

# Feminist center pelvic exam comfortable

By Lia Saliccia  
Oregon Daily Emerald

One day last December, I found myself in an uncomfortable situation. It was time for my annual pelvic exam, and there I was, at the Student Health Center, flat on my back, my feet in the cold stirrups.

It was hard to see the doctor and I had no idea what he was doing with his instruments that

poked, prodded and scraped at me, but I tried to peer up at him and his work anyway, so that I might catch a clue of what was going on.

Just then, a woman with a stack of files breezed into the room, and the doctor lifted his eyes away from the work his hand was doing as he discussed someone else's case with the woman.

Feeling like an automobile that is temporarily abandoned while the mechanic takes his coffee break, I swore that I'd never again put myself into a situation where I felt so small and so violated.

That's why I accepted an offer from the Feminist Women's Health Center of Eugene to go through a routine annual exam.

The development director,

Sally Sheklow, said it offered an approach leading to empowerment rather than discomfort or victimization. I, like all of the clients, was told to ask as many questions as I could think of before, during and after the exam.

I arrived at the Feminist Women's Health Center in the morning and was greeted by the standard smile and forms to fill

out. A dish of condoms sat on the counter, with a sign that says "Free. Help Yourself." So I do.

Soon after, I was called into the back by Rita Conway, a naturopathic physician.

"What's that?" I asked my first question, and she told me that she is a licensed primary care provider, meaning she diagnoses and treats disease using a combination of standard medicine and alternative therapies. Only eight states, including Oregon, license this type of care provider.

The exam began, and as Rita took my blood pressure, pulse, heart and lungs, I remembered that this was an examination to see that my whole body was running smoothly, not just to see if one part functions.

I only had to undress from the waist down, and I felt less vulnerable with only half of my body naked under the drape.

Before I knew it, the breast exam part was over and it was time for the part that makes my stomach lurch in unpleasant anticipation — the Pap smear. The name itself conjures up forgotten images of the jeering boys who got to play outside while the girls had to stay in the classroom and watch the embarrassing "girl movie."

Rita explains to me that a Pap smear screens for cervical cancer, venereal warts and active herpes cells. So onto the table I went, trying not to flinch. But I was soon distracted by the absence of the cold metal stirrups that always make me feel like a prisoner.

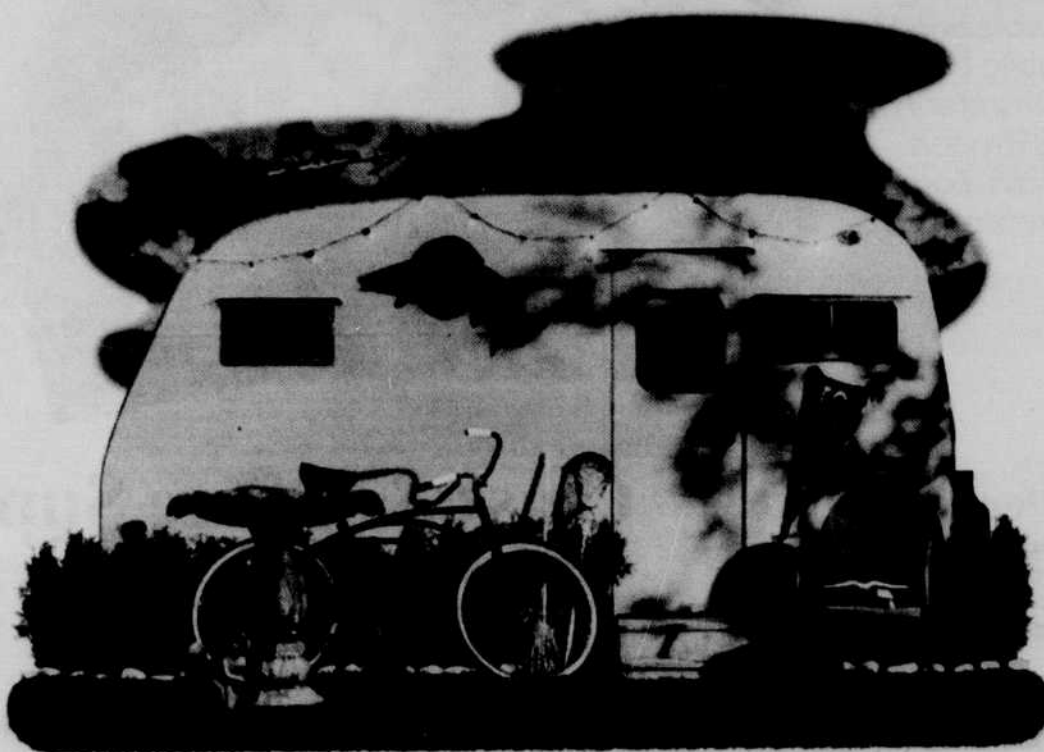
They were replaced by contraptions over which I draped my knees. The physician then pushed a button, and my back was suddenly raised upright, as if I were on one of those adjustable beds seen in commercials. As she put a small mirror into my hand, I realized with a start that I'll be able to watch the whole thing!

Turn to EXAM, Page 8

## CORRECTION

In the Sept. 27 issue of the *Emerald*, it was incorrectly stated that the \$50 late-registration fee had been abolished. The late-registration fee is a new fee that was instituted this year for students who enroll after the fourth day of classes. The story should have said the \$50 late-tuition payment fee was abolished.

AT&T can  
help you save money  
whether you live  
on campus, off campus,  
or somewhere  
in between.



Choose AT&T and save.

No matter where you choose to live, you can save money on your long distance phone bill with AT&T. On campus, we provide AT&T Long Distance Service savings through your college or university. Off campus, choose AT&T as your long distance carrier and save with AT&T Savings Options.

It's all part of **The i Plan™**. The personalized plan designed to fit the way you call.

To sign up, stop by our booth on campus or call  
1 800 654-0471, Ext. 4119.



**LOCKER RENTALS**

- \$5 Key Deposit
- \$4 Per Term

EMU Recreation Center  
Ground Floor, EMU  
346-3711