

By KENDRA HENSON-STROUD

"Pussy crack corn ... and I don't care." University of Vermont's Patrick Gymnasium had to plug its virgin ears on October 9th when comedian Margaret Cho paid our lovely Green Mountain state a visit. The show was a stop on the CHO Revolution tour, coincided with UVM's celebration of National Coming Out Day, and was sponsored by the Department of Student Life and the First Year Experience Diversity Committee. Cho attracted a packed gymnasium of heteros and homos of all shapes, colors, ethnicities and abilities. Margaret had a little bit of something for everyone and then some!

The "pussy" line recurred throughout the show with different actions – something Cho said she picked up from a visit to Southeast Asia, walking past a brothel with a pitchman calling out what the prostitutes inside would do ("Pussy eat banana!"). As always, Cho took something offensive and crass and made it uniquely hers, sending it up in her inimitable way.

Comedian Bruce Daniels, who stars in the short "Grocery Store" on Margaret's Notorious C.H.O. video, was the show opener, telling tales of his well-meaning friends' racism. He has, he said, a whole lot of Afro-centric art, all of it given to him by white friends. One guy approached him saying, "Yo, dude! Yo, du-u-ude!" Daniels' response: "First of all, you're over 30 and you don't get to say 'dude' any more."

Cho, sporting short shorts topped with a 6-inch-wide blue and white belt, said she had spent the day before the show shopping in town, hitting stores like the Sox Market in the mall and Old Gold (which she raved about – the source of the belt – and said she would actually consider moving here for that alone). She and Bruce had also spent part of the day at Dean's campaign headquarters where

they blogged in support of Dean. Margaret was clear that out of the Democratic choices, she liked Dean the best and was especially unimpressed with Kerry whom she had met previously and considered boring (loud snores from both Cho and Daniels).

Dressed in a red UVM 2003 t-shirt, Cho took hold of the audiences' minds and stretched them like silly putty into the realm of the perverse, disgustingly bizarre world that we all know about, but are too polite to discuss. Not at all shy about discussing topics like sex, queer culture, eating disorders, bodily functions, separation of church and state, and cultural sensitivity gone awry, Cho rocked the audience with the kinds of stories one cannot easily forget (the Pretenders' "Brass in Pocket" will never be heard quite the same again).

Members of UVM's Free to Be LGBTQIA group were a very visible presence at the show. Cho noticed them right away wearing military fatigues sitting in the front row, and thanked them for being so out and wonderful. Cho moved smoothly between queer culture jokes noting that lesbians have such a keen sense of direction since their vaginas are equipped with built in On-Star systems, to physically and verbally illustrating a flight attendant's worst nightmare while serving the Asian American Cho the airline's version of "Asian" chicken salad ("My people use Mandarin orange slices and crispy wonton crunchies! This is not the salad of my people!").

Cho was passionate about encouraging people to speak up to injustices. She exclaimed that the country is so fucked up because of the people running it, and not because of the people in it. She declared that the DOMA act denies lesbian and gay

Americans 1,049 civil rights, and that yes she is afraid of terrorism, but she is more afraid of the Patriot Act, and that silence equals non-existence.

Cho's website www.margaretocho.com is home to her daily blogs, charged with her insights into topics such as the Vatican discouraging people from wearing condoms, psychological terrorism, Queer Eye for the Straight Guy, gay marriage, the end of the world, etc.

Cho and Daniels held a quick Q & A session at the end of the show and finished with a rap about the crappy state of health care and health insurance in our country – it was difficult to understand the lyrics to it, but I really wanted to.

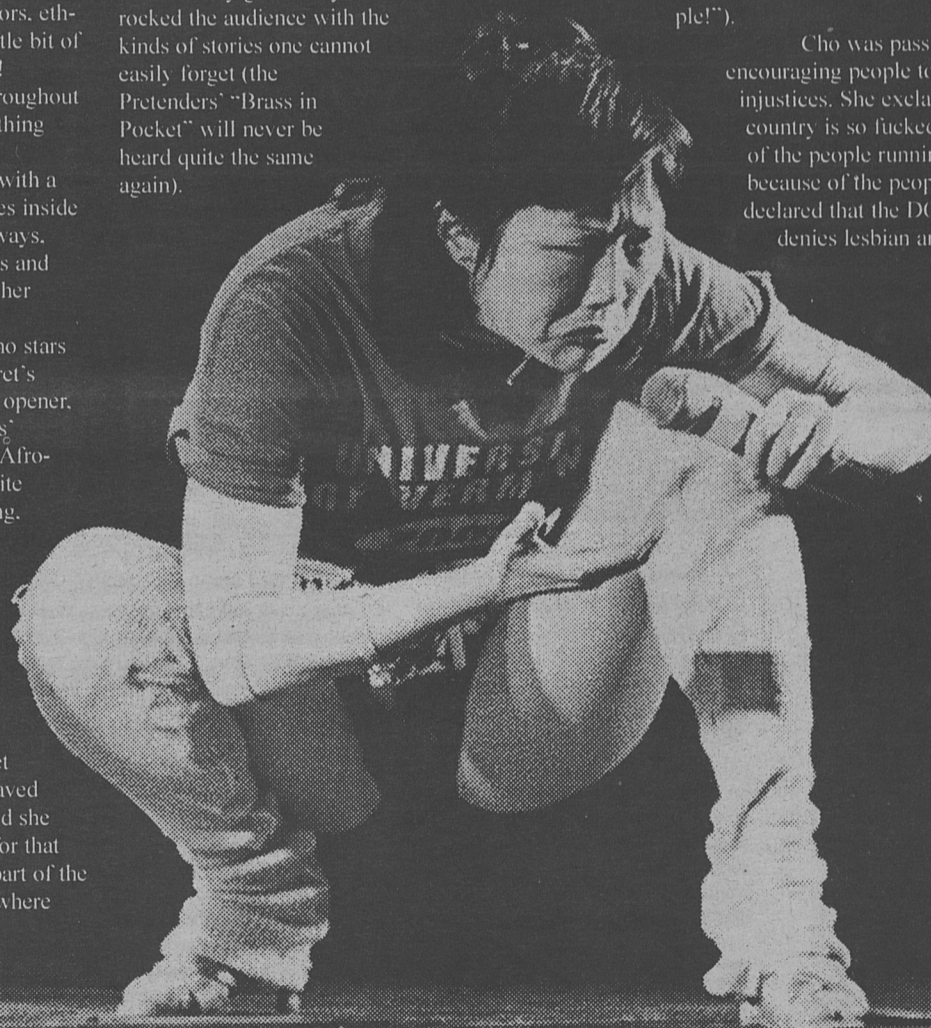
I asked Cho a couple of questions immediately following the performance. Cho had mentioned during the show how wonderful it is that Vermont recognizes and allows gay marriage and how it's completely ridiculous that it's the only state in the nation that does. I asked what she thought of marriage as an institution and she said she thinks marriage is "beautiful in that it represents equality for the community. It is equality on paper and you can't legislate morality, but you can equality."

I asked her how she would continue to support Dean, and she said she had blogged for him earlier and that she would possibly continue support that way. Cho said she blogs now on a daily basis – her blogs are what comes to her in the moment – and she considers it "a different type of performance."

Cho is taping the "CHO Revolution" tour and hopes to have a new video out sometime next year. ▼

Kendra Henson-Stroud is an avid Cho admirer (but not stalker) and lusted after her red UVM t-shirt, without any luck. She and partner Max Henson-Stroud, a photographer, live in Burlington.

Margaret Cho performing at UVM's Patrick Gym in October



Pussy Crack Corn!

Margaret Cho's Sexy Revolution

As always, Cho took something offensive and crass and made it uniquely hers, sending it up in her inimitable way.