

# Tampon tax a gender injustice, cramping women's style



Illustration by Kaylynn Wohl

**By Kaylynn Wohl**  
Staff Writer

Every month, millions of women around the country face a week of intense pain, flaring hormones and ovaries, excessive chocolate cravings, and cute undies being tossed in the trash. If this monthly routine isn't bad

enough, these ladies have to take trips to the nearest grocery store to stock up on supplies in order to essentially survive a week of hell. We are subject to spend our hard earned money paying about \$7 a month for nearly 40 years of our lives on boxes of tampons. Not only do we have no other choice and have no other alternative, but also we are required to pay state sales tax on each box. According to our government, tampons and sanitary napkins are considered to be non-essential luxury items.

Current President Barack Obama is also baffled by the tampon tax and the idea of menstruation being considered a luxury. He states, in a TIME magazine interview with YouTube star Ingrid Nilsen, "I suspect it's because men were making the laws when those taxes were passed." He makes the point that these taxes are made at the state level, and "it will take action on a local level to get things changed."

Our government makes millions of dollars each year off of taxes on sanitary items. Furthermore, women in just California alone pay over \$20 million in just taxes on tampons each year.

According to a California Press Release, The American Association of University Women states women make 79 cents on the dollar compared to men. "Women of color face an even larger gap": African American women make 63 cents to the dollar while Latinas make 54 cents to the dollar than a man.

of a parentheses. Language is love.

Not only are we being taxed for being women, but we make less and still have to pay more for products we cannot live without. Lower income women with tight budgets struggle enough to pay for sanitary items as is; lifting this tax would help save them thousands of dollars in a lifetime.

Assembly member Cristina Garcia of California told the Washington Post, "if we can't make [feminine hygiene products] free we should at least make them more affordable."

Not all states have taxes on these items though. Aside from the states that do not have sales tax at all, only five states do not tax our menstruation hygiene products: Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania. Additionally, only three states are currently considering legislation to remove the tax. Arizona, unfortunately, is not one of them.

Kimberly Garcia, a first year student here at PVCC, says, "Tampons are not a luxury item! It's a necessity; if I could, I would never wear a tampon!" Also frustrated with the tax, she believes our state tacks on an additional 5.6 percent of the sale in taxes because no one is aware that it's an issue: "We have to inform the public and take action," Garcia says

Ironically, some states don't tax candy or soda but do tax our essential items. Of course, Arizona is one of those. They want us to get cavities, but don't want us to stop the flow.



# Nudity laws, social norms trap women's nipples, deny equality

## FREE THE NIPPLE

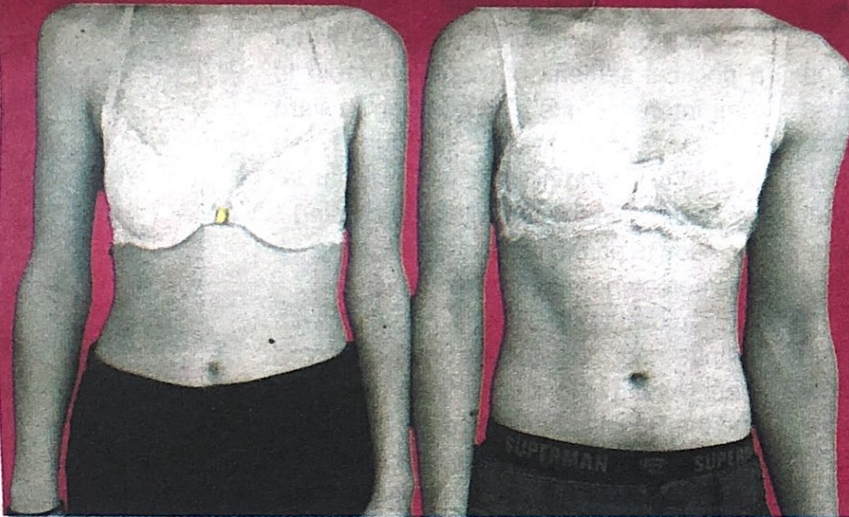


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In today's American society, golden, crispy men are praised for their shirtless selves. Advertisements are filled with tan hunks whose stomachs are symmetrically fit and whose pecks are perfectly plump. Celebrities like Zac Efron or the wolf guy in *Twilight* are idolized, iconized, and itemized for their incredibly god-like appearance.

These unrealistic but flawless men create insecurities for society's normal men. They feel the pressures to look like a golden chicken nugget with perfectly formed abdominal muscles. It is socially acceptable for men to be topless in public, but when a woman does it, all hell breaks loose (not just their "jiggly bits"). Women's bodies are to be

securely contained, as if their own perfectly plump pecks are sacred and hold the secrets to the universe. It is unlawful in most states of our country for women to let loose and be free. In fact, according to film and equality movement *Free the Nipple*, women can be arrested in 35 states for being topless or even breastfeeding their children in public. Furthermore, "in less tolerant places like Louisiana, an exposed nipple can take a woman to jail for up to three years and cost \$2,500 in fines." Imagine being sent to jail just for taking your shirt off to feel a beautiful breeze or even that warm Arizona sun. Or what if you're out having a nice Sunday stroll and someone vomits a turkey sub on your shirt — with extra mustard? You can't take it off because you'll get sent to jail

for showing a nipple. That is, if you're a woman.

Accurately enough, "the humans aren't afraid of the human breast; it's the nipple that's the issue," says feminist Miley Cyrus on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*. Our culture's apparel for women has seemingly gotten smaller in size over the years; women can show as much side or under boob as they wish as long as no nipple is visible. Ironically, women's nipples are the only nipples to serve a functional purpose, providing the complete nutrition and vitamins needed in the first phase of life. Woman can legally be sent to jail for breastfeeding a child in public. Why should any infant have to have lunch in private and in shame? It's as if our society sees man nipples to be useless and therefore suitable to be seen by the public eye.

Maybe the female nipple isn't the issue though? Maybe it's our male dominant society with male legislative members and lawmakers? Can males not contain and control themselves at the sight of a nipple, getting aroused in the least sexual of situations?

The boob itself is not sexual. It's the interpretation of a scenario that makes it so. The female nipple provides life to infants and yet our culture is afraid of something so purely human and vital for survival.

Everyone has a nipple (and if you're lucky you have two); yet some nipples are illegal. Join the movement to help free that nipple!



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# PVCC welcomes the Year of the Rooster with cultural events

**By Kaylynn Wohl**  
Editor-in-Chief

Every year, the Chinese New Year lands on a different day; it is a 12-year animal cycle. This year is the Year of the Rooster. According to chinahighlights.com, this holiday was originally set to align with the upcoming farming season when the population in China was primarily agricultural. Traditionally, they celebrated the year's successful harvest and prayed for another fruitful year. As China is now 55 percent urban, this holiday has shifted toward a celebration of a successful upcoming business year.

In the Gregorian calendar, which is today's internationally accepted civil calendar, the Lunar New Year begins during the new moon, which usually falls between Jan. 21 and Feb. 20. This year's new moon landed on Jan. 28.

Paradise Valley Community College's librarian and Chinese originate, Lili Kang,

coordinated efforts within the Asian community and with librarian, Paula Crossman, to present the Lunar New Year in sound, word and sight. "By specifically framing the events as a cultural exchange and anchoring the celebration to curriculum, the learning became relevant, and the events elevated to impact student learning with a diverse lens," Kang said on the Daily Growl.

According to Governor Doug Ducey in an Arizona State Proclamation, the Lunar New Year is a multi-day holiday for many Asian cultures; it is "an auspicious beginning or renewal whether in one's personal life or in business, community or government affairs." Furthermore, this holiday is welcomed with firecrackers, "colorful serpentine-like dragons and lion dancers moving to the thunderous sounds of drums, gongs and cymbals and bring prosperity, happiness and good health." Families gather, exchange gifts,

prepare special meals and give respect to elders and ancestors. Ducey also stated "Arizonans of many Asian heritages, immigrants and descendants alike, enrich our state by bringing their rich cultures and continuing their traditions of observing and celebrating the Lunar New Year."

The first event PVCC hosted to welcome the new year took place on Wednesday, Feb. 8 from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. in the southeast corner of the Buxton Library. Titled "Measuring Time by the Moon and the Sun," Astronomy instructor Jenny Weitz shared, from an astronomical perspective, how to measure years from lunar cycles: "There is no absolute 'best' method for counting time as all systems have pluses and minuses." Additionally, Kang displayed how the "Lunar calendar shapes Chinese lives, such as when choosing the date of a child's conception/gender, wedding and/or funeral date arrangements."

The second event, "East Meets West: Intercultural Communication and Business Etiquette," fell on Feb. 9 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. in KSC1000. Multiple classes gathered to engage in a lively discussion about cultural



Chinese lanterns come in various colors with red being the most common. In Chinese culture, red represents happiness and good luck.

Photo by Sabrina Arnold

norms, customs and intercultural dos and don'ts. Additionally, the panel discussed how culture influences our worldview and how understanding cultural differences will benefit careers in a business atmosphere.

Aaron Bruhn, a Fine Arts Major here at PVCC, attended the event with his Owning and Operating a Small Business (MGT 253) class. He learned about cultural relativism where the concept is "like the phrase 'when in Rome, do as the Romans.' It's incredibly helpful to consider other culture's norms when visiting other places," he stated. For instance, "in the United States, honking your horn is seen as a negative act often done



Cultural snacks to bring cultural awareness to all the senses such as Chinese rice cakes and other candies.

Photo by Sabrina Arnold

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with anger when someone is being ignorant. In Vietnam, it's positive, like saying 'Hello. I am here.'"

Bruhn reflected this event with a smile and said, "I feel like I grew in awareness. It was encouraging to see people who had been to other cultures, who are well traveled and well informed."

The third and final event, "Artistic Expression and Social Justice," fell on Jan. 16 in the southeast corner in the Buxton Library at 12 p.m. David Bradley, the ceramics instructor on campus, began the panel with an in-depth presentation involving his trip to China in 2015. He spent five weeks studying graduate students and their intricate artwork under the Communist regime. The contemporary artists used precise detail and realism to express themselves and how they feel under their government's strict control.

Bradley then proudly informed the group of his meeting the famous conceptual artist and activist Ai Weiwei. He is known for his seminal artwork "Sunflower Seeds." According to the website aiweiseeds.com,

Weiwei initially conceived his project for Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, located in London. His take "on the large hall was simple and complex, poetic and disturbing at the same time. He filled the Turbine Hall with a thick layer of sunflower seeds hand-

crafted in porcelain, a total of 100 million seeds, with a total weight of 300 thousand pounds." He began two years in advance for this location due to its 30 step intricate procedure. Since 2009, Weiwei's Sunflower Seeds exhibited in 12 galleries across 11



Paradise Valley Community College students laughing at a part of the presentation of the three part Lunar New Year event.

Photo by Sabrina Arnold

LEFT: An Nguyen discussed how names are written and the meaning of last names in Asian cultures.

Photo by Sabrina Arnold

cities and nine countries.

Bradley explained that each of these seeds represented the "Chinese people being seen as not very valuable." When people walked in the hall and stepped on all of the seeds, it symbolized the way the Chinese feel about their oppressing government. "Art is so much more than pretty things to hang on the wall; they're voices," he concluded.

PVCC concluded the celebration with guest speaker, Ping Yi-Rivera, born and raised in China. She shared her experience of the last 11 years in the United States and discussed some of her cultural expansion projects, such as the "City Walker." In this video, she followed the path of the homeless and compared the city life in China versus the city life in Phoenix as a homeless person.

All events had tasty cultural snacks to bring cultural awareness to all the senses. Chinese rice cakes and other candies were some of the students' favorite.



# Unique Oregonian hotels built from school and tree houses

By Kaylynn Wohl  
Staff Writer

It was a typical rainy night in a Northeast Portland neighborhood. With spring in the air, trees bloomed with various colorful flowers. Children and their families were dressed in raincoats and umbrellas, all gathering at the same place: McMenamins Kennedy School. It just so happened to be St. Patrick's day when my mother and I arrived at our hotel for the next few evenings. We initially felt out of place due to this unordinary setting; we were in an old school house that had been renovated into a hotel.

Last spring, I went on a week-long mother-daughter trip to the most verdant state I have ever seen: Oregon. With our nonconformist mindset, we made it a priority to stay at hotels and resorts that had originality and creativity, unlike chain or franchised hotels. This included a few family-owned businesses that are unique and affordable.

## McMenamins Kennedy School

In 1915, the building was an elementary school-house that also served the surrounding community as a public meeting hall, polling location, blood drawing center, weekend playground, and even as a flood-relief



Photo by Kaylynn Wohl

The vibrant painting on the headboard above one of the beds at McMenamins Kennedy School hotel features a man singing who is part wizard and part tree.

shelter. However, years later in 1975, school officials claimed the building to be too old to be repaired, and it was shut down. Fortunately, two men, Mike and Brian McMenamins, renovated the building, reopening it in 1997 but with the twist of it's being a school-themed hotel with its own brewery.

Through the doors, the very first thing we noticed was the giant chalkboard on the wall that greeted us in colorful chalk. The hotel provides a variety of chalks and erasers to encourage guests to write and draw on the rooms' chalkboards. Our room even had an old desk and classroom chair. On the desk were several fat pencils that small children learn to write with. My mom immediately noticed the giant painting on the headboard of the bed: a singing man who was part wizard, part tree.

After settling into our room, I went exploring, full of wonder at this interesting place. It was late at night and the gloomy halls gave off an eerie vibe. "Children and old buildings are creepy enough as is," I thought. The rain poured and pitter-pattered against the windows, leaving a cold, soft hum throughout the building. I eventually found myself at the hotel's "soaking pool." Located in a private courtyard, which used to be the old Teacher's Lounge, this beautiful ceramic tiled pool peacefully sits at the center of a luscious garden. The pool is open to the general public for only \$5, and guests can enjoy it free as a part of their overnight stay.

My favorite feature of McMenamins Kennedy School would have to be its movie theater. Very few hotels have this unique luxury. This hotel not only has a variety of feature films playing throughout the day and night, but guests can get comfy on old sofas, funky looking love seats and armchairs. Instead of sitting in an uncomfortable, semi-reclining movie theater chair, guests can enjoy their traditional theater snacks while curled up on the couch with loved ones. It's like Netflix but way better. Similar to most movie theaters, it tends to get a little chilly inside, so a blanket is both recommended and encouraged.

## Out 'n' About Treehouse Treesort

With a scenic Oregon coast drive and the Redwood Forest in our minds, my mom and I made our way to Cave Junction, just north of the California border. After driving down a few dirt roads, we arrived at what seemed like the middle of nowhere. Here lies a family operated tree house resort; a true bed and breakfast up in the trees. Similar to an Ewok Village in Star Wars, Out 'n' About Treehouse Treesort is carefully tucked away in the beautiful Oregon countryside. We were offered



Photo by Kaylynn Wohl

Visitors can enjoy a peaceful night in one of the tree house rooms at the Out 'n' About Treehouse Treesort in Cave Junction, Oregon.

a variety of types and sizes of tree houses for decent costs; there was even a yurt (similar to a teepee, or as they call it, a treepee-style "tree house," called a Yurtree, that accommodates a family of seven. My mother and I chose a smaller one called the Peacock Perch for \$150 a night. It had a lovely peacock carved and painted on the door and a colorful glass stained window right next to it. When I walked in, I was shocked at how much the owners were able to do with the space. We were essentially 20 feet off the ground, in their fifth highest tree house; inside was a bed for two, another smaller bed comfortable for a child, running water, electricity, and even a heater. The main restrooms and showers were located on ground level, not too far from our room.

I soon wondered off to investigate my new environment. In the middle of the "campsite" was a big cabin, where the owners resided and made their guests breakfast daily. Surrounding the main building far up in the air were the other main tree houses. I walked up many creaky wood stairs to get to the rope bridges that connected them all. I cautiously walked across the well-constructed bridges, irrationally terrified that I would break them and fall and die. After realizing I had nothing to fear, I soon found comfort in the silence that the forest brought. I was able to reach my place of Zen as I watched the sun set, with horses calmly neighing in the distance. In that moment, I realized everything in the world is pure and everything is beautiful.