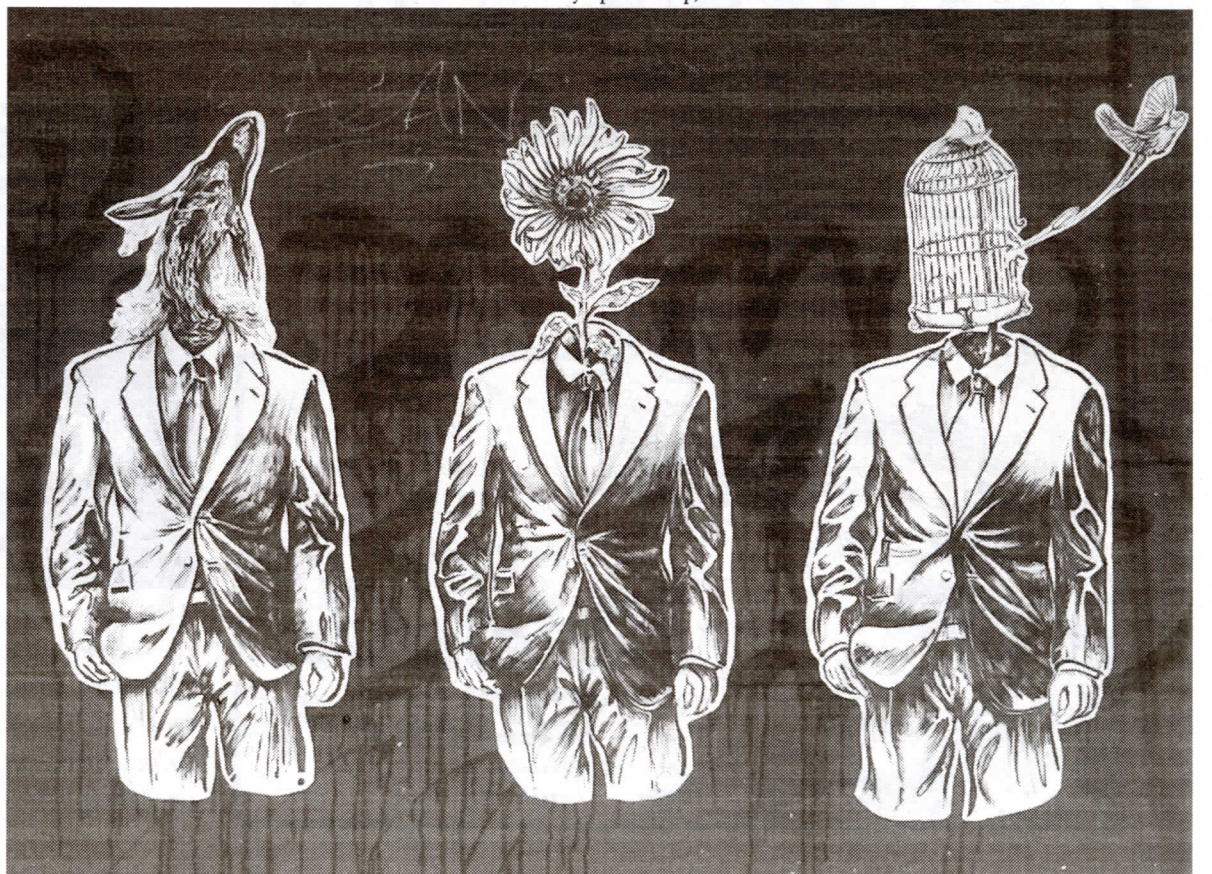
Outside of West Olympia Co-Op, 2008. TORI SLOANE. Courtest of WIKICOMMONS.

becoming waves here, then a flock of birds, in bright primaries, and stanzas of poetry placed throughout.

Up on the third floor are hopeful works, like the religious and folktale-reminiscent scenes painted on library windows by Cappy Thompson. Then there is also an idyllic scene of nature, the stars, and two purple human figures, a spider, hummingbird, along with other creatures, in close harmony.

For a decidedly more critical view, venture to the basement, from the elevators closest to the main entrance, and you will be confronted by a panorama of epic proportions and themes: scenes of the advent of colonialism, prisoners, agricultural spaces branded with McDonald's imagery, Uncle Sam drinking the tears of the Earth, and a beast with grey skin and red eyes. The mural seems to be a group effort, produced in the spring of 1989, and its inscription reads 'Democracy & Tyranny.' Interpret and digest as you will.

Beyond the library, some few miles, outside the West Olympia Co-Op there may or may not be a mural of suited figures whose heads have been exchanged for various objects. I've only seen it online, so if you go, and it's still there, call it a blessing.



Ads

Hosted by the Ethics in Action Coalition

Ethics in Action Conference

Art by Patrick Ward

the COOPER POINT JOURNAL

COME WRITE FOR US!

meetings wednesdays at 4 p.m.
CAB 3200
bring your pitches.

THE **brotherhood** LOUNGE

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Photo of Ruka Verbena. RUKA VERBENA.

RUKA VERBENA

Artist interview by Brittanyana Pierro

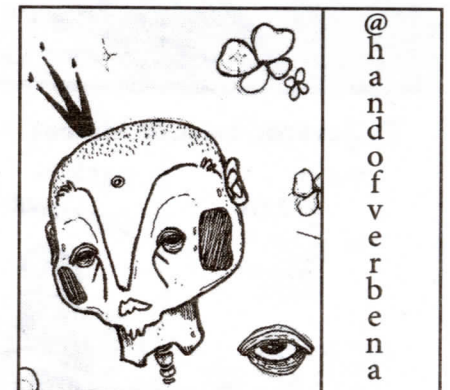


Ruka Verbena is a local portrait artist based in the Seattle/Tacoma area. Though Verbena is originally from San Bernardino, CA, they have blessed the Pacific Northwest with their presence for the last five years. Verbena's portrait style can be classified as abstract linework. It took time to develop their particular form, starting as somewhat of a cartoonist, and then eventually coming into their current art style. The artist is currently in the middle of a portrait special in honor of Black History Month. Each portrait is only \$14.14. This venture has been one of their most successful, with over 30 people commissioning portraits only in the first two weeks of February. "It's going amazing. I'm actually surprised at how well it's going. It finally has rhythm. I don't feel unsure about whether or not it's gonna

carry. It feels so solid now. I feel very established as an artist in this place." Verbena's own identity as a Black person in a predominantly white area of the country is complex, and a big part of their inspiration. They shared how wanting to be accepted by their white peers made them avoid focusing on Black identity and features in the art. "I wouldn't even draw hair on a lot of my figures, because I didn't want that attachment. I was like, 'I want everybody to be able to connect to it.' But now I feel like that disconnected me from it." This led to a breakthrough for the artist. As they said, "I need to use this challenge, and accept my blackness, and stand and honor it. And that's what I've been practicing doing, trying to incorporate it into my art." Verbena continued, "I feel like [my art] reflects who I am. And

without reflecting Black culture into it, it felt like it was missing something. So, now that I've been aware of that, the art that I've been creating more recently is changing. And it's feeling more whole." They are re-focused on their own desires for the art, instead of worrying about others' perceptions: "I'm not solely thinking about everyone else, and how everyone else is gonna like it. That's inspiring me to incorporate things that I like. Stuff that I admire. Certain textures that I admire. Afro hair, crystals, plants." With this internal inspiration in timing with Black History Month, Verbena has chosen to encourage other artists' success by using their platform as a way to engage and support the wider Black artist community. "I wanted to draw more Black people, and that was just kinda like the intention. Just to also influence people to support [Black] artists more. The platform that I already have also [benefits] my other artist friends who are black artists as well. People who have bought from me, they also go and support them, creating that chain and getting everybody supported and seen like we deserve to be." One of the art pieces they did recently was a portrait of two Yoruba Women, and also happens to be the piece that inspired them to do a Black History Month feature. This piece is featured as the cover art for this issue of the Journal. "I was in the process of changing my explore page on Instagram because I noticed that it was like really white. And so I just went into this rabbit hole of looking at a bunch of African women. All the hair and the textures and all the textiles. I was just feeling inspired," Verbena said. Recently, Verbena traveled back to their home state for a few months to do an internship with an LA-based graffiti artist. "Our focus was painting murals," Verbena explained. "I got all this art knowledge from my mentor, Robert Gomez. He's a really cool guy. He goes by Dytch." Gomez and Verbena traveled the Los Angeles area painting murals for Gomez's customers. Burbank and Hollywood were the two cities that got the most attention from the pair, as they spray painted ev-

erything from schools to businesses. The two even managed to grace the side of Capitol Records with a mural in tribute to Paul McCartney. Gomez started his career in Venice Beach, where his family has been since the 1950's. He considers himself a product of his hometown, influenced by "all the creativity and diversity" of Venice, as he said in an interview with Gabba Gallery. Dytch can be found on Instagram @Dytch66. Verbena says the internship experience with Gomez above all taught them about keeping up business and building relationships with art buyers. "It's not necessarily about how many people, it's about having loyal people, who keep coming back." The relationships Verbena has fostered through their portrait commissions and social media have given the artist a supportive following. "With the portraits, I've been doing it for a while. And every time I bring them back I change the style, so they're all kinda different," said Verbena. "I have other artists who just continue to support my portraits every time I bring them back, even if they've already been drawn before. They see that the style is slightly different, or they see that I'm doing it for Black History Month, and they come back and they're like 'we support you'." Aside from being an artist, Verbena has dreams of being a botanist and opening up an herbalist wellness center for QTPOC, mothers, and other community members in need. "My dream is to have a safe space, a home. Where queer people of color, mothers of color, can come for counseling. My little dream. It's still blossoming, it's still blooming."



COMIX

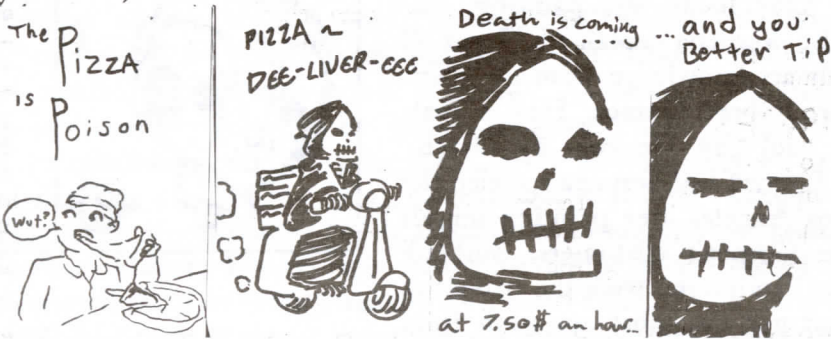
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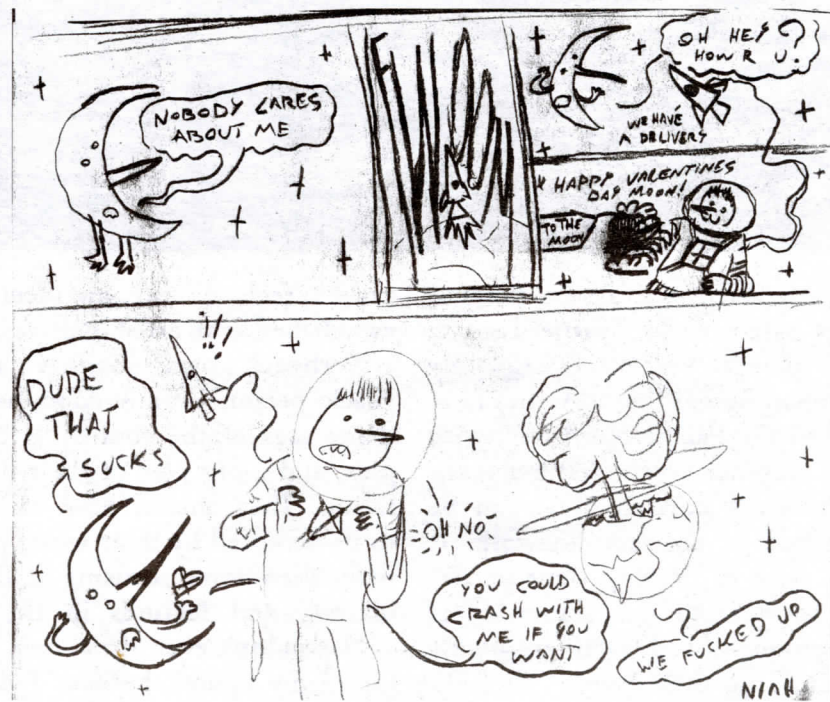
By Severin, Isaac & Marcus



By Isaac



By Niah





by Mariah Guilfoil-Dovel

ARIES

3/21 - 4/19

Mars is moving into Capricorn and this means your ambitious go-getter spirit will be amplified. You already have a natural pioneering spirit, but this week it's kicked into hyperspeed. Your desire to work out, to do ALL the homework, to facetime all your friends, and to watch every YouTube on how to install your own shelves will be so strong, but remember to prioritize! Your high energy levels are good, but don't start 100 new projects when you still need to finish the 5 you began last week.

TAURUS

4/20 - 5/20

You are known for your green thumb. Like most Tauruses, you have a knack for keeping things alive. Except for your social calendar, that is. It's good to hide away in your green room or walk in nature, but you are still a person who needs human interaction. Find a friend who also cares about the little things in life the way you do and you two can stop and smell the roses together.

GEMINI

5/21 - 6/20

Are you Khloe Kardashian's daughter? Because you are a TRUE friend. Geminis are the truest of companions, but they have a tendency to fake confidence so that people will think they are bolder than they are. This week, ease up on the people pleasing. Your real friends will love your authentic self even more. You're proud of your extensive music collection and rare vintage pop culture items, so find someone else who will appreciate those gems with you.

CANCER 6/21 - 7/22

You have 20 journals and diaries that you've started just in 2019 alone. You're more likely to rock a vintage hat than a brand new Supreme beanie. If you're feeling over-emotional at the moment, don't stress. There's a full moon in Virgo this month that explains those wild mood swings you've been having. Stay true to yourself and stay the course. Resist the urge to drop everything and run away from your problems. Facing them head on and dealing with those dark corners in your life will bring a bright new spring that's just around the corner.

LEO 7/23 - 8/22

You love action. All this snow has given you serious cabin fever. Don't take it out on those you love though, just because they're closest to you. You love leaving people on read and buying expensive shoes (probably ones that have lions on the heels tbh), but don't go over your budget just because you're bored!! Leos love attention and being in the spotlight, which is hard in these literally dark times. But take heart! The sun is staying out longer and the days are getting longer. Just keep holding on, Winter Quarter is almost done!

VIRGO 8/23 - 9/22

We all know you're the smartest person in the room, but sometimes you can be kinda dumb when it comes to emotional intelligence. Just like how your biggest pet peeve is people leaving dishes in the sink, other people's pet peeves include you walking around in the middle of conversations. Don't lie, you know you do it. This week, you're going to be faced with some difficult emotional situations. You can do it. It'll be hard to step out of your constant state of "don't question me or what I am doing" but a little humility will go a looooooong way.

LIBRA 9/23 - 10/22

You love stopping serious conversations and isolating yourself away from feelings. Just like Michael Scott when he runs to catch the train after he declared bankruptcy, you are also likely to say, "I'm running away from my responsibilities and it feels good!"

Unfortunately, you live in the real world, my friend, and deep down you just want a ride or die. Someone to inspire you to get up and do your homework and then spend the night watching your favorite episode of *Friends* even though you already know all the lines. It's time to open up the winter cocoon and butterfly into the badass you really are!

SCORPIO 10/23 - 11/21

Cuffing season is alive and well in the scorpions world. You've got your partner handcuffed and you've already conveniently "misplaced the key." Congratulations! You worked hard to have a snuggle buddy all winter. It's time now for you to step up your game to make sure your partner knows how precious they are to you and that every day with you is Valentine's Day. You know how to draw others in without seeming needy but now you need to work on actually not being needy. Be a source of strength and support for your family and friends this week.

SAGITTARIUS 11/22- 12/21

If you gave a TED Talk, it would be about how to always win an argument, but that's not entirely a bad thing. Due to being ruled by Jupiter, Sag's have the ability to inspire people and use their big imaginations. But you also might come off as fake to people who don't really know you. Don't be afraid! Keep doing your thing and work on opening up this week, even if people don't understand you at first.

CAPRICORN

12/22- 1/19

DUDE you don't know how to relax! Somebody had to say it. Your ideal surprise party is a party you've planned for yourself, by yourself, 6 months in advance, with a full guestlist that RSVP'd to you in person. Then you'd want all your work recognized while also getting to be the most humble person in the room. It's not all bad though. It comes from your desire to be a hard worker and your love of excellence. Those are great things, just don't let them come at the expense of your family. It's no fun to throw a party if nobody wants to come.

AQUARIUS

1/20 - 2/18

Hope you sucked up every second of Aquarius SZN! You deserve it! You love mystery and standing out for your unique style. You love surrounding yourself with others who value your uniqueness and don't care about what other people think. Starting off this new year of life, remember to be thankful for everyone who helped you get this far. Send out some thank you notes to the special people in your life. The stars are calling for an attitude of gratitude.

PISCES

2/19 - 3/20

It's PISCES SZN and you are ready AF! Pisces are total sweeties and get what they want! You love it when people appreciate your aesthetic, allow you to be sad, and show you through their actions that you matter to them. Pisces also love pets, so it's highly likely you want a new puppy for your birthday. Stay away from local shelters unless you're truly ready to treasure your new best friend. Whatever you do this Pisces szn, have a happy birthday!

