

Terri Grayum could be seen from a quarter-mile away as she approached a Portland coffee shop sporting a bright rose T-shirt and riding a bike adorned with pink silk flowers. Emma Goldman's proud face was emblazoned across her head-turning shirt, challenging "What Would Emma Do?"

What, indeed? The famous activist of the early 20th century agitated for freedom on many fronts, including speech, sexuality, women's rights, anarchism, birth control and union organization. In 1917 Francis Caffey, a U.S. attorney in New York, called her "an exceedingly dangerous woman."

Goldman is now the patron saint of Portland's chapter of Code Pink, a national movement of female peace and justice activists founded last fall in Washington, D.C. The group's name subverts traditional notions of femininity while making a dig at the Homeland Security Department's color alert system. It is also a reference to the term used in hospitals to alert staff of a child abduction in progress, "since the children of the world are being abducted—symbolically and often literally—by the global corporate culture and war machine," says the national Code Pink Web site.

For Grayum, a 52-year-old lesbian, musician and longtime Portland resident, Code Pink has been a lifeline. "I've never found a group where I felt so safe and where it's so easy to go out and be political," she says.

Plus, Code Pink's politics are right in line with her own. "I have huge concerns about the direction this country is going," Grayum says. "Globalization is so hurtful to human rights."

Grayum joined the group in March during the waning days of the war on Iraq. She had read about the organization in several progressive media sources and was elated to hear that a Portland chapter had sprung up. "I knew it would be the place for me," Grayum says.

Nationwide, Code Pink has sparked enthusiasm from a broad array of women for its hard-hitting anti-war, anti-globalization, pro-human rights and pro-environment messages, including high-profile agitators Alice Walker and Michelle Shocked. In addition to eye-catching pink posters and banners, the group uses stealth, humor and in-your-face tactics to deliver its missives.

During a May 29 protest, pink-clad Portlanders waved signs and banners outside Clear Channel's headquarters on Southwest Macadam Avenue. It was a national day of protesting media monopoly, organized in part by Code Pink.

But pink poster board was not all the group had up its sleeve. Two days earlier, several Portland Code Pink members had arranged a meeting with a Clear Channel sales manager. They confronted the official with their concerns about the pending



From left, Code Pinkers protest war April 12, media monopoly May 29 and the Rose Festival fleet June 7

LADIES WHO LAUNCH (PROTESTS, THAT IS)

Code Pink lets peace and justice activists show their true colors

by Meg Daly

Federal Communications Commission ruling to weaken media regulation laws.

According to Grayum, when the tête-à-tête with the sales manager was winding down, one Pink slowly and delicately lifted her skirt to reveal a "Pink Slip"—literally a pink item of lingerie with "You're fired!" printed boldly in black across the satiny fabric. (Other "Pink Slip" recipients include pro-war U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., and FCC Chairman Michael Powell.)

Media conglomeration is an issue of concern for Code Pink member Theresa Mitchell, a trans woman who has been the host of *Press Watch* on KBOO-FM for 12 years. The 30-minute show is "unapologetically left," says the 45-year-old, who provides her listeners "news you are not supposed to know."

Mitchell joined Code Pink last spring. She wanted to take action because of what she calls "the heinousness of attacking a nation on the basis of lies."

She was drawn to the group in part because she admires the work of two national Code Pink founders: Medea Benjamin of Global Exchange and author and activist Starhawk. Mitchell, like Grayum, appreciates the group's trademark humor and creativity.

"It's amusing to us that we can get away with



Theresa Mitchell (left) and Terri Grayum are two of the queers who have joined the national movement of female peace and justice activists

stuff the black bloc anarchists can't," she says. "People think we are a bunch of old ladies in pink."

Until they listen to Code Pink's messages, that is.

At a recent infiltration of the Western States Republican Leadership Conference, Code Pinkers left dozens of paper roses behind with "thorn" messages attached. One read, "While the government increases military spending, over 41 million Americans have no health insurance."

For Mitchell, a seasoned anti-imperialism activist, Code Pink has been gratifying both personally and politically. When she first approached the group about joining, she came out as "a trannie" right away. She wanted to make sure she would be accepted and was sensi-

tive to possible concerns about trans women "acting like men."

"If I step on you, you can kick me out," she told them in an e-mail. But the group welcomed her with open arms. "It's been great joining forces with all kinds of women," Mitchell says.

The main steering committee of Code Pink Portland is composed only of women, but the group welcomes men to participate in outreach. Recent actions include an informational appearance at the "Last Thursday" art walk June 26 on Northeast Alberta Street.

The group also joins the Portland Peaceful Response rallies at 5 p.m. Fridays in Pioneer Courthouse Square.

Code Pink Portland T-shirts are sold at In Other Words Women's Books and Resources, which donates half of the proceeds back to the group. According to store manager Sue Burns, the shirts have met with "an amazing response" from customers.

"They inspire excellent conversation," she says. "They are a wild, wonderful bunch of women."

In Other Words played host to an informational event on the life of Goldman this spring. "It was incredibly well attended," says Burns, noting that interest in Code Pink crosses generations and sexual orientations.

Mitchell admires Goldman for her civil disobedience. Her "stint in jail for opposing U.S. imperial designs was an admirable act," she says.

For Mitchell, concern about going to jail for her beliefs is one way her gender identity has affected her activism. "I'm skittish about getting arrested," she says. She fears that if she were arrested for civil disobedience, she would be "thrown in with men and possibly raped."

"Being a transsexual has made me an outsider," says Mitchell, who believes misogyny, homophobia and imperialism are linked. "My existence as a trans woman threatens the smooth fabric of imperialism."

The bright, ironic fabric of Code Pink dresses, hats, shirts and even fishnet stockings certainly clashed with the battleship gray of the Navy ships on view at the Rose Festival, during which Code Pink distributed more "thorn messages" and chanted: "We are Portland's Peace Fleet! We say war is obsolete!"

"People don't know what to do with us," Grayum told *Just Out* at the end of her interview. She then turned to climb on her bike, revealing on the back of her T-shirt Emma Goldman's famous saying: "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution." [E]

For more information about CODE PINK visit www.codepinkportland.org.

MEG DALY is a Portland free-lance writer.

DIGNIFIED PET SERVICES
Cremation & Memorials For Your Companion

- Unique Cremation Urns
- Memorial Jewelry
- Personalized Caskets
- Granite Monuments
- Books & Literature

8976 SW Tualatin Sherwood Road
Tualatin OR 97062
Phone (503) 885-2211
www.DignifiedPetServices.com
(A Division of Cascade Funeral Directors, Inc)

COLDWELL BANKER
EADIE ADAMS REALTY

"For Your Palm Springs Place in the Sun"




John W. Butler
Bus: (760) 778-5500
Fax: (760) 323-7832
Cell/Pgr: (760) 774-0685
E-mail: ccsvs@aol.com
431 South Palm Canyon
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Drive with Pride



Visit us online at:
www.reyreece.com
or schedule your appointment
503-256-3700
REY REECE DEALERSHIPS
VOLKSWAGEN-MITSUBISHI-USED
122nd & East Burnside
www.reyreece.com

OUR PLANTS ARE 6 ON THE KINSEY SCALE



CISTUS NURSERY
22711 NW GILLIHAN ROAD
SAUVIE ISLAND WED-SUN 10-5