

REPORTS FROM THE FRONT – FALL 2009

Dear GGOT diary,

We performed this evening in Easton, PA at Lafayette College and what an awesome and fun show it was! We kicked off the night with my wig flying off. No worries, though. I caught it in mid air!

We had the best student volunteer to help us out. His name was Chris, but he later chose Frida Kahlo as his Guerrilla Girl On Tour name. During rehearsals he was amazing! He knew all his lines and was game to learn the improv that we threw at him. What was really funny, though, was that when we called him onstage it was obvious that he wasn't really expecting it. He had gotten quite comfortable in his audience chair. When we began our first improv, he sort of stood there, waiting for us to give him some clue as to what should happen next. It was apparent that he was a little shaken by the rousing welcome he received from the audience and so had forgotten a lot of what we rehearsed. After a few nervous minutes, he relaxed and fell completely into his stage persona as Frida. Chris/Frida was by far one of my favorite volunteer's to date!

All in all I won't forget Lafayette....it was a great show, volunteer and audience. I can't wait to hit the road again.

~Josephine Baker
November 23, 2009

Dear Deezers,

Whirlwind tour to Easton, PA. We hopped in our rental car, threw on the tunes, sped through the Lincoln tunnel to what we thought would soon be Pennsylvania. After about forty-five minutes of driving, we found ourselves at the Holland Tunnel. It wouldn't have been embarrassing if I wasn't publicly posting this diary, but I am and it is so there's a little lesson about staying humble. They say, "well-behaved women rarely make history," and we disobeyed THE RULES OF THE ROAD to make this mistake. trailblazers I guess.

Nafis our gracious host, welcomed us with hands ready to carry prop bags and bottles of water for thirsty soldiers marching through the deserts of sexism. I wish we were marching through the DESSERTS of sexism! It would have been a more fun story for the grandchildren, but as they say, "you can't live life through the eyes of the grandchildren." Too much candy from the floor, I guess.

The crowd was totally into our student volunteer, Chris--- as were we. He was a fabulous actor and game for ridiculousness. A total double whammie. Our tech folks were quick on

the draw, and for that I was grateful--thanksgiving style. My favorite moment of the show was pretending to be a drunk co-ed in the date-rape intervention skits. Pretending to be drunk is actually more intoxicating than actual drunkenness. None of that pesky nausea and memory loss. It's like being your own stunt woman.

Lafayette treated us like queens and I wouldn't have it any other way. We left with the sweat of catharsis on our tongues and the bulge of college tortilla wraps in our bellies and headed back to the Lincoln Tunnel. We tried not to make eye contact with the Holland Tunnel.

Find your inner grand-child,
Julia Child
November 23, 2009

Hello Diary,

After taking the scenic route through the industrial back alleys of Jersey City (why do Josephine Baker and myself always find ourselves there?) we finally made it to the sprawling, picturesque campus of Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. Aphra Behn was busy developing the play-writing genre, but we knew she was only a tweet, text, blog or page away.

What did we GGOTs find at Lafayette?

Liberal campus? Check. Astoundingly equal ratio of male to female faculty members? Check. The feminist uproar caused by a PA Representative Joe Pitts, co-author of the Stupak Amendment in the Affordable Health Care for America Act? Check.

No one seemed to protest when we voiced our disgust over Pennsylvania's own Representative, Joe Pitts. The amendment encroaches on a woman's Constitutional right to an abortion by putting several road blocks in her way. Namely, by making the woman purchase riders--supplemental policies that would cover abortions--on a private insurance program if she accepts federal affordability credits from the new insurance plan, which may lead many back to the days of back alley abortions. Joe Pitts, we know you're a member of the Pro-Life Caucus and a chairman of the Fatherhood Promotion Task Force (Huhh?!), but how about joining the "**Freewill Motherhood Promotion and Women's Rights Task Force?**" (If someone does start said group, please let us know!)

And there were several men in attendance who nodded in agreement at our ideals and raised their hands loud and proud when asked if they were feminists, which always make me happy and hopeful that feminism is losing it's "dirty F- word" reputation of late.

There was so much love at Lafayette, including a standing ovation (go girls!) that one of the questions in the post-performance talk back stood out to me. "Do you feel like you're preaching to the choir at most of your college campus shows?". Well, no, actually. Quite often our shows are mandatory assemblies during women's history month or violence

against women week where we are met with a barrage of scowls and stoicism. At those times we roll-up our sleeves and become the Rosie Riveters of Feminism, breaking down stereotypes and building awareness one block at a time. But Julia Child answered this question best with "That's great; we love preaching to the choir!". It's true, we love rallying the troops with the latest statistics and political hot topics so people will become even more inspired to make change.

Thank you Lafayette College for being such gracious hosts and being our choir of feminism!

Oh, and for the record, Rep. Joe Pitts was actually born in Kentucky.

xxxxoo,
Anne Sexton

Dearest Book,

I can't think of a better way to spend my birthday than to perform "Silence Is Violence" at RIT's annual "Take Back The Night" rally with Julia Child and Edith Evans. Yes, the morning I turned none of your business (as Julia would say) I was boarding a US airways flight to the beautiful and chilly city of Rochester with my two BGF's (best guerrilla friends). After checking into our hotel and singing a few musical theatre medleys we head off to the RIT campus – a huge sprawling brick conglomerate of ginormous buildings and winding roads. We find the theatre and meet our fabulous hostess, Susanne, who greets us with veggie wraps and coffee...the sure fire quick way into our hearts. After a tech rehearsal that was interrupted by a constant changeover of the tech crew we go over our posters, DV stats and improvisations on date rape and bystander intervention. We meet our fearless student volunteer, Nevin, who takes the name of Frida Kahlo as an honorary member of Guerrilla Girls On Tour for a day. Backstage it's all warm ups we recently learned at Upright Citizens Brigade (yes, we are all trained in long form improv techniques) and we're off on the first show of the season.

A few hilarious mishaps both planned (Obama dances a la Saturday Night Fever) and not planned (Julia's wig flies off) later Julia and Edith surprise me when the audience sings a loud "Happy Birthday" to me at the end of the show. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Yes, we had the audience practicing chanting all through the performance so that by the end and the beginning of the "Take Back The Night" rally we'd all be in fine voice for our march around the gym. As a survivor of domestic violence it was particularly poignant and touching for me to be doing this on my birthday...god knows there was many a chance that I would not have made it past my 27th! A fine Q and A ended our two hour show and we headed off to the nearby coffee shop which is also a bar for some celebratory cocktails to end the night. I got carded...no longer flattering, just plain ridiculous at my age, and the nice barkeep bought me a birthday pint. Now that's hospitality Rochester style. I fell asleep like a baby in my heavenly bed dreaming of tours to come.

-Aphra Behn
October 1, 2009
Rochester, NY

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT
RIT - 10/1/09

Hey Diary,

Edith Evans here, just back from upstate New York, Rochester to be exact, where the leaves are all ready turning, the temperature is all ready dropping, and the students are all ready involved, chanting and marching, for 'Take Back the Night.'

For those of you like me who skipped the college culture and went directly into bohemian artistic employment - 'Take Back the Night' started in the late 1970's as a way to raise awareness to sexual violence and support those who have been victimized. The goal of these gatherings is to help women achieve a feeling of safety and empowerment. Many events are women only, but now men are also standing up as survivors and some events are becoming co ed. (takebackthenight.org)

Julia Child, Aphra Behn and I started our day together at the airport drinking coffee and eating delicate, beautiful, little cupcakes in honor of Aphra's birthday. What a nice treat!

Aphra and I also got to experience a little culture shock while buying some disposable camera's in the local Rite Aid. The cashier was so friendly. We had a long lengthy discussion with her about heat and our new friend wanted so much to continue the conversation she walked us to the door on the way out. Being from NYC we confessed to being afraid she wouldn't leave us but would follow us right into our car.

Off to campus. It is a big campus. Once again though, a friendly security guard drew us a map of where we needed to go. And he was right!

Susanne was there to greet us and set us up (and got us some much needed coffee too, thanks Susanne!) and tech began. And many hours later tech ended. Show time!

The audience was really responsive. There was almost no need for Julia to encourage them to get into the spirit and rock the house out with their voices. Our student volunteer Nevin did a fine job as a chest bumping, subway sub eating male student. And after marching around the campus 'Sentinel' the students came back for a Q & A.

Afterwards, we went to a local bar (and got carded, would you believe!) and had a beer once again in honor of Aphra's birthday. We slept on the delightful heavenly rest mattress, and came home on time thanks to the most efficient flight attendant ever. Yeah

baby.

It's nice to be back on tour,
Edith Evans

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