

The Tush is Out There

Tails & tribulations on the PT table

My knee hurt. Fiery daggers shot through it when I stepped down, tried to cross my legs or squatted to retrieve whatever Pussy (not her real name) batted under the kitchen stove. Privileged to have health insurance, I mustered my co-pay and went to the doctor. She referred me to an orthopedist who referred me to physical therapy. Triple co-pay.



Unfortunately, I discovered that my friendly neighborhood lesbian physical therapist isn't authorized under my current health plan. I'd have to entrust my knee to a new practitioner, sight-unseen. If I'd been less under the influence of severe inflammation, I might have checked around, asked for references, looked on Angie's List. I mean really, who knows what homophobes may lurk in the mysterious field of physical therapy?

In the waiting room, nervous, I leafed through a *Time* magazine (who reads *Time*?). My new PT opened the door and called my name. Athletic, buff, short hair, polo shirt and khakis – he looked so much like my beloved dyke PT that my nerves calmed right down. He shook my hand in a friendly grip. "I'm Peter," he said. "Let's have a look."

Peter was low-key, all business, gentle. He walked me to the exam room, gestured toward the padded table. "Have a seat." He proceeded to scrutinize my knee and the maypole of muscles, tendons, and ligaments attached to it. We moved to the gym, an apparatus-filled room which could easily double as a doggie agility course. "Step up, bend, crouch, lunge," Peter instructed. "Close your eyes and balance on your left foot."

I steadied myself, breathed, struggled to remain upright.

Back in the exam room Peter had me lie on the table, roll onto my left side,

I squeezed my buns to maintain the pose. My breath made Darth Vader sounds.

then right, face down, on my back. He maneuvered my leg this way and that. "Squeeze. Resist. Push. Lift." Peter measured my lower extremity's strength, range of motion, flexion, extension – pretty much everything except barometric pressure.

"Shoulders and feet flat on the table, arch your back into a bridge." Peter said. "Hold." In yoga, this would be known as the double-chin-asphyxiation posture. Peter focused on his watch and timed my endurance in this position. I squeezed my buns to maintain the pose. My breath made Darth Vader sounds. Peter asked, "So, what do you write?"

Oxygen deprivation made me hesitate before I remembered listing *writer* as my occupation on the PT intake form – anything to invoke the publishing goddesses. "Oh," I grunted, still arched, straining, "A humor column."

"*Eugene Weekly*, right?" Peter kept watching his timer.

Buttcks now on fire and neck folds strangling, I managed to murmur "Mmm-hmmm."

"What's it about?" A standard question. All my columns are about my lesbo life, but did I really want to come out at this moment? My pelvis thrust skyward and barely breathing, in pain, vulnerable. How exposed do I need to be? Now I sounded like Gollum, "This week's is menopause." True, but not the whole truth.

"Oh, right," Peter chuckled. He rested his warm hand on my throbbing knee. "My wife and I read that and laughed our asses off."

Asses? All I could think of was that my own ass was now in dire distress, fighting to maintain my seriously sagging arched bridge. At least we'd dispensed with the coming out thing.

Finally, the tush-torture test was over. Peter jotted notes in my chart and rolled close to the exam table on his wheeled stool. Turns out, Peter explained in strictly clinical terms, that my behind is what's behind my knee problem. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, my derriere, although unquestionably ample, is too weak to do its job of supporting my knee. De butt bone connected to de knee bone – who knew?

Peter sent me home with a stretchy band and two pages of exercises to strengthen my glutes – minimus, medius and maximus. My knee still hurts, but finding a new fan feels pretty good.

Award-winning writer Sally Sheklow has narrated her saga of pain for EW since 1999.

How to Be Happy

by Shannon Wheeler



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BORED & HARMLESS

The description of dangerous "wayward youth" in the article "Mean Eugene" (8/14) is out of line. Those "leatherbound peacocks" are usually either A) peaceful, traveling beatniks and punk rockers who come to Eugene to enjoy its natural beauty and music scene, B) bored (and harmless) kids who want cigarettes and/or soda or C) houseless people who just want a place to sit down and not get hassled. And they usually say "Please," "Thank you" and "Good afternoon." I have learned this from personal interaction, not distant and nervous observation. An attacker may just as easily be the polo shirt-wearing suburbanite with nothing better to do.

Yes, violent people sometimes wear untidy leather garments downtown. But nowhere in your article does it say, "Clay's assailants looked like the spangers in front of the library." The assault didn't even occur downtown. This description of scruffy kids and the use of it in this article could only be based on personal feelings. Prejudiced statements like this have helped to grow a web of fear across this city, changing attitudes from, "There are dangerous young adults downtown," to "Every young adult downtown is dangerous." In this environment it is easy to be labeled dangerous just for utilizing our public spaces while looking a certain way.

A suggestion to *EW*: Why not interview the scary high-schoolers at the bus station or the guy riding the bike loaded down with bottles? As opposed to just writing what others think of them.

Christine Anderson
Eugene

IGNORE YOURSELF

This is a response to Michael McDonald's letter (8/14) about the art on the cover by a once local artist Frustr8 (Lopez). In the last paragraph he writes, "But I have to wonder why you chose this particular artist, and this particular image." Did you read the article? The artist got his start here in Eugene as an up-and-coming artist and has since gained national recognition for his

skills. The artist is also spending three weeks up here (probably on others' couches) to give back to our community by encouraging the youth in their artistic growth and channeling their energy into something positive.

The person depicted on the cover, Erykah Badu, is using the art on her MySpace page for the whole world to see, so I would guess she likes it and does not feel insulted or degraded at all. Instead of worrying about something that you took no time to educate yourself about, you should be worrying about your friends and family who are probably voting for McCain because they are racists and you feel bad about it. So shame on you for not reading the article and for being completely out of touch with what really matters. Next time feel free to ignore yourself!!

Randy Smith
Eugene

ENFORCE RESPECT

Since I can smell bullshit even before it hits the ground, I would like to preemptively respond to the inevitable brouhaha which will be clogging *EW* letters pages in the wake of the recently passed exclusion ordinance.

First of all, the motivation behind the exclusion ordinance is not "fear of youth," desire to establish a "police state," "discomfort with the homeless," "intolerance of diversity," or any of the other crackpot theories which will surely be proffered by our local keyboard-wielding freedom fighters. (Side remark to the amateur civil rights lawyers out there: The ACLU expressly stated that it was objecting to the ordinance on *procedural* grounds, not constitutional ones, since—believe it or not—exclusion ordinances do not violate the Bill of Rights.)

In point of fact, anyone who does not buy, sell or use drugs, who respects private property, who observes quiet hours after 10 pm, who does not accost or harrass passers-by and who generally conducts themselves in a courteous and civilized manner is more