


Devil's Advocate

By ANNA NEMCHUK

News editor

I am woman, hear me purr

I like having long hair. I like how small my hands are, like the curve of my collarbone, like the shape of my mouth.

I love perfume and I have enough lip-gloss to last a regiment of beauty pageant contestants for 3.4 years. I like having doors held for me, like assistance with my coat, love 4-inch heels.

I love being girly.

This, of course, makes me sexist. Or perhaps I'm just an object of pity, a victim having thoroughly fallen to men's chauvinistic expectations while my more liberated sisters, those of the shaven heads and ripped army pants, luxuriate freely in their jobs as firefighters and chain-smoke and belch in an orgy of emancipation.

What does it mean to be female? We range from the extreme of the Victorian era to the biker age, from bound feet, dresses encompassing small continents and whalebone corsets to shoulder pads, muscle shirts and fetish corsets and still no one can come up with a satisfactory definition.

What does it mean to be a girl, to be feminine? There are a few ways in which I wax traditional, but having been raised by Old Europe, I must admit to more than a few inbred gender preferences.

I dislike what has come to be called "feminism" - not just the support of women but the rabid hatred of male and the simultaneous mimicry thereof, the insistence on "equality" in all things, the frantic thrusts away from anything soft and sweet and conventionally ladylike.

We're different, girls and boys, and what seems so often to slip through the cracks is that it isn't bad; there's a huge chasm, a world of disparity between judging from those variances that one is superior to the other, stronger or better, and wallowing in them, basking in the striking contrast that male and female present.

What makes a girl? Sex hormones, brain chemistry, sexual orientation, preferences for pink over blue, a sympathetic nature, physiological and psychological traits, what? Who's to say that a woman doesn't like one night stands or roses, doesn't feel vulnerable or cruel, doesn't have a vagina and use it copiously or a penis and a craving for the former along with a severe chocolate addiction?

I favor the unwelcome view that there are no clear boundaries. I feel feminine in silk and cats and whips, but she may prefer salt and verdigris hair dye and long walks through Tokyo's slums. So be a girl, if you feel like it, if you want to.

I like boys and I like girls. I like them at different times for different reasons. I love the sight of guys brushing women's hair and a woman painting a house.

But my lipgloss is my own.

Circus magic at Smith Center

 By DANELLE MEYER
Staff writer

From the first act to the last bow, the audience was won over by the San Francisco Circus Center's performance at the Smith Center last Saturday.

Whether being dazzled by bubbles, yo-yos, magic, trapeze or any of the other amazing performances, the show was incredible.

Master of Ceremonies Jeff Raz came out before each performance and got the audience laughing with jokes and all sorts of tricks from juggling to balancing a ladder on his chin. After the first show by the Youth Circus, Raz introduced The Bubble-Smith, Sterling Johnston.

Children ran up to the stage in hopes of being splattered by the amazing bubbles he created. Johnston wowed by creating bubble forms that most never thought imaginable. He would dip his hands into the soap and out of thin air would be large and small bubbles. Johnston also did tricks like putting smaller bubbles into bigger ones and creating long bubbles that looked like snakes.

After the bubbles were put away, Jennings McCown and XiaoHong Weng came out on stage to perform the Iron Monkey show.

One of the more memorable moments came when the two held each other up in the air with only their hands. They stunned the audience with impossible positions that showed off their ability to keep balance while hoisting each other into the air.

The Youth Circus performed two more times during the night, once with rings and the other with a jump rope. Both performances were magical as people flipped through rings held up by the feet of two other performers.

"I do enjoy this a lot. It isn't my plan to be professional but it keeps me in shape so I do plan to stay with it awhile," said Alec Kauf, who is actually the son of Broadcasting Instructor & Director of Television Services Gary Kauf.

Midway into the show, the audience was entertained by The Yo-Yo King, David Capurro. He came out with attitude and threw mean spins and twirls. At the end of his performance his yo-yo flew into the air and into his pocket as he walked off stage to the rock music's beat.

The most striking performances included the contortion act by the Mystic Pixies, the Magic show by Alex Gonzalez and the Aerial Silk act by Brett Womac.

Womac stunned audiences by

climbing silk ribbons that hung from the ceiling. When Womac would climb the silk it was unbelievably fast and most were afraid to look away for fear of missing an outstanding moment.

"I started training in elementary. It's an adventure every time I perform. I have to prepare myself each time because I get so nervous before; it is such a relief when I'm done," said Womac.

Magic took on new meaning when Gonzalez came out. Strings and pieces of cloth would turn into doves. Cards would disappear and reappear in the air. When you would think he couldn't pull anything else out of his sleeve he would cough up cards and swallow golf balls.

"I have been doing this for seven years. It is great. I think that I feel really blessed I can do something I love and can make a living out of it. This was my last show with everyone before I go on tour. It was great. We have such a family type atmosphere," said Gonzalez.

Featuring Dasha Sovik, Idanna Zharzhavskaya, Natasha Patterson and Julie Bergez, The Mystic Pixies completely won over the audience as their bodies contorted and did things that one would not think were possible.

Whether lying with their bodies

hung across their heads or walking with their faces in between their legs, the performance was glittering. Unreal poses were created as bodies stacked on top of each other to create pyramids of stunning flexes.

"We train for 40 hours a week," said Patterson.

"I love performing. It's such a great experience to meet new audiences," said Zharzhavskaya.

"The circus would not be complete without a trapeze act," said Raz.

The first trapeze act was a solo performance by Abi Munn, who dangled through the air by his legs, feet, hands and anything else that could be latched around the trapeze bar.

The night ended with a double act by brother and sister Ena Dallas and Danny Sarnowski, who made a story out of their trapeze act with equally entertaining music and powerful poses.

"When I perform I feel like I'm showing something very special with others that I want them to know," said Dallas.

"I had a great time here. It is the hardest thing that I have ever done, but I wouldn't want to do anything else. I regret that I can't do it forever," said Sarnowski.

Women's History Month

Women in danger of losing rights won in '60s, '70s

EDITOR'S NOTE - In honor of Women's History Month, the Monitor has decided to run a series that delves into issues still pertinent to women in 2006.

The series will run through the month of March with a new topic and Q&A every week.

 By JOYCE LEUNG
Features editor

As we reflect upon the gains that women have made since the Women's Rights Movement of the '60s, we have to ask ourselves, "Should we be complacent?" or "Should we be expecting more?"

Women have undoubtedly broken many barriers, from infiltrating the "Old Boy's Club" in corporate America and staking a place on the *Fortune* 500 list to achieving many firsts - the most recent being the election of female presidents in Germany, Liberia and Chile in 2006. Yet, as Professor of English and Women's Studies Cynthia Lee Katona warns, the momentum for Women's Rights has slowed.

Perhaps it is because of the efforts of previous generations that protested, marched and refused to settle for less than equal that the current generation is shrouded in comfort and security.

Still, when you evaluate the statistics and facts, there are only seven women CEOs among the 500 companies on *Fortune's* list and women make only 77 cents on the dollar compared to men. And if we look globally, we see that female babies are being given up at alarming rates, domestic violence is often overlooked and sex trafficking is prevalent.

Should we settle for this?



Professor of English and Women's Studies Cynthia Lee Katona. Staff photo.

Q: Do you think a women's history month is still relevant today?

A: I don't know how much anybody pays attention to women's history month anymore. It seems to me there needs to be maybe less of a women's history month than a real kind of return to the issues of the second wave of the women's movement.

Young women, I think, don't realize they're about to lose all their rights again.

So women's history month is kind of symbolic and that's very nice but I think probably women's issues are in trouble right at the moment and I'd probably rather see something serious done about that.

I think the most obvious thing is that we have a new Supreme Court and we have a state that's going to try to push some legislation up to the Supreme Court to outlaw abortion completely. No exceptions.

That test case has a chance of

overturning *Roe v. Wade*. That's one of the major accomplishments of the second wave of the women's movement and I believe it's just the beginning of an attempt to take us back culturally maybe to the '50s, which is maybe not the best thing for women.

The problem is there's a whole new generation. Young women had best watch those rights or they're going to lose them again.

In other words, the apathy could be the end of a lot of the gains that were made in the '60s and '70s. As an older feminist, one who wants to retire, I'd really like to see young women make sure they hold onto those rights and perhaps address some of the issues that still need addressing, like they only make 76 cents on the dollar for what men make.

Q: 77 now actually.

A: Oh is it really 77 cents now? Fantastic. But it's not enough to make three quarters of what men do for the same work. It's not right. So there are inequality issues that way.

There is still a glass ceiling for women in corporate America. All you have to do is look at who the presidents of the *Fortune* 500 are to see that it's not a thought that I have, it's a fact.

I think women would be wise to keep an eye on things.

Q: Where do you think women stand now?

A: I think they're backsliding. For one thing, there is a backlash and I think that the conservative agenda has been very effective in the last eight or nine years.

I just think that women should

be vigilant right now.

Q: What does it mean to be a feminist today?

A: Last semester I taught a "Women in the Western World" course and actually one thing I was shocked at was that so many young women don't want to be considered feminist.

They somehow think that if you're a feminist you have to hate men or that you're a lesbian-it's just associated in their minds with a lot of things that aren't necessarily the case. A feminist just wants equal rights under the law for women. It's as simple as that. And look, we still don't have the Equal Rights Amendment.

Q: Are there battles left to be won?

A: This seems like it's not a women's issue but the Patriot Act, which has just been renewed by the government, can be used against women.

Right now we're worried about the Patriot Act being used against Muslims or Arabs or whatever but it will be used against whatever minority the government doesn't like if it's gays, if it's women, if it's a racial minority.

I mean, this country has a history. We don't have a very good track record. So why would we give the government all this ultimate power?

The Patriot Act is a women's issue because women and minorities are the first people who the government starts to keep tabs on, starts to interfere with when individual rights are taken away. So women can't afford to let that happen without paying attention.