

GENDER JUSTICE LEAGUE

CU BOULDER WOMEN & GENDER STUDIES

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The Gender Justice League is a Women and Gender Studies student organization. We are a small group of majors and minors committed to social justice not only in theory but in practice. Our goal is not only to spread awareness, but also to confront serious issues on campus and in the community.

In past issues we have taken on serious issues. We have addressed violence, misogyny, racism, and homophobia. Our group has written or even mobilized on issues that have angered or hurt our individual members or those close to us. While anger and disappointment can be powerful mobilizers in creating action for change, there are also more positive motivations that inspire us all. In this issue we still tackle some weighty issues, but we also highlight some of the more positive aspects and experiences of being advocates for social justice. We hope this issue will inspire you to take notice of or maybe even take part in some of the many efforts aimed at making the world a better place.

A special thanks to Diane DeBella for her help in editing this issue of the Gender Justice League newsletter.



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CU Activism Alive and Thriving Meagan Maddock

Our generation often battles the negative stereotypes of being plagued by apathy and incompetence. We are seen as Internet and iPhone zombies, taking a hot second to sign an online petition before going back to our newsfeed and calling it activism. Well, if the people ascribing to those stereotypes have been paying any attention to CU Boulder lately, they would find themselves surprised. CU's campus is alive with activism this semester, and much of that activism is feminist in nature and very much "offline." CU Activists understand the importance of social media as a tool to create change while recognizing that posting progressive Facebook statuses and sharing Upworthy videos can only go so far (continued on page 2).

To prove this point, let's take a look at the way the Women's Resource Center has been fighting the good fight, shall we? The W, as we lovingly call it, not only provides a space for feminists and activists to come together in a sort of "new-age-consciousness-raising-way," but it also creates tangible change outside of that space in big ways. This semester, the W has hosted screenings of the documentary *Miss Representation*, which explores how the media's misrepresentations of women have led to their underrepresentation in positions of power and influence. This documentary sits heavy on the feminist heart, but the W has perfected the art of turning anger, frustration, and disillusionment into passion-fueled action. At the screenings, they did this by facilitating a discussion about how to challenge and change sexism, racism, etc. in the media. They continue to fuel feminist action through additional programming as well, including the Sugar Free Feminism and Rumor Has It series, where people can come learn about issues we're facing and how to go about deconstructing and changing them. The W's unwavering commitment to encouraging feminist activism on this campus is inspiring and the change it brings about is invaluable.

Student groups are leading the fight against social injustices at CU. One such group is Advocates for Choice, a Planned Parenthood affiliated student organization that works to engage campus in reproductive justice and Pro-Choice activism. Holding weekly meetings and events at least once per month, A4C is always busy activist! They have hosted a sex-positive, inclusive, and informative Sex Trivia night (with sex toys, porn, and food for prizes!), and worked hard this election season to make sure students got out and voted. A4C has collaborated with the W at events like "Speak Out on the War on Women" and they have also staged a counter-protested of an anti-choice group that came to campus with triggering and misleading signs. How, you ask? By handing out condoms, of course!

Lastly, we cannot leave out the various groups that were in the trenches of the election. New Era, CoPirg, Organizing for America, and various other political campus teams worked day and night to make sure students and community members were registered and ready to vote. They canvassed and phone banked day in and day out, rain or shine, come hell or high water. As someone who gets burned out on door slams and hang-ups after just one volunteer shift, I can assure you that this is no easy feat!

Our generation's activism may look a little different than that of our parents', but I assure you, it is alive and thriving. My only hope is that our campus activism will become even more integrated, more collaborative, and more allied, making it stronger and louder than ever in the years to come. Keep up the good work, CU activists!

It Takes a Village **Tessa Williams**

Human beings have an amazing capacity to work together to solve problems, for the knowledge of a group is vastly greater than the knowledge of a single individual. This is a reflection of our history as humans on this earth. It is well known, yet not so well acknowledged, that human beings spent the majority of their historical lives in hunter-gatherer clans. For hundreds of thousands of years we have evolved within this context. There is a tendency in our current society to move inward, to focus on the individual or secular family unit, indeed this is a part of a hetero-normative, patriarchal structure where power and success are framed to mean domination over others and accumulation of wealth at all costs.

Although this is the current trend, it is important to refrain from cutting ourselves off from the past, from our evolutionary roots, in our efforts to move forward. It's true that people can survive under many conditions. But at what point are we merely surviving and at what point is that not enough? Communities have, and will continue to serve as a forum through which people enrich their lives. It is where we find a connection and purpose that allows for a redefinition of success and a challenge to do more than simply survive as individuals, but to thrive as a whole.

Community is a verb first and a noun second. It is going to take action and some hard work to create change but it is well within our abilities to do so and it all begins with a discourse of action. It is through this discourse, with a conscious effort to foster relationships and to develop an inclusive environment that we can learn about other perspectives. The beauty of community is that it is an avenue to creating positive social change as well as positive personal growth and all one has to do is openly participate.

By investing and claiming a stake in community, a shift occurs in our understanding of how we fit into the world, how we effect and are affected by others. It is the consistent interaction with others that is crucial to keeping one another aware of the fact that our actions do have an impact on those around us. When

living in a close community setting, your fellow community members are constantly reifying your actions and thoughts back to you, both consciously and unconsciously. Not only does this function as a barrier to allowing self-interest to cloud one's judgment and morals, but it also serves to cultivate and expand upon those actions and ideas that will positively impact the community.

The potential power that community has to make positive changes in this world is absolutely awe-inspiring to me. Like with many things in life, the concept of community is not black and white. It can look very different for different people and is not an end-all solution to the problems we face. One of the strongest points of community, however, is creating a space for dialogue in an environment that is rooted in positivity and genuine values. It is in this space where we must interact with others, find amazing opportunities to learn from, relate to one another and mobilize around commonly identified issues.

The possibility of finding common ground increases dramatically when we are physically sharing the same space. It is in this refusal to withdraw, to be passive, that we may find our allies and become one to others. It is where we may challenge the prejudices of others and confront our own inconsistencies. Most importantly, it is where we may find support in these processes and in mobilizing to create a world that is more inclusive and compassionate towards all who inhabit it. There are people around the globe who are doing incredible and inspiring things and it all began because they chose to take a stake in something greater than themselves. Their stories are profound in their variance, in showing that there is no single definition for what constitutes a heroine or hero. The potential for profound and tangible community change lies in all those who have the courage to invest.

All About Positivity...

Sophia Surage

The feminisms that I have come to know through many amazing WGST/ETHN professors and the feminism that I attempt to practice each and every day is at its heart radically humanist. True feminisms involve self-love, respect of all people, and zero tolerance for domination, degradation, or unproductive destruction of any kind. With the mass amount of human suffering happening in the world, down the street, and in our hearts, it is nearly impossible to be a feminist and not be angry-or at least deeply disturbed by oppression, violence,

poverty, and powerlessness that so many people experience.

Being a feminist is being someone who chooses to be aware, to take on the task of constantly learning about social justice, and thinking critically about everything that crosses one's path. Feminists are constantly deconstructing and attempting to reconstruct the world around them.

Some people say that "ignorance is bliss" and others that "knowledge is power." Being a WGST/ETHN major has taught me, more than anything, that knowledge is incredibly powerful. True knowledge is unimaginably empowering, and of course power is inextricable from responsibility. Without a doubt the information that I have learned has at times felt devastating and utterly overwhelming. So I understand why people would choose to avoid knowledge, power, and responsibility in order to live a blissful and detached life.

However, I will never choose to protect myself with ignorance and I also refuse to live a life in which I am not profoundly happy. I was definitely much more "chill" and blissfully simple at times in my life when I was less aware of what actually happens in the world, in my own life, and in the lives of those around me. However deep down I always knew that this was a temporary state. Perhaps feeling angry and overwhelmed is also an important transitional state before one finds the balance of being an aware activist and a whole-happy- human being. One thing is for certain: self-transformation is necessary for societal transformation

Feminism is contradictory because humans are contradictory, and therefore one can be angry, devastated, grateful, unsatisfied, hopeless, eternally optimistic, defeated, triumphant, and almost all other things--all at the same time. More importantly how can one be an effective feminist without first and always recognizing and supporting one's own humanity? It is impossible to pour your heart and soul into the issues that you are passionate about unless you also find ways to fill yourself back up. Although every one of us is different and experiences a unique intersectional identity with various connections to privilege and oppression, we can all agree that being a human isn't always easy or simple.

Finding balance is key to being happy, the best activist that you can possibly be, and creating long-term effective change. Finally, how can one achieve inner peace and at the same time experience being

deeply in conflict with the world? I don't have an answer, but I can offer a starting point.

Take pride in the fact that you care enough to be at conflict, that you are human and alive enough to struggle and feel. Loving yourself, creating yourself on your own terms, and being happy on your own terms, are revolutionary and positive. Furthermore, sometimes the feminist thing to do is to be positive and to believe in peoples' incredible ability to heal, learn, transform, overcome, and live, no matter what. Respect the people who are currently facing the unimaginable, people who have struggled before you, beside you, and who have passed on. Attempt to live your life boldly and full heartedly, without shying away from the good, bad, or in-between.

Despite everything that injures and oppresses human experiences, I remain eternally optimistic and encourage us all to continue to face and enjoy every single day. Remember that there is always hope and remember that sometimes having a smile on your face is the most impacting form of activism that you can practice.

Gender Currents

Cameron Elder

When choosing to raise children without rigid gender expectations, parents provide their children with the opportunity to forge their own identities. Too often preconceived notions reinforce stereotypes and power differences, placing certain behavior(s) on strictly one side or the other of the feminine/ masculine binary. In a highly publicized ad for J Crew, which ran in April of 2011, a mother was depicted painting her younger son's nails pink. The advertisement enraged many conformists, sparking debate around what is appropriate behavior for young boys versus girls, and highlighting the social stigma surrounding gender ambiguity and transgender children. Fox News responded with an opinion article by Dr. Keith Ablow who insisted that blurring gender lines in this manner aids in the exploitation of an innocent male child by exposing him to the ideologies of "liberal transgender politics." Other testimonials explained that allowing a male-child to do this wouldn't be a problem and there is no scientific evidence to prove that this act would harm the child's psychiatry and own understanding of gender and self-identity.

Similarly, the *Huffington Post* recently reported August, 29th 2012 on an image of a German father with his 5-year-old son walking hand in hand down the street, the boy wearing a dress and the father

wearing a skirt. The image went viral, stunning some, yet also drawing support for Trans identities and openness to androgyny. The father explained that he wishes to raise his son based on principles of equality for both male and female gender roles/representations. He wants his child to have the opportunity to express himself in whatever way that feels most comfortable to him; this method of child-rearing is more productive in creating an inclusive and loving environment for the adolescent- teaching that gender fluidity is something that we all embody. The father's response to his son's interest in wearing skirts was a supportive one. After all, it is impossible to enact strictly feminine or masculine qualities.

Another example of valiant efforts made by parents to raise their child without gender dichotomies involves a set of Canadian parents raising a genderless baby named Storm Stocker- reported on in May of 2011. The news surrounding the parents' decision gave rise to nasty comments and opinions concerning "correct" ways to raise a child. Many who responded believed that this family was denying their ambiguously sexed child the slightest clue as to how they should grow to do/be/act. The patriarchal standard for gender expression is disallowing of gender bending; however, everyone blurs the boundaries of the male/female binary on an everyday basis; people rarely adhere to a strictly "masculine" or "feminine" demeanor. Androgyny is all around us, whether gender conformists wish to admit it or not, but men, women, and certainly trans-identified people all embody characteristics and behavioral patterns that stray from their assigned gender, which is often based on sex and is usually determined at birth. Should we all be limited by these narrow definitions? Or should we spread the word that gender isn't something that maps directly on to us at birth, but rather becomes a part of us as we grow and explore our own passions and interests?

Speaking from personal experience in perusing my mother's closet and picking through flashy skirts and heels at a young age, I understand the curiosity some of these boys might have in trying to understand gender constructions while also learning who they are/want to be. Being able to have the freedom to explore these curiosities, without being chastised for acting "out of place," I feel that allowed me to have an easier time navigating relations with peers as well as my own self-doubt and uncertainties.

Gender is an endless sea of uncharted territory- much too fluid to be encased into arbitrarily boxed

categories. These performative roles are constructed by behaviors and actions that suggest what we ought to be (or aspire to become) as people. There should be no shame in pursuing our questions surrounding gender. A “right” way doesn’t exist and some things will feel and come more naturally than others in terms of self-presentation-- masculine or feminine, or anywhere in between.

Sex Worker Activism and Human Rights

Cassy Gonzalez

Sex workers in the United States have, historically, endured social stigmatization, abuse, and belittlement from law enforcement and society. Violence against sex workers, ranging from rape to murder, has been absent in media attention, and when it is included, it is saturated in victim blaming and voyeurism. This is because no one cares if “hookers” are murdered or abused, because they asked for it by being “bad” women and “whores.”

Such was the case of the Green River Killer in Seattle. Between the years of 1982 and 1988 he murdered 71 women, though there may have been more victims. A significant number of his victims were sex workers, and their deaths received no public outcry or mourning. He even explained that he targeted sex workers because “he thought he could get away with it.” It was this sentiment and lack of media coverage that led Dr. Annie Sprinkle and Robyn Few of Sex Workers Outreach Project-USA to start the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers. This day is celebrated on December 17th with observers holding candlelight vigils while carrying red umbrellas. On this day, global violence and abuse against sex workers is remembered and resisted.

This day is not well publicized beyond sex worker and harm reduction advocates. In fact, sex worker rights mobilization is treated as a new phenomenon, but it is not. Sex worker rights coalitions emerged alongside feminist organizations in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Once again, their activism and mobilization was ignored and overshadowed. Some prolific feminists even denounced sex workers and their mobilization efforts and claimed they only support patriarchy by promoting violence against women and rape. As a result of being ignored by mainstream social justice groups and movements, sex workers formed their own safe spaces and coalitions. Margo St. James is one of the most well-known and respected of these sex workers.

St. James created the advocacy group Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics, aka “COYOTE,” to promote the decriminalization and human rights of sex work and sex workers. St. James also founded the St. James Infirmary with another sex worker rights group. This Infirmary is a clinic “for sex workers run by sex workers” and extends their services to men, women, and transgender sex workers, providing HIV awareness training, legal advocacy, and emotional support to combat the mental abuse sex workers can endure.

There are numerous independent sex worker rights coalitions across the United States. These include the Sex Worker Outreach Project (SWOP) groups with offices in several cities across the nation—there are two in Colorado, one in Boulder and Denver; these groups even participated in the Pridefest parade this past June. Other groups include the Sex Worker Project, which focuses on harm reduction and anti-trafficking campaigns, and Red Light Chicago. Their allies are educators, lawyers, doctors, nurses, wives, mother, sons, and neighbors. Sex worker advocacy groups are also active in addressing the violence and attacks on the human rights of sex workers and—despite what many anti-trafficking officials and campaigns say—they work to end sex trafficking and the forced prostitution of minors.

Sex Worker Project has this motto: “Sex Worker Rights are Human Rights.” Personal opinions on sex work aside, violence against sex workers concerns us all. When violence and dehumanization of one group is permitted or ignored, it reflects on all marginalized groups. Sex workers are overwhelmingly women—an attack on a sex worker does not happen solely because she is a woman, but a woman who is disenfranchised and dehumanized because she is a woman deviating from “decent” female sexual norms. Violence, particularly sexualized violence, against sex workers is an attack on all women’s sexual autonomy and human rights because they are dehumanized in society. Advocating for personal autonomy and being accorded full human rights has been a consistent staple in feminist arguments and movements, but sex works have yet to be fully included in the mainstream activist efforts—which is why they created their own.

Sex worker rights groups and mobilizations deserve acknowledgement and respect for speaking out against how they are viewed and treated. They deserve to be treated as equals and humans—they have been denied this for far too long.

Cuban Resistance

Adriana Barsan

The driver of the *Máquina*, or Cuban taxi, dropped me and a classmate off in front of a towering apartment building outside of Havana. He returned our handwritten directions as we hesitantly exited his 1954 Chevy. The LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS activists we had met with a day before had scribbled the address for their next meeting on a scrap of paper. Since the activists did not specify whether or not our attendance would raise any suspicion, my friend and I had agreed not to speak in English for cautionary reasons so as to not place them in any danger with the government. In Cuba, it is still illegal for Cubans to interact with tourists unless they have a Tourist license from the government.

As we made our way up the many flights of stairs, we entered the apartment designated by the barely legible directions. Much to our surprise, we arrived at the correct place. We were greeted by familiar faces and were quickly introduced to others. We had seen some of the people they introduced us to from the local cafe/night club, Fresa y Chocolate, named after the Cuban, Gay & Lesbian film. It was at this club where I realized that hipsters, no matter their national origin, dressed the same way. One of the more notable individuals we met was Yoani Sánchez. She is most famous for her blog, *Generación Y*, and her outspoken and seemingly resilient efforts to continue fighting for equality in Cuba.

After several quick introductions, one of the activists directed us to the balcony. She proudly showed us the rainbow flag they display at every meeting. As we waited for more people to show up, I could feel a certain excitement in the air. Over the coming weekend, they were going to present a declaration of anti-discrimination laws as civilians to the Capital in Havana and have a Pride march. That night we watched a documentary on the Stonewall riots in New York. After the film, the group of activists ended the evening with a small discussion.

During my six weeks, I learned so much from our Cuban friends and activists. It became very clear to me over the course of my visit that social activism and political resistance are strongly rooted in Cuban history and culture.

Since the 1959 Revolution until after the fall of the Soviet Bloc, Cuban people have been fighting for independence, which was sometimes directed at the Castros' regime. Although the Revolution granted

citizens free health care, housing, education and food rations, the Revolution was not inclusive of everyone. In exchange for some social rights and efforts for racial and gender equality, anyone deemed counter-revolutionary or anti-socialist was subjected to discrimination or incarceration. Homosexuality, in particular, was not decriminalized until 1979. And in 1980, during the Mariel boat lifts, the government encouraged homosexuals, criminals and other undesirables to leave Cuba. It wasn't until the 1990s that the government made efforts to protect LGBTQ identified citizens from discrimination and violence. Mariela Castro Espín, Raul Castro and Vilma Espín's daughter, is the public face of LGBT advocacy in Cuba. Similarly to her father and uncle, Raul and Fidel, Mariela has been critiqued for advocating for social rights in order to cover up greater human rights violations. Since Raul took power, the government has allowed more economic freedoms. In exchange, Raul has tightened his grasp on Cuban citizens by intensifying police surveillance. As a result, Cubans have had to resist the government in different, more innovative ways.

Some advocacy groups act directly and openly against the government. The LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS activists we met in Havana were not afraid of publicly disagreeing with the Cuban government. The activists organize campaigns, supply food and medication to people who have HIV/AIDS, write to other countries, and host workshops. Their organization is technically illegal, but they continue to organize as citizens. Although the organization does not commit violent acts against the state, their work could be seen as anti-Cuban and counter to the revolution. The members of the organization avoid arrest by utilizing the international media. If their protests and campaigns are under international attention, the Cuban government cannot suppress their voices without potential consequences.

Another route for Cuban activists, such as Yoani Sánchez, is the internet. Whereas citizens can be thrown in prison for openly disagreeing with the Castro regime, social media allows citizens to openly disagree and confront the government. Utilizing strategies outside the communist party, Sánchez confronted Mariela Castro on Twitter saying, "Welcome to Twitter pluralism @CastroEspinalM. Here, no one can silence me, deny me permission to travel nor impede my entry." In regards to political freedom, Sánchez questioned Mariela's narrow focus on LGBT rights and asked, "Acceptance is total, or not?" As the internet becomes more available to

Cuban citizens, the government will have a more difficult time controlling freedoms such as speech and citizen organizations. The face of political and social activism in Cuba is changing along with the rest of the world. Cuba is not stuck in the past or exempt from contemporary problems or global issues because they drive old Chevys and live in unrestored buildings. Its citizens continue to fight for a free and independent Cuba that they have always imagined. Change may not happen in this year, the next five years, or all at once, but it is present, active and exists where you may not expect it...

That evening, as we stood out on the balcony looking over Havana, someone pointed out a rainbow that formed after the rain. There was a lot of excitement, people cheering and laughing at the spectacle; the rainbow symbolized good luck for the upcoming events. But then the noise subsided and, for a few moments everyone went silent. The sounds and activity of the city distanced. I swear in those few seconds, which seemed never-ending, we transcended borders and were no longer in Cuba or anywhere else in the world. I glanced at the faces of those around me. The flag sounded freedom as it danced in the ocean breeze. In those moments, I wish I could have known what everyone else was thinking. Were they imagining a free Cuba?

As I stood there wondering about their lives and the lives of so many others, I realized my place in Cuban resistance. I understood their struggle or *la Lucha* even though I cannot embody it. I sense it, but I cannot live it. Imagining what a free Cuba might look like, however impossible for me, belongs to Cubans and, in those few moments, lives forever.

Feminist Film Review: Once Upon A Time Kelly Milan

As a feminist filmmaker, I find it extremely difficult to enjoy or even find films that truly personify the good qualities about women, men and gender. Either women are placed in the background or are often killed, as is the case throughout most of the horror genre. Finding a film or television show that is actually empowering to women can be somewhat of a challenge. The new television show on ABC, *ONCE UPON A TIME*, however, has broken into the genre of empowering women.

With the same writers who created *Lost*, this show follows a familiar esoteric rhythm, jumping between both our world and the magical fairytale land. For those of you unfamiliar with the show, Snow White

and Prince Charming have had their happily ever after. They are about to become parents only to find out that the Evil Queen Regina has set up a curse to destroy their happiness. Snow White and the prince save their daughter Emma from the curse by putting her in a magic wardrobe, sending her to our land first. Then twenty-three years later, Emma meets her own ten-year-old son named Henry, whom she gave up at birth. He takes her back to the town of Storybrooke, Maine where he is convinced that his adopted mother Regina is the Evil Queen and that the people in the town don't know they are fairytale characters. The curse is that they are brought to our world- forgetting who they were in their past lives. Emma is set up to try and break the curse even if she doesn't believe it herself.

Strong female characters drive this story. Though some of the fairytale elements are still the same throughout the story (the Evil Queen, the Poison Apple and the True Love), each of the characters presented in this show has been set in a feminist lens. All of the old school labels placed on the women characters are thrown off. Snow White manages to save her prince on countless occasions, both Prince Charming and Emma take their turns at being the hero, and finally the villains in the show are more complex than just good and evil.

The way that characters play their dual roles in our world and the fairytale lands is amazing. All the women in the town of Storybrooke have jobs and choose their own relationships. One of the most interesting storylines occurs when they introduce the character of Ruby (Red Riding Hood) into the town of Storybrooke. At first she appears to follow tired archetypes, dressed in tight clothing and characterized as somewhat flighty; however, in a whimsical twist we find that she is not the victim but the wolf in her story. So it seems that not all is as it appears.

My favorite female character is Regina the Evil Queen. Even though she is characterized as being evil, she has emotions and feelings. The most intense scene takes place when she attempts to poison Snow White; she is not poisoning Snow White for her looks and beauty, but because Snow White had ruined something special to her--her own happiness. The show gives each of the characters some agency. Even though this show is still produced by Disney and all the characters are played by stereotypically attractive women, the feminist lens is there in the characters and the setting. We have women saving other women and men from disasters and magic. *ONCE UPON A TIME* provides a positive, strong look at feminism.

I Need Feminism Because...

Ann Price

When the word “feminism” comes up in mainstream society today, it often has incredibly negative connotations. The words *feminazi*, *bra-burning*, or *misandry* might come to mind, though the intents of feminists are generally far from genocide, hatred of men, or the burning of clothing. To combat both these misunderstandings and the idea that feminism is no longer necessary in modern society, women at Duke University started the “Who Needs Feminism?” campaign (<http://whoneedsfeminism.tumblr.com/>). Rather than creating a definition to fit feminism, these women started the campaign around the idea that feminism can fit many people in many different ways. The campaign seeks to ask feminists from all backgrounds both what feminism means to them and why they need it: through these definitions, the women hope to debunk common myths and negative associations in order to make feminism more accessible.

The “Who Needs Feminism?” campaign has turned into a widespread movement in which participants have called out societal ideas restricting gender presentation and sexuality, and the ways in which things like cat-calling are seen as acceptable but actually make many people uncomfortable. Some participants have also been calling out things like victim-blaming, either in their own experience with reactions to sexual assault, or in societal views as a whole. Some women have spoken to their wish to have children, and still be taken seriously. Because the campaign takes place on Tumblr, it has become much more accessible to those who might otherwise be hesitant to become involved in other forms of activism, and the images can be passed around by those who agree with them but who are hesitant to take their own pictures.

The Gender Justice League and the F Word (a new CU feminist organization open to all undergraduate and graduate students committed to working for social justice) have been continuing this campaign on campus. The group has a tumblr page (whoneedsfeminism-CU.tumblr.com) where individuals who are interested in this project can post pictures of themselves and the reasons they need feminism. We have been visiting various campus locations with dry erase boards, markers, and a camera, in order to spread the message of the campaign further and find out why feminists at CU identify as they do. We are also available to visit classrooms and peer groups. If you are interested in having Gender Justice League members visit your classroom or in joining the F Word, please contact Cassy Gonzalez at: Cassandra.Gonzalez@colorado.edu.

The pictures from top to bottom are CU students Renée Roberts and Alex Dutro-Maeda, along with CU alum and now Community Health’s Sean Connell.



Amazing Women Being Awesome

By Kelsey Young

We in the Women and Gender Studies program have much to think about and a lot to learn, and many of these topics can be pretty intense and provoking.

With too much focus in the news on all the bad things happening to women, it is easy to get distraught.

It is far too easy to get down on ourselves and feel like nothing in the world is ever going to change no matter how hard we try.

That, my friends, is why we have hoped to make this semester's newsletter positive and heartwarming. So, as a tribute to women who are doing incredible things not only on our campus, but also around the country and around the world, I wanted to compile a list of some of the incredible and brave work that has been done over the past year:

◆ A lot of incredible women devoted their time and energy into election campaigning all over the CU campus. Read this article in GQ about CU student Savannah Pullin, who tirelessly worked to get both the young and old to vote in this year's election: <http://www.gq.com/news-politics/blogs/death-race/2012/11/this-election-may-be-decided-by-two-college-students-in-colorado.html>

◆ Twenty-nine women of color will serve in the new Congress. That is so awesome. Just thought you all should know.

◆ Lisa Harper, the chief executive officer of Hot Topic's plus-size line, 'Torrid,' is working to change how society views "plus size" fashion. In a recent interview she said, "We've reworked the brand to refocus on fashion, pure and simple, without the apologies, without the curvy conversation, the body type or any of that." And if we are going to go shopping, it might as well be about fashion, not about body image issues forced upon us by society, right?

◆ Women for Women International (WfWI), "helping women survivors of war rebuild their lives," through a year-long program of direct aid, rights education, job skills training and small business development, is putting on a walk/run 5k in San Francisco called 'My Step Her Stride.' The 5k will benefit programs in all 8 of the countries in which WfWI operates. To get an idea of how great WfWI is, check out their website www.womenforwomen.org. You'll find yourself lost in stories of incredible individuals while learning more about the work of the organization

◆ Rachel Simmons, author of *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls*, helps run the Wurtele Center for Work & Life at Smith College, which she says "develops programs for students who want to gain confidence in speaking up." The students that she works with are mainly women, and through working with them to build up their communication confidence, Simmons is changing lives.

◆ Hollaback!, a non-profit dedicated to ending street harassment, is quickly growing into a national movement. Check out their website at <http://www.ihollaback.org/> to find out how to get involved and learn more!

Can't get enough? Are 6 stories of empowerment making you want to know more? I suggest browsing through HUFF POST WOMEN and Jezebel. Also check out Ms., Feministing, Women in Media & News Blog, and Broadsheet. All of these blogs and websites are great sources of information on work being done by women. There are countless problems in this world, but I would just like to remind you all that there is important and valuable work being done as well.

Conversations Beyond the Cottage

This semester The Gender Justice League put on two speaker events; "Conversations Beyond the Cottage." At each event, we gathered a panel from a varied range of disciplines to speak and share their stance regarding the topics.

The first event, "Race, Gender, Sexuality and Class in the 2012 Election: What's at Stake?," was a conversation on how certain issues such as abortion and gay marriage would be implicated depending on which way the election went. Over forty people were in attendance and there was an expansive discussion had.

The second, "Immigration Reform Panel," was a conversation surrounding the subject of immigration. We had speakers from the sociology and political science departments, but we also had a student activist speak to her personal experience as well as her activist work being done in the community. This panel was extremely informative and engaging for the audience.

Next semester the GJL will be putting on more "Conversations (this time) at the Cottage." Aside from educational conversations on pertinent issues, there are always refreshments provided! For information on when the events will be held next semester, check the front desk of the Hazel Gates Woodruff Cottage.

Leadership Practicum Application

The Gender Justice League is a program-affiliated student group that is committed to bringing positive social change to our community, on and beyond the CU campus. The program has two parts: while anyone is invited to participate in Gender Justice League projects, there is also an accompanying leadership practicum that is limited to undergraduate majors or minors in women and gender studies. To participate in the practicum students must apply. Students will be chosen based on academic performance and faculty recommendation. The practicum meets weekly as a group with the faculty advisor, working together in three main areas, they: 1) plan **academic events** such as speakers or film viewings followed by critical discussions; 2) coordinate **activist and community outreach events**; 3) publish a **newsletter** with student articles focusing on different feminist issues.

Name: _____ Student ID# _____

Address: _____ Phone # _____

WMST 3940 for 1 credit during: Spring 2013

The practicum will meet weekly on: Mondays at 4:30 .

The Leadership Practicum is pass/fail, but in order to receive credit for you must

1. Attend all meetings.
2. Contribute to the semester newsletter.
3. Attend and participate in the planning of a GJL sponsored academic event.
4. Participate actively in the planning and execution of a GJL sponsored community project.
5. Participate in the planning and execution of a GJL sponsored activist event.
6. If scheduling or other issues interfere with the above, the student must present an alternative activity to participate in or contribution to group efforts.
7. As with an independent study, students are expected to put in a minimum of 25 hours per credit hour a semester. This includes meetings as well as outside activities.

Students who do not meet the above requirements will receive a fail and may not be re-nominated or apply for the Leadership Practicum the following semester (although they may the following year).

Eligibility:

Major or Minor of WMST: _____

of WMST Hours: _____

University GPA: _____

Major/Minor GPA: _____

Faculty Reference: _____

Please fill out this application and attach a paragraph or two about why you want to participate in Leadership Practicum for the Gender Justice League and what contributions you think you can make to the group (it should be no more than one page single spaced).

We may have a few openings for Spring 2013. Applications for the spring semester are due to Professor Celeste Montoya by Dec. 31st. Applications may be turned in at the Hazel Gates Woodruff Cottage or sent via email to montoyc@colorado. Applications for Fall 2013 will be sent out during the spring.