

SPRING 2003

Dear Diary,

As soon as we hit town various faculty members greeted us and they were wonderful! We were scheduled to perform in a real theatre which was a treat since we have been performing in ballrooms, classrooms and multi-purpose spaces all year. The audience was as pumped up as ever, almost like they were waiting for us all semester.

We visited a women's studies class where there were a few pro-war students. They posed the question Can you be a feminist and be pro-war? Lots of great discussion around that subject as well as how we structure our group, how we collaborate, etc. Then on to the art department to lead our from attitude to activism workshop. Three groups made posters on hot issues that needed to be addressed in their community and on campus. I am always inspired by the posters that come out of our workshops. The next day came the big moment - meeting Gloria Steinem. I am a big fan of Gloria's and was so glad to hear her say that she is a fan of mine! Meeting her and hearing her speak on the same night our country attacked IRAQ was an amazing dichotomy of events! She made me realize life is short and the fight will be ongoing for the rest of my life-but, it is worth it!

Love, [Hallie](#)
Edwardsville, IL - March 20, 2003

Dear Diary,

I just got back into town from Southern Illinois University where I had the thrill of a lifetime. Guerrilla Girls On Tour met up with Gloria Steinem when she was booked to lecture the night after our performance. I felt like I was in the presence of one of the truly great leaders of the planet. I was fascinated to look at her bio and see that she actually did study the non-violent protest movement in India for several years. And when I told her that I was Diana Sands, she let out a heartfelt "Ohhhhh", squeezed me on the arm and then said "Ohh it's so sad", because Diana had died of cancer at the age of 39. I got the distinct impression that Gloria had known Diana Sands. She then asked us if we would be willing to come up on stage with her during the question and answer period and say a few words about our current tour and new projects. Ms. Steinem began her lecture by saying how happy she was to have us in the audience. It was then that I realized for the first time just how big an impact we have had over the years. And later, when she did call us up on stage and I found myself speaking extemporaneously about our upcoming trip to Paris and Poland in front of a sold-out crowd of 800, I thought to myself..."Wow, being a Guerrilla Girl On Tour is really something!"

Love, [Diana Sands](#)
Edwardsville, IL - March 21, 2003

Dear Diary,

What a gracious and kind woman Gloria Steinam is. She has the quiet strength, grace and power that can galvanize an audience made up of women and men with many different view points. And that is why I felt that it was so important for us to be meeting her now? when the womens movement seems to be at odds with itself at times and when feminism is now the word. And how cool was it that she invited us up to share her stage with her! She is truly an inspiration. It was really a perfect end to our US 2002/03 tour. I can't help but reflect on how blessed we have been this year ? traveling to places that we don't usually get to go to; meeting people of different backgrounds; engaging in dialogue via workshops with those we haven't had access to in the past. Onwards to France and Poland!

Love, [Aphra Behn](#)
Edwardsville, IL - March 22, 2003

Dear Diary,

After we left, the somewhat charming town of Gainesville, Georgia we drove 3½ hours south to Statesboro, which is near Savannah. And if you ever thought that closed mindedness is evenly distributed throughout the south you are wrong. I quickly learned that the deeper you go, the more prevalent it is. I could not complain about the warm weather, though. And the air smelled sweet and clean. The fresh climate was a welcomed change, though the social climate seemed stale.

From the time we set foot on the Georgia Southern campus I felt something was a little off. I couldn't put my finger on it though and tried to tuck away my instincts. And in spite of my feelings we had a very successful workshop the first night. (We were given a beautiful piece of art as a welcome gift from grad student Charles, a banana made of remnants of DKNY designs). About 70 showed up for the workshop and a lot more than we expected but we succeeded in gauging the problems on campus and in the community. Some of the students came up with some great posters and some, well, let me just say that the white students were working on the racism poster and I had to ask the African American sisters why they did not speak up! All in all we felt very welcomed by Trish Carter of the Art Dept and the other students who showed up.

About 400 came to the performance of our Gig. We seemed to startle them from the moment we ran out on stage. Our usual stunt of tossing bananas to the crowd seemed to freak most of them out. Throughout the performance there were waves of discomfort as the audience seemed taken aback by the material we presented. We suspected that the Q and A at the end of the show would be intense but we were not prepared for what happened.

What can I say but that it was extremely intense. We witnessed firsthand the underlying tension that surfaced, maybe for the first time, on campus. I was shocked to hear two different female students get up and state that the reason why women have not gotten as far as men was because women were not as good as men. One student quoted the bible and referenced that women were supposed to follow men. Quite a discussion broke out. Another comment was about our GW Bush poster. How dare we criticize the president don't we know he's under a lot of pressure said another female student. This was very interesting to me. Only women spoke out against us. Of course women don't have top positions in film and theatre because they are not as good was another sentiment. It ended when the bible toting student informed us that we were going to hell. That was enough for us.

Coco stormed across the stage and gave one of the most empowering speeches I have ever heard from her about her own beliefs as a Christian. She moved the crowd to thunderous applause. Then, the crowd began to acknowledge each others differences and spoke about how while there were differences a dialogue seemed to be beginning and that had never happened on campus before. Seeing this happen is what being a Guerrilla Girl is all about for me. Even though the Gig was a little scary at times it was gratifying to know that we may have been a part of the beginning of this exchange of ideas at GSU.

It is very obvious that we were much needed in southern GA. As a Guerrilla Girl On Tour, our work is cut out for us. As we headed back north I saw my first cotton field. The image provoked images and ideas in my head. I know that I can be a part of great change.

Love, [Alice Childress](#)
Statesboro, GA - March 14, 2003

Dear Diary,

I am extremely glad that the Guerrilla Girls On Tour went to Georgia Southern University. Most of the time it is the converted that attend our performances and we are merely speaking to those that agree with us while those that hold different opinions stay safely at home. It has been amazing, though, to give hope and courage to those that feel beaten and tired of fighting for equality.

I commend the two women who stood during our Q and A. I realize the courage it takes to stand in front of a group of people that may not agree with you and speak your beliefs. I am glad that our tour has provided them with a forum to speak that sparked an intense discussion among the crowd. I hope everyone was left thoroughly confused, but with renewed desire to call attention to their own beliefs and research other beliefs and opinions. I do not want people to blindly change their minds. I want them to realize there are two sides to every coin and that only if you look at all your options can you truly know what is the best choice for you.

It is through tolerance, patience, and education that the world will change. The bible teaches all these things. The world owes us nothing. It is only through our perpetual search for the truth that can lead us to any peace with each other. I encourage people with other viewpoints to contact us. Help us in our search for tolerance, patience and knowledge. DO NOT KEEP QUIET. Women have been kept quiet for so long based on fear in the hands of government, society and religion. NO MORE! Speak out, act out and get out. Do not hide behind a hypothetical veil. God gave you a brain. Use it. Realize the importance of diversity in the world and embrace it. This will change the world.

Peace, [Coco Chanel](#)
Statesboro, Georgia - March 14, 2003

Dear Diary,

Well we've done it. The theme of our tour this year Guerrilla Girls On Tour Go Where No Girl Has Gone Before! underscores every move we make here in the Deep South. First stop: Gainesville, the poultry capital of the world, and Brenau University. This is the smallest school we have ever been to with an resident student body (all women) of 350. The old part of town is charming and after lunch at the Two Dog Café we head off to our class visit, which was actually attended by about 100 faculty and staff. After provocative questions from the smart and savvy women of Brenau we realized that Southern charm and hospitality were the norm here. Yes, the women's history month production of Vagina Monologues was not very well publicized but posters for our Gig were all over campus. The brand new Hosch Theatre/John S. Burd Center for Perf Arts was a beautiful theatre complete with a dressing room for each of us! I have to admit that the Brenau audience laughed more than any other I can remember. They really got into the sneak peak scene from The Guerrilla Girls On Tour Show and we had a terrific audience volunteer for the occasion. Afterwards, a sumptuous dinner at Lunas. Tomorrow a long drive down to Savannah to go further into uncharted territory.

Love,
[Aphra Behn](#)
Gainesville, Georgia - March 11, 2003

Dear Diary,

Dr. Mary Martin was our guide for our trip to Middle Tennessee State U near Nashville. She was so thoughtful, thorough and accommodating that we felt right at home. Alice & I led the first half of the Master Class; a modern dance class full of very diverse students with great ideas. Almost all had double and triple majors! Talk about over-achievers! We led them through our ensemble theatre techniques and physical warm ups, which we try to add to each of our workshops regardless of whether it is for performers or not. Our class visit to the art barn was full of stimulating conversation and discussion about activism, performance and art. Then we performed our Gig which went great and the audience was very responsive. The only bad part was when I had a complete blank and said about one of our posters: This demonstrates our technique of putting black letters on paper. DUH! Neither Alice or Aphra bailed me out they just let me float out in the not-making sense universe. What I noticed were there were two children in the audience - a boy and a girl. They both giggled a lot at our Guillani poster. I hope they grow up to be non-biased, open, empathetic members of society!

Love-[Hallie](#)
Murfreesboro, TN - March 13, 2003

Dear Diary,

Just returned from a wonderful weekend trip to the heartland of America- Storm Lake, Iowa. What a lovely experience. No death threats this year, thank goodness.

We performed an excerpt from The Guerrilla Girls On Tour Show, which will premier in Warsaw, Poland in April. We were guests of Buena Vista University (oddly enough pronounced with a long u sound as in tuna which we stumbled over the entire time). It's small university- only 1000 students. I was touched by the warmth and generosity of the female faculty who wined and dined us, or should I say "Weight-watched" and "Subwayed" us, since it seems that the entire female faculty was counting points. Brava to them! It was refreshing for a New Yorker to spend time in such a small town where everyone knows their next door neighbor-

and in fact everyone knows everyone in the whole town! It made me think for a minute about the stress and wear and rear of the Big City lifestyle. Maybe they know something we don't.

I loved Storm Lake, by the way, which is a bit surreal set as it is right up against a highway and completely frozen over from the winter chill. What is this humongous man-made lake doing in the middle of Iowa? Intriguing. The highlight of the trip for me was during the show when I introduced Diana Sands to the audience and told them about my background- how I had fought valiantly with casting directors and producers until I won the right to play classical leading roles. I told them that I played Medea, Antigone, Portia, and Cleopatra. They broke into applause. It was so sweet. They were rooting for Diana and therefore black actresses everywhere! Hey wait a minute- then why isn't there more non-traditional casting taking place on Broadway? These are the very tourists who come to New York to see the shows and clearly they don't have a problem with it. Definitely got me thinking. The activist workshop was also an invigorating experience. A small group of very committed students attended and we brainstormed for a few hours and came up with several funny and provocative poster ideas.

Another cool thing that happened was that we had the rare privilege of shopping at the new Internet store started by Carla and Chuck Offenburger. (Check out their website: www.Offenburger.com). The love Iowa and to prove it they are selling products made in Iowa on the internet. Products that they themselves use. We tasted the absolute best raspberry jam any GGOT has ever tasted and we stocked up on fragrant soy candles- all the rage on the West Coast we were told. As I said before, a total delight! Next vacation- don't go to the Bahamas- try Storm Lake, Iowa!

Love, [Diana Sands](#)
Storm Lake, Iowa - March 1, 2003

Dear Diary,

Last year, we had gotten our first death threat at the school, and so, absolutely, had to schedule a return. Iowa needs us! Aphra said in the car ride over. (I was too busy with the map to think of anything other than Route 20 - where the hell was Route 20?)

We read an excerpt from our play we will be premiering in Poland this spring. Students were respectful and curious. Some even hesitated when we offered our complimentary bananas, maybe worrying about being polite. No freewheeling questions designed to wreak havoc and earn high-fives were thrown during the Q & A. Aphra, Diana and I, had a great time.

Finally, we wrapped up the weekend, sneaking into the B.V.U. basketball game. It was the final one, to decide whether the school would go on to the division iii championships and they won! It was the first live sport event I had seen in years, and it was great to watch the boys play with speed and skill and heart. Carla and Suzanne rooted for their team and their support and enthusiasm was so contagious that Aphra started screaming too. These teachers are so cool they bust their butts to expand their students minds, showing them different possibilities of living and thinking, and sometimes, they get frustrated or disappointed, but they are always committed, because they just care about their students so much I really admire them for that. Afterwards, when the team won, fans, friends, and family rushed the court to hug the winning team. When the merry mayhem thinned out a little, you could see a one little just running in circles on court followed by her toddler brother not because they cared about the victory, just cause they felt like it. Very cute.

[Anna May Wong](#)
Storm Lake Iowa - March 2, 2003