Richard Barry update
50 years after The Stonewall Uprising
PSU Artists of Color Collective
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Front and back cover: Media consumption is getting a little out of hand. Illustrations by Josh Gates

The Pacific Sentinel is a monthly student-run magazine at PSU. We seek to uplift student voices and advocate on behalf of the marginalized. We analyze culture, politics, and daily life to continually take the dialogue further.

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Saturday Farmer’s Market
photo by Brooke Jones

PSU’s heritage tree
photo by M. Saqif Maqsud
Richard Barry: Chronicle of a Death as Told

CPSO body camera footage raises questions about Barry’s death.

by Margo Craig

On the evening of Thanksgiving 2018, Mr. Richard Barry, aged 32, died soon after he was taken into custody by Portland State University’s campus police and Portland Police Officers. The medical examiner and district attorney both concluded Barry had a heart attack because of a poor heart condition and drug use. The death was ruled an accident, caused by “acute methamphetamine and cocaine toxicity,” and the officers are determined not at fault. Officer footage and records reviewed by The Pacific Sentinel raise questions about the circumstances and response around Barry’s death.

The incident involved four officers from PSU’s Campus Public Safety Office (CPSO): one armed sworn officer, David Tropp, and three unarmed campus safety officers, Michael Anderson, Danie Murphy and Nichola Higbee. (Only Tropp, as a sworn officer, carries a body camera.) The two Portland Police officers reportedly involved were James Deanda and Jared Asby.

Official reports of the incident say that four CPSO officers and two Portland Police officers performed a “welfare check” in response to calls of a man yelling and running near SW 6th Avenue and SW Mill Street. According to the reports, six officers struggled to restrain Barry. Police said they requested emergency medical personnel “based on the subject’s behavior,” and that he was transported to the OHSU Emergency Department hospital for treatment of “an unidentified medical condition,” where he was pronounced dead.

The Multnomah County Medical Examiner’s Office performed an autopsy investigation and on December 30th, 2018, reported that Barry died from “acute Methamphetamine and Cocaine toxicity.” Because the death was ruled an accident and unrelated to officer involvement, Multnomah County initially declined to release the full medical report. The report was made public after The Oregonian appealed the denial of records.

The Oregonian filed a public records request, and PSU’s Office of General Counsel released CPSO's body camera footage and incident report to the public. The video footage offers further insight into the circumstances surrounding Barry’s death.

13 minutes of video footage taken by PSU Officer David Tropp’s body camera captured some of the events that preceded Barry’s death—from the moment CPSO encountered Barry up until Portland Police are about to arrive. Then, there is a three and a half minute lapse in the video’s visuals. When the visuals resume, Barry is surrounded by officers and restrained on his belly on the sidewalk. Barry resists until he seems to become unresponsive. The final four minutes of video show paramedics arrive on scene and prepare to restrain Barry on a backboard. No one seems to notice Barry isn’t moving or talking anymore. The video ends before first responders roll Barry onto a backboard.

According to PSU’s Office of General Council, the only changes/reductions in the video are “the blurring of faces.” The Oregonian confirms that the entire video is 13:07 minutes in length, and that “yes it cuts off.”

The Medical Examiner’s report—the only full narrative available to the public, by request—describes the events leading to Mr. Barry’s death. The report relies on accounts of the event and CPSO’s body camera footage for that narrative, but does not reveal or explain any lapse in footage. (Portland Police do not use body cameras, but PPD is implementing a body camera pilot program this summer to determine whether they will adopt “full implementation” in 2024.)

The Oregonian reported that a DA memo addressed the lapse in footage saying that Tropp’s body camera was knocked off and reattached. The CPSO incident report does not reveal or explain the lapse in footage. Nor does it mention any body camera issues. (PSU/Campus Police Chief, Donnell Tarksky, has not responded to requests for comment on PSU’s body camera policy, the lapse of footage, or why the video stops during the interaction.)

Oregon’s body camera policy, HB 2571, says that the camera must continue recording until "the termination of the officer’s participation;"...
in the contact." (HB 2571 applies to law enforcement agencies that use body cameras, but it does not require all law enforcement officers to wear body cameras.)

Here is what the video shows:

CPSO officers responded to Barry, clearly agitated, running and screaming in the street. "They got guns!" Barry behaves as though he has just fled from someone with a gun. His movements are erratic—jerking his head around to look over his shoulder, pacing, occasionally pointing, always fidgeting. At one point, Barry appears to try to get into CPSO's patrol car through the driver door that Troppe left open. Troppe pulls Barry away, closes the door, and instructs Barry to put his hands up on the vehicle while he searches Barry's pockets. Troppe asks Barry if he has a gun. Barry answers no. Barry urgently tells Troppe to "put me in the back, lock me up," but adamantly refuses to go to the sidewalk and get out of the street. "You're going to shoot me, aren't you?" Barry says suddenly before accusing Troppe and the safety officers of being "fake police," of being "with them." (It is unclear who "they" are.) Barry calls for help: "Help! Call the police!" he yells in the street over and over. At one point, Troppe has Barry by the wrist, but Barry lurches away and runs towards the intersection. Troppe is telling him to stop. Barry stops, turns around and says "Lock me up then!" Troppe and the officers struggle to take Barry by the arms and lead him to the sidewalk. There, Barry tries to wriggle free as he continues to cry out for help. At minute mark 2:57, the footage wobbles and goes black moments before Portland Police officers arrive. Barry is audible through the lapse of footage.

At minute mark 6:06, a voice says, "We're going to need AMR—he's all cut up on his head."

At minute mark 6:37, the footage regains vision of bright lights that cast a figure's shadow on the brick wall of St. Mary's Academy. Troppe is handed the body camera and says, "Guys, I've got a video camera right here."

The videotape shows Barry writhing on the sidewalk. Barry's left leg before walking away.

The paramedics announce a plan to "calm him down," with four-point restraints and "a backboard to restrain him." Then, they ask about the drugs. The conversation is inaudible over the sounds of a paramedic closing the first aid kit and the campus security officer asking if she should inform Chief of CPSO, Donnell Tanksley. Troppe affirms that she should.

After officers examine the contents of Barry's pockets—white tissue, some tobacco—Paramedics return with Velcro restraints. They strategize briefly before they relay the plan to the officers. The last several seconds of video show people position themselves around Barry—still prone, handcuffed, silent and motionless, his head covered by the sweatshirt—before the video cuts off at 13 minutes and 7 seconds.

Questions Raised

Then Deputy State Medical Examiner, Sean Hurst, came to the conclusion that Richard Barry was extremely aggressive and he was fighting with us, so—"
Barry died of Acute Methamphetamine and Cocaine toxicity based on the autopsy, review of accounts, body camera footage and Barry's social and medical history. Dr. Sean Hurst is currently Acting State Medical Examiner.

According to the Medical Examiner’s report, “Rescue personnel” with the Portland Fire Department and paramedics with American Medical Response (AMR) arrived on scene at 8:31 PM. They were at Barry’s side at 8:36 PM, the report says.

The Medical Examiner’s report says that paramedics rolled Barry onto a backboard and secured him with restraints. Then, “as they were placing him on the gurney, they noticed that he was no longer fighting.” It was at this point, the report says, that paramedics assessed Barry and found that he was pulseless and not breathing.

The report says “they found him in a slow pulseless electrical activity arrest,” (PEA), which means that the heart has electrical activity but isn’t pumping enough to make a pulse. Richard Barry was in cardiac arrest. Paramedics established an airway and started to give him CPR. They gave him “three rounds of epinephrine,” applied a mechanical chest compression device, and “then urgently transported the subject to OHSU.”

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The report says “they found him in a slow pulseless electrical activity arrest,” (PEA), which means that the heart has electrical activity but isn’t pumping enough to make a pulse. Richard Barry was in cardiac arrest. Paramedics established an airway and started to give him CPR. They gave him “three rounds of epinephrine,” applied a mechanical chest compression device, and “then urgently transported the subject to OHSU.”

The report says that Barry reached OHSU’s Emergency Department at 9:02 PM. The report then relays Barry’s vital signs.

The report says that when Barry arrived in the hospital, he was still “in a slow wide complex PEA on first pulse check.” But when they paused the mechanical chest compression device and checked with ultrasound, “this showed no cardiac activity,” prompting more life-saving efforts: including more rounds of epinephrine, chest compressions, and an intubation. “He remained pulseless throughout the code,” reads the report.

Mr. Barry was pronounced dead at 9:16 PM, 14 minutes after he arrived in the Emergency Department, 56 minutes after campus police approached him.

The following day, the Medical Examiner performed an autopsy. Postmortem toxicology results revealed that Barry’s blood was positive for methamphetamine and cocaine, as well as other drugs like cyclobenzaprine, a muscle relaxant he had been prescribed, and cannabinoids.

The report also points to Barry’s social and medical history of chronic use of stimulant drugs. The report notes that the autopsy reflected "adverse effects" of such drug use, "the most severe of which is" dilated cardiomyopathy...This pathological change of the heart can make an individual prone to sudden dysrhythmias that can result in sudden death," the report explains, "especially when exposed to agents that have a stimulatory effect. This is the most likely mechanism of death in this case."

The Medical Examiner concludes his Report: "In summary, this individual used two stimulant drugs in combination which caused physiologic derangements that interacted adversely with existing cardiovascular disease. As such, the cause of death is best classified as acute methamphetamine and cocaine toxicity. Based on the circumstances as currently known, the manner of death is accident." •

The Pacific Sentinel will continue to report on this story as it develops.
Students Rally Against Tuition Increase

Despite opposition, PSU BOT approves 11% tuition increase

article and photos by Cory Elia

Several groups including Portland State University Student Union and the Portland branch of the Democratic Socialists of America held a rally in the Plaza of the PSU Urban Center which was attended by more than four dozen students and some faculty members.

"Education is a right, not just for the rich and white!" and "No Tuition Hike!" were common chants during the 40 minute rally. Representatives of different groups gave speeches before the procession moved to the fifth floor of the Recreation Center to attend the PSU Board of Trustees meeting. The BOT meeting included a proposed tuition increase of 11%, which would also include a $23 per term increase for the student incident fee.

Associate professor of child and family studies, Ben Anderson-Nathe, was the first to give a speech during the rally, "When I graduated from college I paid around $2,300 a year for tuition at a public school in Washington state, that same school has increased to $7000." He sees this increase as quite problematic because "PSU’s tuition is even higher still, around $8000 a year for undergraduates." Anderson-Nathe said this puts a further burden on students in a city where "the cost of living is 30% higher than the national average."

Anderson-Nathe said that because of this high cost to attend, students are being encouraged by predatory lenders to take out more and more student loans.

Anderson-Nathe states that he has been on the faculty since 2004 and that he is aware of the financial issue of the university "I understand and appreciate the gravities of our financial situation and I refuse to stand by and watch students be treated as ATMs for the university" and that his love for the university lays in its slogan of "let knowledge serve the community" but that he feels putting financial burden on the students that are trying to adhere to that slogan is counterproductive.

Democratic Socialists of Portland co-chair Olivia Katbi-Smith also spoke during the rally. "Right now we have student debt over $1.5 trillion dollars in the U.S.," Katbi-Smith said. The crowd responded with a unanimous "Boo!"

Katbi-Smith continued, "And it still increases each year when universities like PSU continue to hike tuition and pay their administrators outrageous salaries on the backs of their students backs like that of the former president who just got an $800,000 payout for resigning." This inspired the crowd to respond with a mixture of boos and hisses. According to The Oregonian, former PSU President Rahmat Shoureshi will receive a severance package worth at least $855,985.

Alyssa Pariah, a member of Democratic Socialists of America and Jobs with Justice, spoke to support PSUSU in opposition to the tuition increase, "we are here to support the students and their demands," Pariah said. But she also wanted to remind the students, "it is your fight."

A majority of Pariah's speech focused on the death of Jason Washington, who was shot to death by campus police officers, and the Disarm PSU movement.

Members of PSU student groups including Jewish Voice for Peace and PSU Dreamers also spoke at the rally. After more speeches, the group of about 60 people started to make their way up to the fifth floor of the rec center for the board of trustees meeting.

Despite the vast number, approximately 100 by the time the meeting finally started, of students in attendance opposed to it the board of trustees approved the tuition increase along with the rest of the finance and administrations proposed biennium budget proposal by a vote of 6-3 with one board member, Maude Haines, abstaining from the vote due to concerns that increasing tuition for students is not a sustainable solution when dealing with state funding cuts. "I suddenly feel so aware of my own ignorance that I can't vote on this," she said before opting to abstain.

One of the board members, Christine Vernier, who voted for the increase commented that "I'm gonna have to vote for it as awful as I feel about it" which was answered by the crowd with replies of "you don't have to vote this way!" The budget awaits approval by the Higher Education Committee on June 13.

According to a 2018 University Evaluation of PSU published by the HECC, tuition and fees at PSU had risen by 48.1%. This latest increase will compound that figure.
Portland's Heritage Trees

article by Zoë Sandvigen

Portland is known for being one of the greenest cities in America as one of the first places to ban plastic bags while using 20% more renewable energy than the national average. Portland's air quality is also ranked in the top 25 for U.S. cities, and one the best for major metropolitan areas. Besides the abundance of appreciation for solar panels, recycling, efficient public transit, and a robust biking culture, Portland has another unique attribute making the city more green than anything—the trees.

Portland Parks & Recreation Urban Forestry manages the city's foliage. To be more specific, this organization looks after and cares for 210,000 street trees, 1.2 million park trees, and over 300 heritage trees. Portland’s Heritage Tree Program recognizes the city's most beautiful trees based on historical significance, age, and size. To be a tree in this program means to be protected by city code and invincible to removal without approval of the Urban Forestry Commission. Any tree, given the property owner's consent, could be nominated to become a Heritage Tree; Portland City Council accepts nominated trees if they are significantly old, large, or unique, say, with particular horticultural interest or a rich history.
A great way to see a list of Portland's Heritage Trees is through the website's interactive map. The map includes basic information about these special trees, such as their species and date of induction. Heritage Tree #54, for example, is the European Copper Beech at the center of PSU's Millar Library. The tree will be 129 years old this June. (The library, on the other hand, is 50 years old.)

Before the Heritage Tree ordinance was enacted in Portland on May 19th, 1993—just over 25 years ago, there were a limited number of historically marked trees. In 1973, the Oregon Historical Society proposed the ability to designate trees as historic entities in addition to buildings.

The first tree they designated as a historic landmark is a 150-year old American Elm that still stands today. The "Burrell Elm" was planted in 1870 by Rosetta Burrell in her private garden in the midst of what used to be a family neighborhood. The Burrell estate was featured in Westshore Magazine in 1888, back when the Burrell Elm was at the height of its teenage years.

Over time, Rosetta Burrell and her Elm have come to mean more than just a beautiful garden. Burrell herself was a social activist, a member of the First Unitarian Church and on the League of Women Voters, and also served on the Portland Women's Union. She donated $10,000 to the Martha Washington Hotel, a boarding house for single mothers.

Today, the Burrell Elm is the last standing member of the Burrell Estate and garden. It lives downtown. At 78 feet tall, with a trunk circumference of just over 12 feet, it flanks the Portland Art Museum, proudly looming over the YWCA on a bustling downtown street just a few blocks north of PSU. Since it was planted in 1870, the tree has witnessed and withstood the robust transformation of downtown Portland. The Burrell Elm is one aging resident protected by the City of Portland, its roots firmly planted in a city ever developing.
Photos of the American Elm known as the Burrell Elm, Portland's first tree to be designated as a Historic Landmark. (opposite page) Plaque commemorating and marking the Burrell Elm. Photo by Zoë Sandvigen. (top left) Light strikes the corner of the YWCA, a fitting organization given Rosetta Burrell's commitment to women's advocacy. Photo by Zoë Sandvigen. (top right) A different view to really get a sense of the Burrell Elm's shape. Photo by M. Saqif Maqsud. (bottom right) Rosetta Burrell tending to her fresh Elm, not knowing that students 150 years in the future would be writing about her, and her new addition to the garden. Illustration by Jon Bordas
Ambitious Change in Portland

According to Megan Horst, a professor at the PSU Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning, the Green New Deal is "too narrowly focused on climate change." Horst cited Leanne Betasamosake Simpson’s book, As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance, "We should be thinking of climate change as part of a much longer series of ecological catastrophes caused by colonialism and accumulation-based society."

It was in this vein that CNN commentator Van Jones referred to the Portland Clean Energy Initiative as "the most important ballot initiative in the country."

What is the Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund?
The Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund aims to address both environmental injustice and social inequality. The measure, which passed in spades last November, will levy a 1% tax on corporations that make over $1 million nationally as well as $500,000 in Portland (excluding groceries and medicine). The tax will only affect big businesses like Walmart, Kmart, and Target. It is expected to generate somewhere between 30-80 million dollars a year. The revenue will be used to generate a green energy workforce in which frontline, underserved, and low income residents will be given job priority. The revenue will fund projects for the green workforce, such as offering incentives to maximize energy efficiency and home weatherization.

Professor Horst is deeply engaged with issues like environmental sustainability, community development, social justice and equity. PSU’s Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning, according to the website, "plays a big role in deconstructing some of the myths of Portland as a sustainability paradise." The Portland Clean Energy Fund, according to Horst, is a good start. "The Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund is an important step toward a more sustainable, equitable city," Horst said in The Pacific Sentinel. Like the Green New Deal, the Portland Clean Energy Fund aims to promote environmental sustainability and social justice, an aspect that Horst finds appealing but worth monitoring.

"All projects are supposed to both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prioritize Portland’s underserved populations and neighborhoods including communities of color and low-income residents. A challenge is going to be to ensure that green improvements benefit renters (not just owners) and that they do not inadvertently contribute to so-called eco-gentrification."

To gauge the Portland Clean Energy Fund’s success, Horst says it will be important to "track data over time" and to "consider the full range of costs and benefits of the program, beyond just the economic ones." When it comes to assessing the impacts of legislation like the Portland Clean Energy Fund and the Green New Deal, Horst stressed the importance of using qualitative methods in addition to quantitative methods, which she said, could entail "interviewing or conducting focus groups with organizations receiving funding, employees with new green jobs, and with the supposed beneficiaries." Analysis, she said, will rely on keeping government interventions "transparent and accountable to their espoused goals."

While the politics behind an economic overhaul can be overwhelming, the fact that the conversation is happening at all is encouraging. Horst says that it’s "excited by some new energy in politics around action on environmental and social issues, because it is needed." But the biggest constraint, she says will be keeping corporations in check. The reality, Horst says, is that "powerful interests like Big Oil, Big Coal and Big Agriculture are making a ton of money off of the current system," and many decision makers "have not stood up for the public interest." Meanwhile, "many others, like family farmers, are trapped by policy and markets on an endless treadmill of production without the support to implement more sustainable and just growing practices."

"Overall, it’s a battle worth fighting. "I also don’t think we need fine-tuning or modest reforms right now," Horst said. "We need huge changes if we are going to stave off the worst of climate change, start repairing our relationship with Earth, and address the massive level of social inequalities."

Creating the Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund

Portland City Council Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty conceived of and organized the coalition that spearheaded the Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund. Soon after taking office, Hardesty spoke at the Audubon Society's Nature Night about the lessons she learned as a community organizer, like how to assemble a successful coalition around an ambitious vision.

"Years back, Hardesty began work on the Portland Clean Energy Initiative, she learned a few things as a member of the Environmental Justice Action Group (EJAG). Hardesty said she found EJAG "didn’t really understand what environmental justice looked like" or how to be "inclusive of communities of color as frontline communities who are suffering from many of the environmental issues that we were confronting." Consequently, Hardesty set out to build a coalition in order to mend the divide between environmental and social justice.

The coalition, Hardesty said, was built to "look like those frontline communities" that are disproportionately affected by climate change and who often don’t get invited to the planning table. That coalition includes organizations such as The Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Coalition of Communities of Color, NAACP Portland Branch 1120, Native American Youth & Family Center, OPAL/Environmental Justice Oregon, and Verde.

Initial Criticism

Critics of the Portland Clean Energy Fund argued that the tax would ultimately come back to haunt consumers by jacking up prices. In an article published by The Oregonian’s Editorial Board, the authors argue that "low-income residents will feel it [the tax] the most." Others, however, (including Hardesty) are skeptical. Hardesty said "it was kind of hysterical listening to the Portland Business Alliance"—one of the largest critics of the Portland Clean Energy Initiative—"talk about how this was going to be devastating for low income community members." She elaborated, "they came up with some weird number—it’s going to cost every low income household x number of dollars a year if this measure would pass," right? with no analysis behind it to say why that would be."

Critics of the Portland Clean Energy Fund also argue that more could be accomplished for environmental and social justice by working from the state level compared to the city. The Oregonian’s Editorial Board argues that voters should put "faith in a statewide solution," instead of a city resolution, which they argue isn’t thinking big enough, considering Oregon is looking to "similarly address this need" to combat climate change.

Hardesty argued that environmental activists, including herself, have been trying to pass comprehensive climate reform like the
Portland Clean Energy Fund at the state level for years with little success. Just last November, voters from Washington and Colorado overwhelmingly voted down initiatives that would have implemented a carbon tax and set limits on gas and oil drilling after the oil and gas industry spent roughly $73 million funding campaigns to reject the initiatives. This, Hardesty says, is why scaling down to a city resolution was necessary, "we knew that if we waited for Salem to act, that it may not be the legislation that we were looking for and it may not impact the communities that want to be impacted first," she said.

The Portland Clean Energy Fund vs the Green New Deal

Now that Hardesty is in office, her number one priority is to make sure the Portland Clean Energy Fund is rolled out as intended. She's wary of corporate interest coming for the fund's tax revenue, of "people trying to get their grubby hands on this money."

Professor Horst had similar concerns over the Green New Deal since "it does not offer concrete policy direction." Horst sees risks in that ambiguity, such as getting co-opted by corporate interests for corporate gains, or prioritizing technological "solutions" and "green growth" over structural, reforms and deep social change the country needs to become more sustainable and just.

Conversely, the Portland Clean Energy Fund does offer clear policy direction. The challenge, according to Hardesty, is going to be making sure that the money generated from the fund is headed in the right direction. Hardesty wants to "put a community oversight committee together," elaborating, "We [the coalition] had some very specific criteria in our measure about who should be on that oversight committee. We certainly need expertise from the energy community, but we also need to make sure that those frontline communities are represented so that we can make sure that those dollars really do go where they're supposed to go. Our goal is to make sure that we are training the workforce of tomorrow."

Is the country ready for big climate policy?

The Green New Deal has undeniably sparked a national debate, and a divisive one at that. Despite the near unanimous agreement among climate scientists that climate change needs to be addressed as soon as possible, it just one more point of contention that falls along partisan lines in America. However, in the "Climate Change in the American Mind" survey, when the policies were presented outside of political associations, the results were not as partisan as expected. The bi-annual survey, conducted by Climate Change Communications programs at Yale and George Mason University, showed that 81% of registered voters support the broad goals of the Green New Deal to some degree. In a poll conducted by NBC and The Wall Street Journal, 66% of Americans said they want to see something done about climate change. 13 of the 21 Democratic Presidential Candidates support the Green New Deal, including 6 current Senators who have cosponsored a Green New Deal resolution in the Senate.

The Portland Clean Energy Fund could serve as a model for other cities to follow. "I think two years from now," Hardesty said, "we will see these measures popping up all over the country, because I know that there are at least 35 cities waiting to see if Portland was going to be able to pull this off." In that light, it seems more feasible for states—and even the country—to follow suit.

While the Portland Clean Energy Fund passed handily with Multnomah County voters, in the same midterm election, an ambitious state measure in Washington to impose a carbon-tax on greenhouse gas emissions failed to pass. According to Commissioner Hardesty, one key to the Portland Clean Energy Fund's midterm success was what she called "eyeball-to-eyeball communication," the aggressive in-person outreach from her coalition. "The groundwork" with voters, Hardesty said, was already laid down by the time anti-tax corporations began their negative ads. By talking about the vision, and "meeting people where they were," in community meetings and house parties, Hardesty said the coalition was able to garner enough public savvy and support to pass the initiative despite such a well-funded smear campaign.

The scale of the Portland Clean Energy Fund may have been another key to its success with voters. In Commissioner Hardesty's experience as an Oregon State Legislator, she said she knew that the state hadn't been able pass comprehensive climate-oriented legislation for 25 years. "We are in a wonderful position in Portland to really do things differently than we have done them in the past," Hardesty told the audience, "and to do them in a way that is inclusive of all community members, of all community voices, and to be able to leave a legacy that our grandkids will be proud that we were the ones that moved this forward."

Margo Craig contributed reporting

Illustration of Jo Ann Hardesty by Jake Johnson
Sunscreen

Did You Know

Is Controversial?

Sunscreens are regulated as over-the-counter drug products in the United States because of their active ingredients. In any pharmaceutical product, active ingredients are the substances that produce the effects of the drug, and in sunscreen, their effects are to either reflect or absorb ultraviolet (UV) radiation. As science has progressed, we have learned more about the absorption of sunscreen through the skin. In 2014, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) implemented the Sunscreen Innovation Act, calling for further safety reviews, and in February of this year they updated the regulatory requirements for sunscreens. Former FDA Commissioner, Dr. Scott Gottlieb, stated that sunscreen requirements had not been updated for decades.

Scientists are currently interested in whether or not the active ingredients in sunscreen can be absorbed into the bloodstream, which may have an effect on hormones that travel in our blood. They also want to know if what is absorbed can impact our reproductive systems, or cause cancer. Recently, the FDA conducted a small study with 23 participants looking specifically at four active ingredients commonly found in sunscreen: avobenzone, oxybenzone, octocrylene, and ecamsule. For the study, researchers applied sunscreen to participants every two hours for seven days. Participants stayed in the clinic, away from UV light, for the duration of the study. Blood samples were collected at different time points throughout the week to determine concentrations of each active ingredient in plasma.

Their study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, found that all four ingredients were indeed absorbed into the participants’ bloodstream, and the amounts were enough to warrant further investigation.

However, scientists also noted limitations in the study that need to be addressed in future research. For example, the participants remained indoors and were not exposed to UV light, heat, or humidity, all of which could have an effect on absorption. Also, each participant received the maximum dosage of sunscreen according to the suggested regimen of each product, and plasma concentrations of the active ingredients were not determined after a single application, but only after multiple applications. The brands of sunscreen used were not named.

This research is still in its early stages. Despite the findings, since we know UV radiation can cause skin cancer, the FDA still encourages people to use over-the-counter sunscreen products to protect against UV radiation, which we know can cause skin cancer. If you are concerned about which sunscreens to use this summer, past studies have confirmed that zinc oxide and titanium dioxide do not completely penetrate the skin, but still provide effective protection from the sun.
The fourth floor of Smith Memorial Student Union (SMSU) houses many student groups: the Disability Resource Center, the Cultural Resource Center, the Veterans Resource Center, the Queer Resource Center. And then, there’s the Quiet Study Lounge (QSL).

The QSL used to be the Learning Center until it moved to the library in 2012. Smith’s Advisory Board wanted to transform the central space into a student study lounge and the QSL was born. It has since offered students a work space in the hub of PSU’s campus.

Meanwhile, the Women’s Resource Center (WRC), has been less accessible and more isolated over in the basement of Montgomery. The SAC recently voted to move WRC into SMSU to replace the QSL. The future of another quiet study lounge is unclear according to Jason Franklin, the Director of Campus Planning & Design for Finance and Administration. “We are currently working on a list of potential areas where we can replace the study lounge,” Franklin said. Student Government (ASPSU) is reviewing a list of other potential spaces. Afterwards, per Frankling, “the Smith Advisory Board may recommend a new location and then ask the Student Building Fee Committee for funds to create a new Quiet Study Lounge.”

The WRC will start the moving process once the funding is settled, Franklin said. “The student building fee committee only allocates money once a year so the decision would be next year sometime,” towards the end of winter term he thinks.

The location of the QSL is certainly convenient. PSU student Ash Helvey works at the Queer Resource Center down the hall and uses the lounge at least three times a week. “The lounge is closer than other places on campus and near buildings I have classes in,” he explained. For Helvey, losing the QSL to make way for the WRC is understandable: “It’s a good thing. I’ve heard problems regarding access since [the WRC is] in the basement.”

Other students say they can resort to other study spaces on campus. PSU student Amber Schmid said she’s used the QSL once before. “I don’t find it more beneficial than other places I study at,” Schmid said. “The library has quiet floors so moving the WRC out of the basement of Montgomery could be beneficial.”

Some students use the QSL more than others, but its appeal may just be the convenience of its central location on campus. It seems that other study spaces on campus will be adequate alternatives to the QSL when the WRC takes its place.
Resource Centers Reunited
The Women's Resource Center's long-awaited move into SMSU

article and photos by Hanna Anderson

After a lengthy process of requests to the Space Allocation Committee, the Women's Resource Center has been approved for a move into the Smith Memorial Student Union.

The Women's Resource Center, otherwise known as the WRC, has faced numerous problems with their current location in the basement of Montgomery building. It has stood out as one of only a couple of student resource centers not housed in the Student Union.

However, in their last meeting in November 2018, Portland State's Space Allocation Committee (SAC) approved the WRC's request to move into the student union. The WRC will replace the Quiet Study lounge on the fourth floor of Smith to sit alongside other spaces like the Queer Resource Center, Veterans Resource Center, and the Resource Center for Students with Children.

In February, legislation was introduced to ASPSU Senate to halt the WRC move to save the Quiet Study lounge. But without a motion to move the legislation to a vote, the resolution failed.

In their meeting summary, SAC wrote of their decision: "WRC's current allocation creates significant wayfinding, security, confidentiality, and accessibility challenges, which negatively impacts WRC operations and students. The allocation would place the WRC in a more visible location on campus, the WRC would be adjacent to associate student resource centers, and individuals with mobility devices would have direct access to SMSU elevators."

Erica Bestpitch, the director of the WRC, believes the move to the Student Union will help the WRC serve more students, work with the other student centers, and ultimately give the WRC a "stronger presence in our community."

"The Women's Resource Center is a student resource center, and we wanted to be in proximity to all of our sibling centers," Bestpitch explained. "Because we are really the only student resource center not housed in Smith, we have also noticed wayfinding has been a challenge for many. Often times, students, faculty and administrators who have been at PSU for a long time will have never set foot in the WRC. Because we are so far off the beaten path that some can forget to include our space in tours of campus."

One of the primary reasons for the move, Bestpitch explained, is accessibility. For able-bodied students, accessing the WRC is as easy as walking down the stairs that leads directly to their front door. For those who cannot walk down the stairs, their website has a page set aside with instructions for how to enter their space: "Enter through the main door to the Montgomery Building and take the elevator down to the basement. Once in the basement follow the sign forward and turn left. Follow the hallway down and take another left. This places you at the back of our department by our bathroom and kitchen. Enter through the back door."

But even this winding pathway doesn't ensure access. "Montgomery is a historic building and their elevators are not big enough to ensure access for all kinds of mobility devices," Bestpitch explained. "We have been really concerned for the past several years that our service to students has not been equitable because there are students who can not physically access our location."

"The process of finding a new location on campus and then securing that location has been a long one," said Bestpitch, "it has definitely taken perseverance and patience, and the participation and support of many on-campus colleagues, the mobilization of student voices, and the support of administration to make the WRC accessible to all students on campus."
Campus Accessibility: Room for Improvement

article and photos by Hanna Anderson

For able-bodied students at Portland State University, the accessibility of campus is not often thought of, as they’re only faced with it for seconds of a day. It’s simply a matter of stepping through a door frame. In the case of stairs, they add only more seconds, at worst.

For others, however, a lack of accessibility on campus is an obstacle. Avoiding stairs leads to literal mazes to find where the wheelchair accessible entrance of a building is, such as the case of the Montgomery basement. Other places—like Ondine—luck such entrances away to the back of buildings, next to, in its case, the dumpsters. Then there is the Robertson Life Sciences Building, with it’s especially long ramp nearly the length of the building, gracing its front.

Each problem may be small on its own, but the constant accumulation of all of these problems adds up quickly, until they create a campus that a number of students physically can not attend. The issue extends beyond stairs and ramps; furniture, doorways, nearly every aspect of a classroom can contribute to the issue.

"More access is more inclusion, and it’s beneficial for everyone," said Jen Dugger, the Director of Portland State’s Disability Resource center. "You don’t have to have a disability to benefit from an accessible campus."

As a public college Portland State University is required by law to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act—better known as the ADA, and a basic standard for creating accessible spaces. Becoming law in 1990, the ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, requires that employers make reasonable accommodations, and requires that buildings be physically accessible up to its standards.

“The ADA gave us specific guidelines for what physical accessibility looks like," explained Dugger. "Like doorways have to be 32 inches wide—we didn’t have that before 1990. So there’s a lot of work to do in buildings (built) prior to that. In the 70s, we got our first piece of disability legislation, very first. That was section 504 of the rehabilitation act. And prior to that, if buildings were built prior to that, they could be inaccessible...So we’re not alone, we’re always going to be dealing with those buildings that were built prior to that date in the 70s. What you might see on campus is some weird combination of super accessibility and (buildings that are) not accessible at all."

Dugger is also Co-Chair of PSU’s Accessibility Committee, dedicated to improving the accessibility of the campus as a whole. The committee works on multiple projects throughout the year. Last year’s achievements included elevator upgrades for Cramer Hall and Parking Structure One, as well as the addition of an elevator in Parkmill.

"We are a campuswide group that meets monthly during the academic year," said Sarah Kenney, another Co-Chair of the committee. "We advocate for equity through universal design and discuss and promote ways that we can make our campus a truly accessible place to study, work and live."

While PSU’s campus is ADA compliant, the committee’s goals are to raise the standards even higher than before.

Renovation and new construction projects on campus are handled by the Capital Projects and Construction department, which the Accessibility Committee has been working with to implement what are known as Universal Design Standards.

"For example, the accessibility standards from the ADA say that a building—a building now, in 2019—has to have an accessible entrance, period," Dugger explained. "But that entrance can technologically be around the back of the building, next to a dumpster, and that’s perfectly compliant. But these new UD standards would basically say, that entrance around the back of the building is not up to code with PSU standards. So we would want it to be (that) the most used entrance would be the most accessible. And hopefully, all the entrances."

Throughout the interview, the underlying cause of these accessibility issues couldn’t be avoided: The topic of ableism. Ableism is the discrimination against those with disabilities, in favor of those who are able-bodied. Like other forms of discrimination, it has been a part of a long history in America that can seep into nearly every aspect of life; like whether or not somebody can find the ADA entrance, or if buildings have one at all, while those with able-bodied privilege don’t have to spare it a second thought.

"Accessibility is everybody’s responsibility," Dugger said. "We all create and maintain space. You don’t have to be an architect to do that, or a construction worker, and I think that we forget that sometimes—that we need to be thinking about other people who might join us in whether or not they might have full opportunity to participate or enjoy whatever it is we’re doing. When we think about planning something, we should be thinking about planning for the most inclusive event possible."

For more information on ableism and presentations on ableism on campus, contact Jen Dugger at jen.dugger@pdx.edu

For more information on ableism and presentations on ableism on campus, contact Jen Dugger at jen.dugger@pdx.edu
In today’s interesting era of technology, the average person spends four hours on their phone a day out of the 15 hours the average person is awake. Four hours are spent on social media, news sites, and other media platforms, meaning the average person spends almost a third of their day consuming and processing new information. With this rampant output comes the abundance of fake news that can often be misleading to readers. How do we cope with having a whole world’s worth of information and opinions at our fingertips? Should we be better equipped with skills and tools to better navigate and sift through all the information competing for our attention?

Thriving in this mess of media is the ability of individuals and groups to gain traction for their radical beliefs. This is coupled with the ability for these groups to organize and prey on the ones who do not know how to tell fake news from truth. This is when the lack of media literacy starts to become detrimental to society. In this unique climate where technology has taken over as our main source of connection and information to the rest of the world, it may be time to implement mandatory media literacy education to prevent people from falling victim to the deceptions online.

According to The Atlantic, The Washington Post “publishes an average of 1,200 stories, graphics, and videos per day.” This is a large number, but includes articles produced outside of its organization. The Post’s editorial staff produces roughly 500 stories every day. This massive amount of daily content creation is still a lot but they are just one of many organizations churning out endless content. The New York Times comes in at 230, The Wall Street Journal 240, and Buzzfeed 220. These are just four main media outlets, so it can be hard to fathom how much more is published and advertised on the web on any given day. So much so to where consumer input and other popular media websites will never be able to keep up with the output of the internet, but we can control what information we choose to read, trust, and rely on. Media serves a vital purpose in our world today as it is depended upon to assist us in understanding what is going on and what we choose to think of what is going on. Whether this is directly through news sites, social media, or any other platform, is it absolutely critical that we are able to effectively maneuver through, and think critically about, the copious amounts of opinions and facts thrown at us.

For example, take any given news story and spend a couple extra minutes looking at a few news sites just to see how different the same story can be told twice, three times, fifty times. A story may even be told entirely incorrectly, if from an unreliable source. A story changes based off who is telling it, and it is this discrepancy that makes it necessary as a reader to arm yourself with an education on how to sort through information effectively. Since there is so much information available online, there are few excuses to be uninformed and without an opinion formed from reliable unbiased sources. This is why it could potentially become the norm for all consumers to be educated on how to properly use the internet and media outlets to recognize when information isn’t reliable and how such information is often proliferated.

So what would this look like? Since it can be predicted that the abundance of fake news isn’t going to cease at any moment, it is time to start taking counteractions. There is nothing more limiting of the human mind and personal growth than misleading conceptions about the world and the people in it. Yes, everyone has a right to their own opinions and beliefs but how can we expect to form accurate viewpoints and principals on which we live our lives without gathering the factual truth. The social world can be seen as a swinging pendulum continuously swaying back and forth from one extreme to the next hoping to fall somewhere in the middle, but until then it is most necessary to be able to make decisions for oneself.

How do we identify fake news? A good indication would be if the information and message leans to one extreme or the other as mentioned. In any given situation there are many sides to one story, many viewpoints, angles, and explanations. If anyone is trying to eradicate any given person or belief, it can be assumed that this is an argument fueled by anger and many other human attributes that often get in the way of decision making and reporting. A perfect ex-
ample would be the 2016 presidential election, where it became a competition of slashing reputations between candidates rather than a race of competing policy reform ideas and plans for the future of the country. This debate divided the country based off personal vendettas rather than political amendments. Or when the story of the Pope went viral in 2016, the article claimed he endorsed Trump for president. This story was entirely fabricated from scratch to draw attention, yet the public took hold and believed it—judging from the 2 million Facebook shares.

This is why it should soon be required to educate the public on how to navigate news, mass information, and the internet. Whether this comes in the form of classes, alerts on our devices, or a shift in society's views on mass media. This could be the pathway to build a new community of free thinkers rather than masses led by an ongoing systematic power struggle between opposing agendas and economic motivations.

This issue hasn't gone unnoticed though, new organizations have arose such as NAMLE (National Association for Media Literacy Education) who are currently trying to pass a bill to implement media literacy training. Executive Director of NAMLE, Michelle Lipkin, answered some questions regarding the importance of literacy education. In response to being asked how this education can change society's perspective of news and the opinions we form she stated, "The purpose of media literacy education is to help individuals of all ages develop the habits of inquiry and skills of expression that they need to be critical thinkers, effective communicators and active citizens in today's world. Without media literacy skills, individuals will have a difficult time navigating the complicated communication and media ecosystem that exists today. Media literacy skills are essential." This type of activism is what is necessary to gain awareness from the public of the problem.

"There has never been a time where it is more important to be informed, active, and aware of the world and the events happening because of the proliferation of the news on the internet. Sitting behind screens and letting life pass us by without questioning is how we let our individuality die and succumb to the ones in power. Media is both a blessing and a curse and moving forward we as citizens should use it as a sword in our call to action to take back control of the discourse.

"There is nothing more limiting of the human mind and personal growth than misleading conceptions about the world and the people in it."

*illustrations by Josh Gates*
The Price of Knowledge

University has become a pay to win system

by Jeremy Husserl
illustrations by Josh Gates

"I can't believe it's like this," I thought to myself.

The thing that I noticed with every film portrayal I've ever seen in movies like "American Pie" or anything that was fashionable in the 2000s. The amount of partying in college. I was around nine years old when I asked myself why college was so important if it was just partying all day. It turns out I was right, that it was mostly partying—but only for those who can afford it.

As is the case most of the time in this country, the rich are yet again damaging people's view of the education system. The college admissions scandal—"Operation Varsity Blues" if you have a flair for the dramatic—was a conspiracy to influence who was admitted into the University system by bribing college officials to let wealthy children in and inflating said wealthy children's test scores and grades. People like the Desperate Housewives star Felicity Huffman or Full Houses Lori Loughlin, whom are accused of bribing university officials from Stanford and the University of Southern California respectively. The recent scandal has a lot of people rethinking the validity of our education system and although there are only 11 accused universities, you can see the signs on every college campus, including Portland State's.

School is absurdly expensive for someone like me. I work multiple jobs at once, including my own business ventures. It is imperative that I keep a strict schedule during the school year to keep up with both classes and my financial wellbeing. Unfortunately, the recent scandal doesn't necessarily surprise me. Working at an apartment building, leasing to almost exclusively students has taught me a lot. Now I get how non resident students can afford PSU full-time.

It seems a little redundant. Someone described the process as, "Wealthy kids, going through school for the paper to be in their parents companies." The media's coverage of forged grades for entry into elite schools may seem distant, but parts of the scandal remind me of PSU, which has similar issues on a surface level. Students do not seem prepared for life in general. I see so many students who do not possess even rudimentary skills, like plunging a toilet for example. Even basic cleaning needs are a task. I feel as though there is some gap still between the student body. In my interview with a co-worker and his account of a bias system, I am at odds with the PSU community a bit and it's lack of support with news like this especially taken into account.

Jeremy: So, you've attended 3 separate schools? With PSU being the most recent?
Carter: Yes, I first attended Oklahoma City Community College and then University of Oklahoma afterward. When I went to community college, it was targeted toward low income people. On the upside, they were more understanding, but the problem was that everyone seemed to just be filling out paperwork. All the kids were there for the grade and the teachers would just be showing up for the paycheck. It would just be the minimum requirement.

I can understand how someone can feel cheated, especially if you are like me and have a large amount of loans—especially considering how much attending school costs. Non-residents have to pay an average of $35,941 dollars a year—or for a residents, $29,797—which you can't just have on you obviously. What makes it worse for me and others like me is seeing the cost of living comparisons as well. Living expenses in Chicago cost about half as much on average.

Most people should feel discouraged by the fact that the wealthy can just screw off and do whatever they want everyone else must work for their grades. It seems like yet another reminder of a broken system that is constantly failing its students.

At least that's how Carter sees it. Carter is a maintenance man at one of the more prominent apartment complexes close to the PSU campus. He is an avid writer, reader, photographer, and consumer of the arts. He is a former student of Oklahoma City Community College and University of Oklahoma back in his home state, and, most recently, Portland State University. Carter is currently working and out of school, since the cost and stress became too much to handle. This recent scandal has furthered the seeds of his doubt in the validity of the university system in general.
JH: I feel the same way, but about PSU to a degree, at least in terms of writing classes.
CA: Right, and I love learning, but I think college has gotten to barely be a learning institution. It almost works better as a think tank.

JH: How was your experience at University of Oklahoma versus PSU?
CA: The bag there was all sports and frats. That was just the heart of social activity. So, if you were outside of that you'd be out of luck. I'm sure there were ways to join clubs, but I did my initial semester at community college and it isn't like I'm some rich kid on campus, so I naturally felt like an outsider. It was built for people a lot wealthier than me. PSU has been nuts. I've learned coastal wealth and Oklahoma wealth are two different animals. I knew people who were wealthy from oil but that's nothing compared to some of the people I've met at PSU. Other people just get their homework done for them. It's literally four years of partying, then a job afterwards. I don't know, that's not who I find myself wanting to interact with, so it creates a culture shock.

JH: It's wild, I've worked for a long time. I'm not really rich coming from the midwest. These people feel like they're on a whole other level. Bullshitting grades, the partying, etc.
CA: I mean with the admissions scandal we are literally seeing people buy their kids' way through school. You see these videos of these kids who only care about their image.

JH: It only seems to be about social media presence like Coachella.
CA: Right, and that is a music festival but I still see people that don't even go for the music anymore. They only really care about posting on social media about it.

JH: Honestly, I haven't really cared about the lineup in quite some time. I generally only see memes about how they appropriate native culture and whatever else.
CA: It's also almost as expansive interestingly enough, actors are even getting caught up in the [admissions] scandal.

JH: I read one of the actresses from Fuller House is being charged.
CA: It's sad. Universities are supposedly these higher structures where education is supposed to be the priority. Power structures are in place for a reason. They just exist perpetually.

JH: Right.
CA: I mean, if you were an admissions person would you care about letting one person in? Especially when you can get paid.

JH: I suppose not. We see these places with wealth gaps. I mean, I talk to you all the time about the differences in food prices from where I'm from.
CA: Exactly, and that is a symptom of a bigger issue in unaffordable places like Portland or any other major city on the west coast. It's just hard to understand what we are paying for as people who do not get things handed to them. Experience is hard to come by these days I guess.

Experience is something that can't be bought despite what some of some may think. The college admissions scandal saw rowing and soccer experience falsified and photoshopped while creating forgeries of test results to justify wealthy children's admission. Experience is good, bad, and sometimes very ugly. Despite this, we ignore most of those with unique experiences for the wealthy and the boring again and again. If people want the world to be a more open place then they should start by supporting those who can't just throw a check at all of their problems. The constant hypocrisy of calling PSU or any other university with such an obvious wealth gap an open and safe space isn't necessarily true. It seems most people who find themselves here are cut from the same needlessly expensive cloth. Higher education has become an expensive macrotransaction instead of a worthwhile addition to the academic experience.
What Stonewall Means to Me
AN ONGOING LOOK AT LGBTQ ACTIVISM AROUND THE WORLD

by Daniel J. Nickolas
illustrations by Brooke Jones
Bravery and the Closet

The Stonewall Uprising was the turning point between the time when queer people either accepted a life in the closet or a life on the margins of society, and the time when queer people started to live openly within society. But what exactly does this turning point mean to queer individuals today; what does it look like on a personal level? The openness of the post-Stonewall environment is exemplified in the common chant of yesteryear’s LGBTQ rights movement: “we’re here, we’re queer, get used to it.” After 50 years, it would be nice to think that queer identities are now accepted by our society, that people have gotten used to it, and that the fight on the personal level was over. However, we now know the implication behind “we’re, we’re queer, get used to it” is a philosophy too simple for reality to allow.

The previous articles in this series have focused on the activism and bravery of queer individuals and relevant events from around the world, but for the conclusion, I would like to take it back home, because even here, in the liberal city of Portland, in 2019, being openly queer still feels like a risk. I discovered this truth for myself last year through an experience that had me confront what a moment like the Stonewall Uprising really meant for me—an experience that was the seed for this series.

For PSU pride month (May) of Spring 2018, I decided to display a rainbow-flag button on the strap of my backpack. I felt it was the least I could do to show pride and acceptance in my own gay identity. Quite literally the least I could do, as I had never done any queer activism, never yet participated in a Pride March, and the button was given to me free by the QRC. I positioned the button so that it lay across the left side of my chest, and in doing so, openly marked myself as queer for the first time.

What I mean by “openly for the first time” is not that I “came out” for the first time, but rather that I, for the first time, forfeited control over who knew and who didn’t know I was queer. My identity had only ever been known in situations where I chose to make it known, or in situations where it was implied (for example, my monthly meetings with the Portland Gay Men’s Book Club). I had anticipated some apprehension in giving up this control of identification, but was surprised to discover how strong the initial discomfort was. I felt as though I’d cast myself into a spotlight, under which I exposed a vulnerability I’d never before perceived. I had never recognized how comforting that control, that ability to hide when needed, really was; I immediately came to hate that comfort I had only just become aware of, because it felt like I had been trying to keep one hand on the doorknob of the proverbial closet. Unfortunately, despite my disdain for the comfort I didn’t even know I had until I gave it up, I could not embrace the discomfort.

I tried to dismiss the discomfort, believing it would cool and diminish as the month went on; marking myself was a new experience, and new experiences often come with an inherent uneasiness. The discomfort did start to numb, but I never forgot the button was there. Like a lit match held between my fingers, I felt the rainbow pin required constant and conscious attention, or else it would burn me. I became very aware that I could no longer fully hide myself from someone who might not appreciate my existence. For the first time, I felt vulnerable to a harsh look or loaded word. Going to my classes, waiting in line for a cup of coffee, I wondered how glaringly the button blazed off the dark background of my backpack, and I wondered if this too is what is meant by “internalized homophobia.” Was I the problem?

The answer is complicated. I wanted to feel ridiculous and silly about feeling such a hyper-awareness, I wanted to simply believe I didn’t care what others thought and go about my day. But I had to care. While the button itself was and is just a button with a rainbow inspired design, it is representative of something that is not yet a full reality, not even in 2019. It is easy to be gay at a book club for gay people, it is easy to be queer in places like the Queer Resource Center, and it is relatively easy to feel accepted at a liberal university like PSU.

But this easiness fades when one is in society at large. The button was a constant reminder that even though I’m here and queer, not everybody has gotten used to it. In realizing this, I was confronted with the question of how many steps away from the closet I was willing to take. Could I take my hand off of the doorknob?

To come out of the closet is simply to stop acting, to stop pretending, to stop denying—it is more passive than active. A queer individual must be active only in dealing with the consequences of stopping the performance. Coming out of the closet by itself, while a significant and important act, has accomplished little on the larger stage of equal rights. Many of the Stonewall patrons were already living an open life, but merely existing did not make the government, or the police force, or even friends and family start to empathize with their unfair treatment. It was the active resistance of the Uprising to that unfair treatment that sparked real change.

This holds true even today. Coming out of the closet might alter the viewpoint of some friends and neighbors, but alone it has done little to stop the misinformation of hate groups wanting to convey a lesser-than about queerness, little to stop the inflammatory rhetoric of pedophilia and assault misappropriated into the conversation about restroom use, little to stop a gay Latino PSU student from being brutally assaulted on an Amtrak train in Spring of 2018. It is worth repeating, one last time, how important and valuable coming out of the closet is, but it is only the first of many

...even though I'm here and queer, not everybody has gotten used to it.
steps that must be taken for the dream of the Stonewall Uprising to be fully realized. This is why the rainbow button made me so uncomfortable. I had already come out. I had already stopped the performance and the denial that is the closet. But I had done little else to move toward a life away from the closet. However, I'm grateful that I learned this about myself, because I want not only to end the performance, but to move forward to that hoped-for future of equality, despite the uncomfortable (sometimes dangerous) consequences of doing so. A future where young, queer people are baffled by the concept of the "the closet" is a future worth taking a risk for. Truthfully, I'd wish I'd taken more risks sooner, and I wish I was a few more steps away from my personal closet than I currently am. But it's never too late to rise up and move forward. It's easy to look at myself and my experience with the rainbow button and think, "coward." But I'm not a coward. I'm just not yet as brave as I will be. This truth has only been reinforced over the past months as I've researched and written about Stonewall and the brave activists still fighting for LGBTQ justice around the world. They took the brave step of moving forward, and in doing so, pushed the world forward. For me to not move, when there are still steps to be taken, would be an insult to everything they risked when they began pushing forward and pushing away from the closet.

A Final Thought

There are many queer activists around the world that still deserve to be talked about, and whose work still needs to be acknowledged. However, I thought it best to close this series by recognizing the Stonewall Uprising itself. I have written about many aspects of the Uprising, and how lucky we in the United States are to have such a historical moment we can look back on, and be inspired by. But now I wish only to emphasize that fifty years is not such a long time, considering the change we have seen. Positive queer representation in media, marriage equality, and even a Queer Studies major at an urban university in Portland Oregon, are all current realities that many who participated in the Stonewall Uprising might have thought too much to hope for in only fifty years time. They are realities for which people struggled, fought, and even died. And while equality for queer individuals is still far from a complete reality, let us be encouraged that so much positive change was ignited by a relatively small group of brave, queer outcasts who, fifty years ago this month, decided it was time to step away from the closet door, and start moving forward.

If we can be as brave, imagine what another fifty years might bring.
Portland State University's campus police are, as Officer Matt Masunari says, "a small police agency in a big city." The jurisdiction of the Campus and Public Safety Office (CPSO) extends only as far as the campus itself: I-405 in the south and west; Market Street at the north end; and the buildings of SW 4th Avenue to the east. Two-way radios in the vehicles and at the office monitor activity on the channels of the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) to enable the agencies to cooperate when necessary; Masunari says situations requiring interagency work are infrequent.

Night shift at CPSO begins at 11 p.m. On a cold and rainy Saturday night in early April, I accompanied Officer Matt Masunari on his duties for about three hours to see what a day in the life of a police officer is like. Contrary to my assumptions, the weekend nights are quiet for CPSO. During the first part of the shift, shop, Officer Masunari drove the police cruiser on the streets bordering and running through campus, making the occasional detour to slowly drive through its parking structures and parking lots. As we made our rounds, our conversation moved to times past.

Before his career as a CPSO officer began in 2015, Masunari studied ancient Latin and Greek literature at Oregon State University. He came to PSU as a graduate student with a particular focus on 3rd century BCE Roman history. Masunari's former judo instructor and mentor from Corvallis had already moved to Portland and told him of a job opening at CPSO. Masunari applied and has now been with the agency for over four years.

Masunari's dedication to police work is matched by his passion for the literature and history of the Hellenic world. "The Roman Republic was a unique time in Roman history," Masunari said. "They integrated other peoples as citizens more completely than Sparta or Athens did." This confederation of Italian and Gallic tribes lasted five hundred years before the Senate granted Octavian unprecedented power as Augustus, making him the first true Roman emperor.

The squad car moved slowly through the University Place Hotel's dark parking lots, its beams illuminating small patches of the night. Our discussion continued. "Augustus had major legitimacy issues," Masunari said of the Roman emperor's attempts to justify autocratic rule to the citizens of a republic with nearly a half a millennium of history and precedent. Augustus commissioned Virgil to compose The Aeneid to link the new form of monarchy and its male lineage to the Homeric epics and Hellenic legend. "The Iliad is about losing innocence and The Odyssey is about trying to come back after loss and trauma. The Aeneid is a story about the emergence of Roman masculinity," says Masunari.
As he drove the squad car north on wet streets lit by the lamps of shuttered food carts and traffic lights, Masunari described a drug-related incident a few nights before my observation: someone on campus had a bad reaction to LSD and began acting in a manner that endangered others. Paramedics were called. (Most details of incidents discussed, such as the identity of persons of interest and association with PSU, are confidential and were not made available for publication.) "Drugs are a public health issue," says Masunari. "There is a misconception that drug use is a victimless crime...There is a criminal element in the sale of some drugs." Crimes against persons and property are committed in the production and transportation of drugs such as methamphetamine that harm people and their communities in far-reaching ways. Drug addicts "are not just hurting themselves," says Masunari. "They hurt society by being driven apart." In addition to the loss of our fellow men and women to addiction, money from the sale of the drugs can be linked to other criminal activity. Addiction to drugs, however, is not evil. Expanding on this, Masunari said that "drugs are not a moral failing by people who use them."

Drug use, property crime, homelessness, availability of mental health treatment options, and urban blight are intertwined. While driving east on Market Street, Masunari talked about the news channel special report, Seattle is Dying. "That is exactly what's happening here. We're creating a population that is completely forgotten and absolving ourselves of their welfare...That doesn't mean we should stop trying..."
"There's a lot of humor in the job—and a lot of tragedy. The two are linked."

The police. Many homeless do not trust the police, but the police have also intervened to help; Masunari told a story about tents in one camp being burned by an outsider, and the CPSO responded and were able to keep the resident of the tent safe from the arsonist who returned with intent to inflict further harm.

The resources available to the homeless, often addicted and mentally ill, are so paltry that to allow them to live in the most stable way they can is the best temporary solution. The people in this camp, and other homeless living near campus, are known to CPSO, and can sometimes help monitor the goings on. When driving through a particular part of campus (details kept vague to protect the person described), Masunari pointed out a homeless man known to him who usually spends the night near a street lamp on campus. The man is trespassing and could be arrested for doing so, but because he is stable and unobtrusive his presence deters unknown persons with ill intent from committing real harm.

At some point during the evening Masunari gave me his perspective on the various disarmament protests from the fall term. Our conversation, and the larger campus and cultural discourses, are too complex, too nuanced, too abstract, and too specific to do justice in a short article. Instead, fragments of a one discussion on one particular night, with minimal commentary and reordering capability, seem to most accurately provide, while incomplete, a more complete sketch of one policeman's perspective.

"I'm just a guy trying to make it better."

"I believe in my heart of hearts that this is an absolutely essential institution."

"I think there was a lot of otherizing. I really do know."

"It was very hard coming in to work every day. This job is important."

"They don't see what I see. I'm not discounting what they see."

"Things were said that were disappointing."

What about the push for disarmament? "Firearms are tools for doing police work in the United States. I wish that I didn't have to have a gun. I wish that people didn't hurt each other, steal from each other." Masunari described an incident when an officer, not carrying his firearm at the time, encountered an unlawful actor in a campus parking structure with a gun. He had to run; there was no way to resolve the situation without having more leverage than the person of interest. The gun is does not license unreasonable behavior. "It's important not to use fear or intimidation for compliance."

"There are a lot of people dedicated to making PSU a safe place. They love this community and love working here. I'm thankful to count myself among them."

We took a short break at the CPSO office some time after midnight. A call came in. A motion detector on the second floor of Simon Benson Hall (SBH) sent a signal to CPSO dispatch, who sent Masunari and another officer [forgot his name, none of the names on the site jogged my memory] with me in tow, to investigate. "We're investigating a possible burglary," Masunari said. "We take that into account when predicting what it will be like if we encounter the suspect because he'll want to evade capture more than if he were peering against the side of a building. That is, if he's not a ghost."

Campus lore, passed from cohort to cohort since time immemorial, holds that SBH is haunted. Masunari and his colleagues have been dispatched many times to investigate tripped motion detectors on the second floor to find no signs of unlawful activity (only logical if the motion sensors on the first floor remain silent on the matter [mixed metaphor?]). The officers must nonetheless treat each call seriously; I waited in the vehicle while the two officers followed protocol for searching and securing the building, flashlights floating through the darkness, sweeping the walls and windows with light.

We were soon on the road again, making the rounds in the car's confines. What does Masunari think of portrayals of police in film and television? He listed a few favorites: Brooklyn 99, Southland ("a great cop show"), The Departed ("not realistic, but so good"), End of Watch ("realistic"), and 21 Jump Street [neglected to ask if he meant the new or old one]. "You cannot take yourself too seriously as a cop," Masunari said. "There's a lot of humor in the job—and a lot of tragedy. The two are linked."

From my observation, there is also a lot of poetry. Driving the streets and alleys, through and around campus in the late hours. The rain on the windshield refracts the glow of street lamps and neon signs. The many hills, dips, twists, turns, roundabouts, byways, and underground parking garage passages that wind their way around campus. The silence of the interior of the car, moving through the darkness of night, observing that which the headlights illuminate, the world formless beyond their beams. *
The harmony of the Gurung people with Mother Nature's bees and their honey has been a tradition; but that relationship is being jeopardized by greed.

by M. Saqif Maqsud

Deep in the heart of the Himalayas, Mother Nature has been conducting a hidden transaction between man and bees for years. The Gurungs, an ethnic group in Nepal, have been collecting the unique honey by climbing down jagged cliffs on handmade ropes of bamboo and wood for centuries. If the thought of dangling off cliffs on bamboo ladders in the middle of the Himalayas isn't frightening enough, then perhaps it is wise not to think of the giant honey bees that dominate the cliffs. These bees, known as the Himalayan giant honey bee are the world's largest honey bees, measuring up to 1.2 inches in length.

In this pocket of the Himalayas, Mother Nature has maintained a rather sacred relationship with flowers and bees. The local Nepalis have harmonized this relationship, respecting nature as divinity and in return they are rewarded with this unique honey. Unfortunately, human beings are flawed, and this would all be a fairy tale if the honey bandits did not exist. The tribes collect the honey respectfully, but there are others—some locals, some from afar—who destroy the hives of these magical bees only to profit from their broken homes. With time, this equilibrium of respect and greed will topple, leaving the bees victimised, and the Himalayas, disrespected.

One may be wondering, why risk falling off a cliff and getting stung by giant bees for something so simple and common as honey? The honey these men hunt for is known globally as "mad honey" or "hallucinogenic honey," and is prized for its medicinal and aphrodisiac qualities.
"Some hunt the honey for tradition, but in recent times there are more people hunting the honey's intoxicating properties solely for profit."

The honey gets its unique feature through all of nature's parameters. According to articles in Vice and National Geographic, the bees of the Himalayan region make several types of honey, and some are literally intoxicating. Nepal's national flower, the rhododendron, is in full bloom from March to April. Known in Nepal as gurans, the quality of this honey depends on the blossoming of the rhododendrons. As Vice's David Caprara writes about his visit to the location of these hives, "There's no way to predict the amount of rhododendron pollen consumed by the bees, so the potency of the high-inducing honey varies from season to season, if there are any effects at all."

Usually the villagers that live in the area harvest the honey for personal consumption, as it has been a tradition for their tribes for years. There are articles that discuss the honey being commercialized, with its hallucinogenic properties being a self-advertiser. National Geographic estimates that this honey sells for $60–$80 a pound on Asian black markets, which is about six times the price of normal Nepali honey. This is a problem, if we take conservation of the bees into consideration. There is a finite amount of hives, and if the greed for profits take over the people, they might inflict harm on the whole process of the pollination. A lack of authority and enforcement towards this honey could prove fatal. The conservation and balance of the flowers and bees is important. Also, the circulation of honey of such potent toxicity must be taken into account. If there are no steps taken towards the illegal trade of this honey, many people could face health consequences.

One or two teaspoons is usually enough to intoxicate a person if the honey is extremely rich with the grayanotoxin. Exceeding this limit may lead to convulsions and often results in serious consequences. A user may end up losing the ability to walk or lose consciousness. According to an article published in the US National Library of Medicine, "Consumption of grayanotoxin containing leaves, flowers or secondary products as honey may result in intoxication specifically characterized by dizziness, hypotension and atrial-ventricular block." Atrioventricular block can cause many problems with the heart, and if severe enough could possibly result in cardiac arrest. A lot of research has been done with honey infused with grayanotoxin and is still ongoing.

Bangladesh, which is not that far from Nepal, also has an excellent reputation of large, dangerous bees. Up until I came across the topic of hallucinogenic honey, I was under the impression that the bees of the Bangladeshi Sundarbans were the largest in the world. However, according to an article from the BBC, the bees from my country may not be the largest, but are included in the list of the largest and most aggressive bees in the world. I have personally witnessed the harvesting of honey in the Sundarbans and the honey hunters showed me their conservation technique. The hunters only carve out a bit more than half the hive, and leave the rest stuck to the tree branches. That way, the honey will not be over harvested and the bees will not be harmed. The honey of the Sundarbans, however, has no toxic quality, and therefore has a value for its smoky and sweet flavour. The problem with the honey from Nepal is that there appears to be no conservation technique. Another predicament is that there are hunters with different intentions. Some hunt the honey for tradition, but in recent times there are more people hunting the honey's intoxicating properties solely for profit.

I reached out to a friend, Tasnif Rahman, who is working with embryonic stem cells and is studying cardiac development at Rochester Polytechnic Institute, about why the bees are not affected by the hallucinogenic properties of their honey. According to Rahman "bees lack the mechanism that the hallucinogens interact with in humans. This is because bees and humans have vastly different genomes."

I was also interested about the replication of this honey. If someone started planting the rhododendron flowers, could they make their own mad honey? I asked another friend, Ryan Colunga, about his thoughts on this process of replicating the infused honey. Colunga is a biologist student at Portland State and hopes to one day transition into species conservation. He had not come across hallucinogenic honey before, but replied, "To call it infused honey is to call any honey infused honey." He said humans are a key parameter in the infusion process, if one were to try to replicate this honey in another part of the world. While talking more about the replication of honey in a lab, for instance, Colunga says, "the honey found in stores, like the ones in the little bear bottles, are mostly carbohydrates and high fructose corn syrup." This replication comes at a cost. The honey replicated will not have the same properties of the original natural honey.

Regardless of the replication process, it is a fact that honey with such hallucinogenic properties can only be found in the Himalayan regions. Such honey may be present in other parts of the world, but it may not be as potent as the one from Nepal. The tribes that are involved with this honey for generations now see it as divine. However, other local priorities lie solely in commercializing the honey. If the balance of tradition and commerce is ruined, we may lose nature's magnificent, hallucinogenic honey makers forever. One can only pray that this honey, and the bees that make it, receive the proper attention that is required. The purpose of documenting such unique delicacies of nature should be so that people can learn and preserve, not over consume and exploit to extinction.
Shoureshi's Cross-Disciplinary Internship Program Revealed as a Cover for Secret Escape Plan

by Raz Mostaghimi

PORTLAND, Oregon (AP) — Several interns from former PSU President Shoureshi’s cross-disciplinary internship program, which The Pacific Sentinel covered in our previous issue, have come forward to state that the program was not what they expected. What initially seemed like a program meant to assist Shoureshi’s administrative affairs became a secret plan to escape from Portland State University via escape pod ejection and assumption of a new identity. Engineering student Clara Matthews was initially pleased with her new assignment, but grew more suspicious as the project continued.

“At first they assigned me to redesign the shower in his new mansion, and like I said in our last interview, I was confused because I’m an electrical engineering student. I guess they caught onto that because my supervisor came up to me and apologized, and then he said he had a new project for me,” Matthews said. “At first I thought it was some kind of automated food cart, because the dude really likes robots. But I saw in the sketches that there wasn’t like a stove or anything in there, but there was a cushioned seat, a cotton candy spinner, and a compartment for sunflower seed shells. That’s when I started getting suspicious.”

According to the sketches Matthews presented, the exterior of the pod was meant to resemble a food cart that sold savory cotton candy spinners as a cover. The flavors on the menu included Nacho Blast, Spicy Buffalo Sauce, and Wet Caesar Salad Crouton. Marketing major Jada Foster, who originally helped conceive of the concept of the cart, was initially excited for the project.

“It was such a weird request...” Foster said. “On my first day Shoureshi asked me to come up with bad food cart ideas on purpose. I liked it, actually! It was nice to let loose and not worry whether my ideas were ‘good’ or not.” But Shoureshi was not pleased when the food cart prototype proved to be surprisingly popular after interns set it up in the cart pod by the library.

“He and I were at the pop-up, and when people started trying to order the Louisiana BBQ Blast cotton candy, he just got this look on his face...it was like he was silently panicking. It’s funny, I thought he would want to see my ideas be successful. He turned to me and said, ‘Even your worst ideas do nothing to serve me. Your life is a misplaced effort,’ and just walked off! Oh my God, I was so upset. I thought he was trying to teach me a lesson about like, imposter syndrome or something. I guess he’s just a dick.” Foster continued. Shoureshi canceled the entire food cart project, including the giant spring hidden under the food cart, that would supposedly launch the cart into the Willamette River if all the cotton candy spinners were set to “Turbo Spin.”

The fake food cart fiasco was not the only suspicious aspect of the internship program. Theatre Acts major and Linguistics minor Nathan Blum was surprised when his advisor referred him to the program.

“It wasn’t an internship with a local theatre or anything like that, so immediately I was like, ‘what’s going on?’” Blum said. “I guess they found out I’m interested in working as a dialect coach because when I got to his office he asked me how to embody a French man called Jacques Bientot—how to speak with a French accent, how to develop a backstory, stuff like that. At first I thought he was getting into community theatre as a side hobby or something but he was acting kind of desperate.” Blum speculates that Shoureshi was trying to develop an alternate identity. Shoureshi’s staff have yet to comment on this allegation.

After Shoureshi’s resignation, Portland State admin are unsure of how to proceed with the internship program. Before Shoureshi’s leave, several students had left the program, including students we interviewed in the last issue: Kelly Parker, Smita Kapoor, and Carly Esposito. None of these students have expressed a desire to speak with us about their leave. Jada Foster considered leaving the program, but after learning about Shoureshi’s resignation, is considering further developing a business plan for the savory cotton candy cart.

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Artists on Campus

PSU Artists of Color Collective

by Jake Johnson

Some of the members of the PSU Artists of Color Collective pose for a group photo. (standing L-R) Ralph Pugay, Safiyah Maurice. (front row, L-R) Jordan Shelby, Maya Stoner, Tim Tran, and Vinh Pham. photo by Jake Johnson

The PSU Artists of Color Collective is a relatively new fixture at Portland State University. The group formed last year, but they haven’t wasted any time. In their first year, they’ve held their own group shows at the Sugar Cube and Littman galleries. They are ambitious and they don’t plan on stopping.

The collective aims to create a space for artists of color whose practices are across all disciplines—visual art, music, film, literature, design, sound, video, social practice, etc.—to be able to come together, inspire, and learn from one another.

Ralph Pugay is the Interim James DePreist Visiting Professor in PSU’s School of Art and Design. The James DePreist Visiting Professorship position is meant to create initiatives and advocate for underrepresented students within the department. When Safiyah Maurice came to Pugay with the idea to form the group during one of the classes she had with him, it clicked. Pugay felt like, “Oh yeah, that totally makes sense. I want to support this.”

Pugay said that his education has “for the most part, been very located in a Western canon type of conversation of what art is. And so I feel like I haven’t really asked questions around what it means to be an artist of color myself.”

Pugay felt like this would be useful for not only students, but professors and everyone in the community. Pugay said that it’s important for people who feel like they’re marginalized to have a place to go where they can feel understood. “I didn’t really realize how important that was until being a part of this group.”

Pugay was really interested in the way the group was really interested in getting together to have conversations about art with each other. PSU has many different initiatives to support recruitment of people from multicultural backgrounds. “But then, what are we doing to support them and make sure that they thrive here. I feel like this group has really been good in terms of just having a space to feel like I can be myself. I have a place where I can express my concerns without feeling like I’m in a space that’s not mine.”

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“The Artists of Color Collective have been so active in terms of just doing things that serve their intention very well,” Pugay said. “I’m just happy to be part of it and witness it basically. And see what they do, because it feels like it’s a real community. Through their activity a lot of conversations for faculty have happened around diversity and now there’s a faculty coalition around diversity issues and equity issues.”

Pugay said the School of Art and Design’s Director Lis Charman is very determined to make these conversations a priority because...
Chatting with the PSU Artists of Color Collective

I spoke with some of the group's members outside the opening reception for Manuel Arturo Abreu's exhibition, Beneath the Music from a Farther Room, in PSU's AB Lobby gallery. The collective was involved in putting that show together.

"I was taking black studies classes, I got really confident and empowered. I was like, 'we need a group, some type of support system with the BFA.' Because I am the only Black woman in the program. Community is so important for POC artists, because white people are...I don't have the words for it."

"Ignorant" Stoner suggested.

"Yeah," Maurice said. They laughed. "When we're divided it's harder to find a voice. And I think that we found a voice by coming together."

Maurice communicated with Tim Tran and Vinh Pham, "Our first planning session was super nice, 'We're gonna destroy white supremacy!' Maurice said. "It was really grand." Maurice laughed.

"It was really ambitious," Pham said.

"Super grand, and super ambitious," Maurice agreed.

"And super radical too," Tran added.

"Which it still is, it's just in different ways," Maurice said.

I sarcastically asked if they were able to destroy white supremacy, they said that they've been able to get a lot of visibility around campus this past year.

"I think we're commenting on white supremacy a lot," Tran said. "I don't think you can fully destroy it. But you can try. One white cube at a time." Referencing the white walls of the traditional gallery.

One major part of creating space for artists of color centers around creating a space where Artists of Color are free to just make art without having to explain racial experience or racial insensitivity to their peers.

Maya Stoner talked about an experience she had. "It was an art class and I was the only person of color in it." Stoner said. "We were all talking about this really famous performance artist and I mentioned something horrifically racist they had said. Everyone in the class was like, 'I would have to hear the rest of what they were saying and get the context before I make any judgement on this.' Basically everyone in the class was saying that this was not racist. And it just filled my body with discomfort and rage. I mean the thing the artist had said was 'indigenous people in Australia look like dinosaurs.' [That artist is Marina Abramovic] All this horrible stuff, and it was so blatant, and I was made to feel so alienated just for bringing that up."

"Like you're wrong," Maurice said. "Like you're crazy. Like you're not seeing it right. Even though [She laughs] It's the worst feeling."

"And then you're like, 'Do I wanna speak up again?'" Stoner said.

"But when you have united voices," Maurice said. "White people are afraid to talk back. To say you're wrong. That's something we want to keep pushing."

"Coming together...amplifies our voice," Tran said.

"The times that we've had white people at our Artists of Color meetings they're mostly listening too," Pham said. "Which has been really nice, being able to be the voices of our own collective."

Maurice said they need white people to come as allies. "People who will come and help us prosper. Help us rise above. Because we do need white people. We do need them, some of them, not all of them, the good ones."

"Also people that are wanting to educate themselves," Tran said. "People that are gonna be quiet, and will learn and listen."

"It's super unfortunate but it seems like white people's voices resonate with white people so much louder than People of Color's voices," Pham said. "So having allies on our side to be able to connect with those people is beneficial for us in the long run."

The increased visibility the collective and the narratives discussed through their work have made some people uncomfortable. During PSU Artists of Color Collective's exhibition, (US), at the Littman Gallery in April they "got a response in the gallery notebook, someone thought that we were being trite and ideological," Pham recalls. "The fact that they were trying to fight us on it means that we were successful in a way."

Pham said that the visibility has given them a platform to try and help inspire other people to build communities for other people. As a result of their platform they were able to talk to students in CORE classes about "our community and trying to build it as a group. And I think that's beneficial for them to see that at the beginning of their student careers so they can build that for themselves too."

"Coming together, we're better together," Maurice said. "We're getting way more opportunities together, and that's what it's about."

"We're giving each other space," Stoner said. "When we're together, it's like you can breathe easier; and when you can breathe easier, you can grow. It's allowed me to explore stuff in my own art I probably wouldn't have been able to if I didn't have some sort of community."

"Totally," Pham said. "There's a time and space we get to explore things that we wouldn't in normal class settings."

Stoner is an Okinawan-American artist and recently displayed an installation work in Us that explored the legacy of discrimination, oppression, erasure, and disregard of the Indigenous Okinawan people by the Japanese and American governments. "It's something that I've been researching and keeping up in the news on for years, but I felt like I could never talk to people about it, because I felt like no one cared. And that was really frustrating and kind of a sad feeling, to keep that inside, something I care so much about. Taking the class Art and Privilege and then being invited to participate in the group show with the Artists of Color Collective just gave me the space to do it; And let me give myself permission to speak about it."

"Just having conversations with Safiyah and Tim and the group I'm able to unpack so much more about my family and heritage by talking to people who come from a similar framework with parents of color in the U.S." Pham said. "There are a lot of things that we have similar histories that we're not able to communicate to white people generally. Sometimes we talk about how it really shows that some people haven't had to change who they appear as in order to survive. Like, adapt their what personality is in order to blend in, that's been a big thing that I've been unpacking through this collective as well."

"I think it just allows you the space to really be..." Jordan Shelby said. "Because in art classes especially, during critiques you have to go in with the knowledge that you're going to have to explain your work, and your being, to someone else. Whereas with this, you can state your purpose and state what your piece is about and people immediately understand it. And yeah, there are things that you might have to digest and break down of, like, this was specific to my experience. But as a whole you go in feeling comforted that you don't have to code switch. That you can just exist as an artist, and an artist of color. And you really are just an artist in this space, rather than the artist of color."

"Also being able to relate, just relate to each others experiences," Maurice said. "It's made my work a lot stronger. And then also, confidence. Like, have way more confidence than I did last year to talk about things. It probably still doesn't show, but, I feel better."

Most of the current members of the PSU Artists of Color Collective are set to graduate soon, in Spring and Summer, which could make continuing the groups presence and space they've carved out for themselves difficult.

Maurice isn't set to graduate until Winter 2020, and plans to "be here to carry the torch until then."

Regardless of their presence on campus, the
We are going to stay together, outside of PSU, because we have a show in September," Maurice said, and then invited Shelby to participate in that show.

"Yay! I am here for it!" Shelby responded. "I think we're trying to plan a community," Maurice said. "I honestly think we should get as many artists of color in it as possible."

"Yeah, I think this has been a real jumping off point, for creating a collective voice in Portland, not just at PSU," Pham said. "We have plans for a show and potentially running a gallery together.

"We have a lot of ideas in our back pockets," Tran said.

"It's going to go so much further than PSU," Pham said.

Something that Maurice has been thinking about in trying to create space is that the, "the school of art and design, they need a space for POC, not just in Smith, here, like, space, open space, just for POC and that's what I'm gonna advocate for until I leave."

Shelby added on to that sentiment, "I think PSU especially is good at, especially in the art department and the College of The Arts, is keeping us all very separated. Because, I have a lot of friends who are in graphic design, who are in architecture, who are in the music program, that I never see because our buildings are split up. In the business program, you have one central building that you all take classes in. And that's the same for every other, like, essentially school. And for us, we don't even have a common place where we can go and sit, we have the studios but, typically it's BFA and you don't really want to interrupt their flow. So it's really about creating a space for students and making it primarily a priority for students of color."

"I feel like, when you get, like, one other person of color, it's the first day of class 'Oh, I'm gonna sit by her!' You're so happy. So to have a group like this..." Stoner said.

Lisa Jarrett is an Assistant Professor of Community and Context Arts at PSU who also worked with the group. A few years ago a similar group focused on the needs of artists of color formed called Interaction. "And then an interesting thing happened: all of the students graduated and there wasn't a way to pass down the legacy of that intention."

Jarrett recounted how Maurice had worked closely with Pugay and "brought together some students that had expressed similar interests in needling community and spaces and ways to think and work that were specific to their interests as artists of color. Safiyah really took the lead on that with some other key wonderful students," Jarrett said. "So there's really been a core group of students that have really identified a need for the space for themselves and then maintained it. And they're all interestingly, again, fourth year students getting ready to graduate. I'm really hoping they're presence, because they really have had such a really strong presence this year for students makes it more of a legacy project where younger students sort of take up the reins and continue it, or modify it according to what they really need."

"It's sort of really wonderful to hear how many things they wanna do," Jarrett said. "How many possibilities there are and how exciting that is, to hear people like 'Oh, we wanna do this we wanna, what if we, what if, what if, what if? So, there's no shortage of desire, and there's no shortage of ideas."

Jarrett remembers a couple students who joined the group after a visiting artist lecture where an announcement was made about the group that the student may not have joined if they hadn't heard about it there.

Jarrett thinks that one of the best part of the group is that it shows "the desire to be more visible, and to show how substantial the contributions are of students of color within a community where we're often not the majority demographic."

Maurice said that the group's ability to give each other opportunities is important, "So you can succeed outside of school, because that's the goal; which they don't communicate here. We're taking professional practices, and it's all very individualized—which, I don't believe in that at all."

"We were talking about a community, and a community kind of turns into a family," Shelby said. "Where, like, I could move to New York and I can always come back and know that this is here. And so it's always like, nothing kind of changes, but everything does change."

"We hope that we can inspire more people to communicate what they need," Maurice said.

"It's really about empowering our fellow cohort," Shelby said. "Even asking for what they need, I don't feel like my voice is being valued in communicating that to either faculty or to other students. So it's really a form of empowering other people to empower other people."

"And also just, like, listening to each other," Tran added. "Ampifying each other's voices, but then showing that someone does care, and that we do exist."

"And then finding friendship within that too," Maurice said. "Especially POC friends." She laughs.

The art world, Portland, and PSU has a long way to go to become truly equitable for people of color. Finding community and supporting one another are important. When the group formed I thought it was nice that artists of color were making space for themselves to meet up. Then they started to put on shows. Safiyah Maurice has created a powerful group on campus who will go on to do great things in the art world, and she wants you to be a part of it.

PSU Artists of Color Collective has a show scheduled for the beginning of fall term that you should watch out for. If it is anything like the work they've done in the past, you won't want to miss it.

You can find them on Instagram at psaartistsofcolorcollective.
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