



THE VOYAGER

MAY 2022



A NOTE FROM
THE
NEWSPAPER
STAFF

HAPPY SPRING!

AS ALWAYS THERE IS A
WIDE ARRAY OF ISSUES
IN THIS MUST READ
EDITION OF THE
VOYAGER!!

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On the front cover: Beautiful scenery of San Juan, Puerto Rico taken by Paridhi Bhardwaj.

POP-CULTURE FEMINISM: MISOGYNY REBRANDED? An Editorial BY UMASOFIA SRIVASTAVA

Nowadays everything is over complicated for the sake of being complicated, the goal is to confuse anyone willing to learn among the endless tirade of propaganda. With the media becoming littered with so many obscure buzzwords and misinformation masquerading as so-called “opinions,” *feminism* is one of the topics that’s true meaning is often lost among the rubble.

While feminism is perceived to be a gendered term, the original goal of the movement was to bring everyone together through shared equality, with the said focus being on the systemic oppression of women. But like most things that start with good intentions, *feminism* has been reduced from being an empowering symbol of unity to something that is ridiculed by most because of an immature demographic. It is a demographic that is small, but outspoken, and is made up of the ill-informed or simply the ignorant. These “pop culture feminists” don’t understand the history of feminism and employ the word “feminism” however they choose, not realizing the detriment of their actions to the cause. The young women who coined the term “pick me girl” -- (girls who try to appeal to males for validation)-- but is it not the women singling other women out who are the true “pick-me’s”? Is it truly the fault of the “pick-me’s” in question that they feel as if they have to change themselves to make themselves fit the mold of the “desired woman” created by patriarchal standards?

Pop-culture feminists are the women who ridicule other women for being mothers, who preach freedom of choice, but only if that choice is to find an “actual job” -- as if motherhood is not enough -- and look down on the women who choose not to “work”. The idea of freedom of choice has been so greatly skewed, to the point that women are the foremost attackers of other women. This is not referring to physical conflict, but rather the instinct to turn on other women to get ahead. One of my favorite authors, radical feminist Bonnie Burstow, shows this in the description of a scenario all too familiar to most of us: “Often father and daughter look down on mother (woman) together. They exchange

meaningful glances when she misses a point. They agree that she is not bright as they are, and cannot reason as they do. This collusion does not save the daughter from the mother’s fate”. Eventually, the daughter will become the mother; whether she decides to have children or not has nothing to do with the fact.

Make no mistake, *feminism* is for everyone and this means that the men in support of the movement can also be part of the problem. The sad truth is we need men on our side to support us because then our issues will be more likely to be listened to. That isn't to say they don't have their issues: toxic masculinity and male sexual assault. But scrolling through social media, I see countless men putting on skirts and eyeliner and claiming they've done something revolutionary while millions of young girls pine after them in the comments. While yes, men should be allowed to wear what they want, I doubt that straight white males will go out in public wearing a mini skirt. This isn't the only performative act that can be seen among the male “feminists”; most of the time male sexual assault and harassment are only brought up to discredit women sharing their own sexual harassment stories. *it happens to us too* and *not all men* are as harmful as *she was asking for it* or *innocent until proven guilty*.

People don’t realize how deeply ingrained misogyny is in our society; the women I mentioned as examples of pop culture feminists are simply a product of this imbalance in society, where they feel it's a zero-sum game among other women. It's no secret that femininity is looked down upon; why do most girls go through a tomboy phase where they claim to hate dolls and the color pink, things we’ve been taught to associate as girly. While some girls may genuinely dislike such things, they shouldn’t feel like they have to avoid them outright just to be taken seriously. These girls then learn not to wear things when they’re older if they want to be respected, a vicious cycle that repeats itself generation after generation.

The lesser-known evil is the commoditization of femininity, or how big corporations exploit the Feminist movement to make money. Shirts that read “Empowered women empower women” and “my body my choice” were bought from companies that underpay their workers (no surprise, female employees get paid the lowest wages) and force them to work long hours in inhumane conditions (news

flash: American working rights might date back to the Industrial Revolution, but barely anything is made in the USA).

This is where Feminism’s true importance lies; with each wave, we’ve been able to break the stereotypes that come with being a woman, from dealing with our right to vote and own property, to anti-discrimination and reproductive rights, and now the foremost issue of combating sexual harassment and assault. As women, we must remember that we are stronger in numbers and we should focus our attention on solving our shared issues. Together.

***SPOTTED LANTERNFLIES* BY HOPE ROSEN**

Do you remember those bugs that everybody told you to squash last year? The ones with the red wings and dark black spots? Well, these insects are called spotted lanternflies, and it looks like they’re coming back this year for another season.

But why are they so dangerous? Spotted lanternflies (SLF), scientifically known as *lycorma delicatula*, feed on plants by using their sharp mouthpart to feed on the sap from multiple different plants. Even though they can feed on over seventy plant species, these insects prefer to feed on ones that are important to our economies, such as grapevines, maples, and black walnuts. When feeding on these plants, the SLF is stressing them, leading the plants to have decreased health and potentially die.

Not only do SLF contribute to the decline of plants in the area, but as they are feeding, they excrete honeydew that can do a multitude of things. This honeydew can attract bees and wasps and promotes the growth of moldy fungi that can cover the plant, as well as forest understories, patio furniture, cars, and more.

So yes, these insects greatly decrease the quality of life. But luckily, there are ways to help stop the spread of them (there is no way to eliminate them). Just like last year, by stomping out SLF, you can keep one less economically-important plant from dying. In the fall, when the adult spotted lanternflies lay eggs, you can also preserve the environment by

crushing them and scraping them. These eggs, laying on outdoor surfaces such as tree trunks, lawn furniture, and vehicles can be crushed with items such as sticks or plastic cards, and then scraped into bags or plastic containers to be disposed of.

With this being said, the best time to catch SLF is in the evenings or at night beginning in July. At this time, they tend to gather in large masses on tree trunks or plant stems. Moreso adults, who are recognizable for their red wings with black spots, then babies, who look like small, colorful beetles.

So, if you see any spotted lanternflies this spring and summertime, be sure to stomp them out, for our environment’s sake.

***MAY THE FOURTH BE PLASTIC-FREE* By AI TAI**

Starting on May 4th, New Jersey will ban the provision of all single-use bags, plastic or paper, and polystyrene foam (better known as styrofoam) containers. This ban will affect all retail stores, supermarkets, and food service establishments within the state. These measures come as no surprise to most residents, as New Jersey has been gradually tightening restrictions on single-use products in its initiative to decrease overproduction of disposables and solid-waste pollution.

Within this plastic bag act, facts on the current consumption crisis are listed. According the Legislature, “since 1950, global annual production of plastics has increased from two million tons to over 381 million tons; that approximately one third of all plastics produced are single-use plastics, which are plastics designed to be used only once and then thrown away; and that an estimated 100 billion single-use plastic carryout bags and 25 billion styrofoam plastic coffee cups are thrown away in the United States each year.” What happens next is even more alarming. Less than nine percent of these hundreds of millions of tons are recycled in the US each year. The rest of it gets incinerated, releasing carcinogens and other toxic gasses like carbon monoxide into the air, becomes litter, or is dumped into landfills. Aside from the substantial spatial requirements and expenses that come along with landfills, they are not even effective at

keeping the trash at bay, both literally and figuratively.

Discarded single-use plastic products do not biodegrade into the environment. Instead, they break down into smaller, harder to detect pieces called microplastics which can be washed into waterways. At the current rate of contamination, “The Legislature further finds that approximately eight million tons of plastic end up in the oceans annually; that, without action, scientists estimate that by 2050 the mass of plastic pollution in the ocean will exceed the mass of fish.” As fish and other aquatic life consume these microplastics, they will spread to more organisms through natural food chains, snowballing the issue.

On the other hand, single-use paper bags have been deemed harmful to the environment, despite being biodegradable, because they require “as much or more energy and resources to manufacture and transport than single-use plastic carryout bags and contribute to harmful air emissions.”

Although New Jersey is only one state, it solely generates around 23 million tons of solid waste annually, so this new law should be effective in significantly lowering the state’s pollution and slowing the environmental crisis already set in place. As the act claims, these radical changes are necessary “to ensure that future generations have a clean and healthy environment to live, work, and recreate in.”

EQUAL PAY FOR US WOMEN’S SOCCER *By* ***SIDDHI PATEL***

In every topic in history, there is a very high chance that a subsection will be about women during that period. Specifically, their roles in society; their expectations; their importance (if they have any); and mainly, equality where women’s rights and voting are particularly looked at. Due to this fact, many people—both adults and kids—have the point of view that “equality” is an ideology from the past because women today have the same “rights” as a man. However, are they really equal to one another?

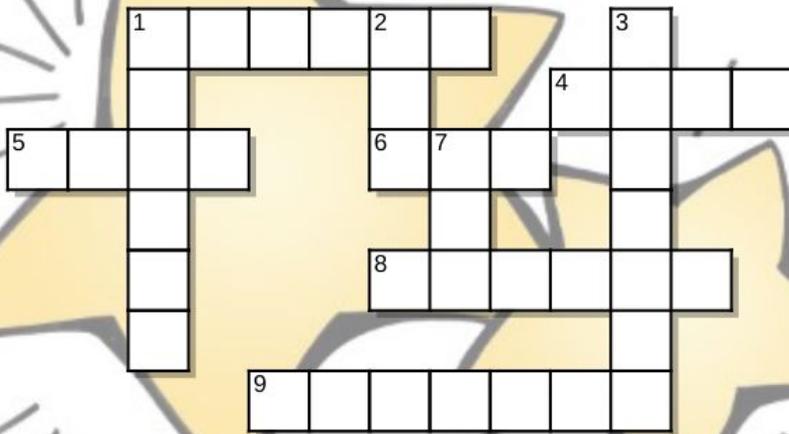
Many have heard of the U.S. women’s soccer team not receiving equal pay as the men’s team for several years now. However, recently the fight for equal pay has been the women’s team’s priority. The players uphold the

fact they are paid less by the United States Soccer Federation compared to the men. This can be a difference of at least tens of thousands of dollars for top players in a given year or a major difference in friendly bonuses between the two teams. The highest friendly bonus for the men (\$17,625 for beating a top-tier team) is more than double the women's highest bonus (\$8,500 for beating a top-tier team). Comparatively, for the bottom-tier team, the men each get a bonus of \$6,250 just for tying a bottom-tier team, while the women get \$0 for the same thing. Additionally, they have argued that the women’s team has collected more trophies and begun to produce more revenue than the men, however, conditions have not improved.

Action was taken in 2016 when attorneys for players: Rapinoe, Morgan Lloyd, Sauerbrunn, and Solo filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission claiming the women’s team should be paid an equal amount as the U.S. Men’s National Team. Significantly, in 2019 when 28 members of the USWNT filed a lawsuit under the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, alleging that women's players were paid a total of \$1.725 million in bonuses after winning the World Cup in 2015; while the men's players were given \$5.375 million in bonuses in 2014 by the same federation despite being eliminated in the round of 16. However, a federal judge threw out a majority of the lawsuit in 2020, saying that women's players were actually paid more in total compensation than their male counterparts. The athletes' lawyers appealed the decision, saying the women significantly outperformed the men, who have never won a World Cup. Despite a federal judge throwing out the majority of the lawsuit in 2020 and more, a settlement was reached.

The U.S. women's national team and the U.S. Soccer Federation announced on February 22, 2022, that they have reached an agreement that will resolve the lawsuit filed by the group of players. The agreement will see the U.S. Soccer Federation pay the USWNT players a total of \$24 million and promises equal pay with the men's team going forward. Although this was far less than the \$67 million the players sought, it was more than they might have expected after the District Court rejected their pay equity claims. The players express this key moment of history as a victory for all women playing sports.

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Salt-cured fish eggs
- 4 Video blog
- 5 "In ____ of gifts..."
- 6 Cul-de-__
- 8 The Star-_____
(NJ Newspaper)
- 9 Second Sunday
in May celebrates

DOWN

- 1 ____ blossom
- 2 Magazine inserts
- 3 April showers
bring May _____
- 7 What A stands for
in card games

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ADVISOR:
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GO VIKES!!!!!!