

W h o I a m

May 2006

Note from the Director

I was again reminded of the power of words as I sat in an adult Sunday School forum at my church Palm Sunday. The pastor for the university student association was leading the forum; the topic he had chosen was poetic literature and lent. He read a variety of poems, all which symbolized Lenten themes. One I remember best was a poem by Ted Kooser, current U.S. Poet Laureate (also from my home state, Nebraska). The poem painted a picture of life and love and happiness and then despair and emptiness.

Joe Ehrmann, our third Annual Riegsecker Lecturer, spoke on Thursday, March 29, 2006. In his talk he described how men and women are misled by our culture about what it means to be a male or a female and what the potential consequences can be of those unhealthy norms. One story he told was one of his father teaching him to box at age 5 and being unable to do what his father wanted him to do and beginning to cry. Then his father told him men don't cry and he should suck it up and be a man. That was one of Joe's earliest memories of learning lessons about (unhealthy) masculinity from his father and from our culture. After he became a Christian he questioned those lessons and the book about his life, *Season of Life*, details his journey. I highly recommend this book.

Other wonderful programming we sponsored or co-sponsored this spring included the Senior Women's Dinner, the Messiah College Women's Retreat, Healthy Living Week, "Take Back the Night," UnLEARN Week, "What's 'sex' got to do with it," "Speed Meeting," and Breakfast with the Provost as well as participated in the Women in Leadership Award. We also helped fund attendance at the "Come to the Water" Conference for several women here at Messiah. Our display at the Human Rights Fair in April had two areas of emphasis; we focused on women and microenterprise internationally as well as sexual assault.

Please watch for our pizza and planning party announcement in early September! But in the meantime...I hope you have a relaxing summer! I have plenty of good books that I plan to read!

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UNCOVERING GENDER

Women Happier as Homemakers?

Time to Recheck Data

**By Rivers and Barnett - WeNews
commentators**

(WOMENSENEWS)--Are homemakers happier in their marriages than working women?

Are wives happier when their husbands are the major breadwinners?

Is too much equality between men and women bad for marital happiness?

A new study suggesting yes, yes and yes has won inordinate attention. New York Times columnist John Tierney looked at the study and a few weeks ago concluded that women "want their husbands to be providers who give them financial security and freedom."

Around the same time, in an op-ed column in the Los Angeles Times, Charlotte Allen, co-editor of the InkWell blog for the Independent Women's Forum, cited the study as proof that "the more traditional a marriage is . . . the higher the percentage of happy wives." The story also buzzed around the blogosphere and was fodder on some cable shows.

Here We Go Again

Here we go again. Last November in this column we looked at the weak data behind a media outburst about men not liking smart women. Before that we looked at all the guff about women at elite universities wanting to just say

no to careers.

Meanwhile, we seem to have the ongoing job of reminding the other news media that despite its devotion to the idea that the male of the species is an unregenerate chore boor, the actual research shows him helping out more and more around the house. Now some in the news media are once again latching on to a flawed study offering bad news for ambitious women.

Published this month in the sociology journal Social Forces (University of North Carolina), the study by W. Bradford Wilcox and Steven Nock of the University of Virginia is based on data from studies in the early 1990s. The findings are so atypical that the study is what's called an "outlier." As columnist Ellen Goodman reports, when sociologist Scott Coltrane of the University of California-Riverside used the same data set, he found no difference in marital happiness between homemakers and working women. Over the past 15 years, some 20 studies have looked at the association between women's employment and earnings and their marital happiness. These studies have involved different samples of people and different methods of arriving at results. But they all tell the same story: Employed women are as happy (and perhaps happier) in their marriages as non-employed women and having an income generally improves a woman's marital happiness.

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Failing Marriages an Indicator

The divorce rate is another important indicator. Do working women's marriages fail at a higher rate than those of homemakers? No. In fact, as University of Michigan sociologist Hiromi Ono found in 1998, a woman is more likely to divorce if she has no earnings than if she does in fact earn money. Other researchers find that the higher the household income--whatever the source--the higher the quality of family life and marriage. Studies researching the same subject have drawn different conclusions. But reader beware: black-and-white conclusions can't be fairly drawn.

The Virginia study found wives happier if their husbands were the breadwinners. Other research disagrees. Some 42 percent of today's married women outearn their husbands. Are these marriages falling apart? Not according to the divorce data. These marriages are as stable as those in which husbands earn more.

In the 1990s, the gap between husbands' and wives' earnings began to narrow. At the same time the divorce rate--which had been on the increase--leveled off. If Wilcox and Nock were correct, and women naturally yearn for male breadwinners, we should be seeing an increase in divorce as women earn more than their husbands. But no such trend exists. In a 2001 analysis of data from our own study of 300 dual-earner couples, funded by the National Institutes of Mental Health, wives' earnings--whether higher, lower or the same as their husbands'--had no effect on their marital happiness. (And, for the most part, men's marital happiness was

unrelated to how much their wives earned.)

Yearnings in Question

The notion that women yearn for a traditional breadwinner is highly questionable, and stands in stark contrast to the large body of literature in this area. Sociologists Elaine Wethington (Cornell University) and Ronald Kessler (Harvard Medical School) found that women who were homemakers at the beginning of their three-year study and then went to work full time reported a decrease in psychological distress. In contrast, women who were employed full time and then dropped out to stay home reported an increase in distress, regardless if they had children. Women who had a child but stayed in the work force showed no increase in distress. But women who had a child and dropped out of the work force experienced a major increase in stress. One of Wilcox and Nock's strongest findings--that men's loving attention to their wives is an important predictor of women's happiness--may be true. Or it may not be. You can't possibly know how attentive the husband is unless you collect data from the husbands and these researchers did not do that.

"This study is troubling because it depends on wives' ratings of both their husbands' emotional support and also their own satisfaction with their marriages," Robert T. Brennan, a research associate at Harvard Medical School told Women's eNews in an e-mail. "The study relies on just wives' reports of marital satisfaction, yet marriage is a two-way street where husbands

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and wives often don't see eye to eye."
Overall, the picture of who is--and who isn't--happily married is very complex. Both women in paid employment and traditional homemakers may have good marriages or bad ones. But the simple scenario sketched out by the Virginia study just doesn't tell us much. When journalists come across a study like this--that says something so radically different from other studies--they should start asking questions and not automatically embrace the results.

Caryl Rivers and Rosalind C. Barnett are authors of "Same Difference: How Gender Myths Are Hurting Our Relationships, Our Children and Our Jobs" (Basic Books 2004.) Rivers is a professor of journalism at Boston University and Barnett is senior scientist at the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University.

Women's eNews welcomes your comments. E-mail us at editors@womensenews.org.

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Men Growing Up to be Boys

Madison Avenue cultivates a Peter Pan version of masculinity

By Lakshmi Chaudhry

When CBS unveiled its short-lived series “Love Monkey” in January, leading male television critics could barely contain their enthusiasm. The *New York Times*’ Alessandra Stanley was far less impressed, especially with its lead male character, thirty-something music producer Tom Farrell, whose “endearing foibles” included “self-absorption, wanting what he cannot have and an inability to commit.”

Based on the eponymous 2004 novel by Kyle Smith, “Love Monkey” offered the latest iteration of “lad-lit,” a genre popularized by the likes of Nick Hornby, whose novels inevitably featured a confused, neurotic, discontented man-boy being dragged kicking and screaming into adulthood, usually by his girlfriend.

But where “lad lit” authors disguise the dumbing-down of adult masculinity with witty prose, advertising executives are less subtle. Commercials for cell phones, fast food, beer and deodorants offer up an infantilized version of masculinity that has become ubiquitous since the rise of “lad” culture in the ’90s. These grown men act like boys—and are richly rewarded for it. A recent cell phone ad, for example, features a guy who responds to being dumped by his girlfriend—because “you’re never going to grow up”—by playing, on his cell phone, an ’80s pop song that tells her to get lost. Of

course, this immediately earns him the attention of a younger, prettier woman walking by. While these ads pretend to mirror a male fantasy—say, of walking down the wedding aisle armed with a six-pack of Bud Light—they in fact reflect a corporate executive’s dream customer: a man-boy who is more likely to remain faithful to their product than to his wife.

This shift in the dominant image of manhood is most evident in the evolution of the so-called “Family Man.” The benevolent patriarch of the ’50s has been replaced by an adult teenager who spends his time sneaking off to hang out with the boys, eyeing the hot chick over his wife’s shoulder, or buying cool new toys. Like a fourteen-year-old, this guy can’t be trusted with the simplest of domestic tasks, be it cooking dinner for the kids or shopping for groceries.

These pop culture images are all the more striking because they directly contradict the experiences of men in the real world. Women may still bear the greater burden of domestic work, but American males today do more at home than their fathers, and are happy doing it. According to the Families and Work Institute, the percentage of college-educated men who said they wanted to move into jobs with more responsibility fell from 68 percent to 52 percent between 1992 and 2002. A Radcliffe Public Policy Center report released in 2000 found that 70 percent of men between the ages of 21 to 39 were willing to sacrifice pay and lose promotions in exchange for a work schedule that allowed them to spend more time with their families.

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Yet popular culture continues to fetishize the traditional, '50s model of masculinity, but in a distilled form—kick-ass machismo stripped of the accompanying values of honor, duty and loyalty. We seem to have carried with us the unreconstructed sexism of the past—the objectification of women, inability to connect or communicate—but discarded its redeeming virtues. Where traditional masculinity embraced marriage, children and work as rites of passage into manhood, the 21st century version shuns them as emasculating, with the wife cast in the role of the castrating mother. The result resembles a childlike fantasy of manhood that is endowed with the perks of adulthood—money, sex, freedom—but none of its responsibilities.

At least part of this image is rooted in a real cultural trend, according to State University of New York at Stony Brook sociology professor Michael Kimmel. His upcoming book *Guyland* argues that men “are resisting becoming men longer and longer,” doing their best to postpone all the decisions that mark the passage into adulthood—getting a job, moving out of their parents’ home, getting married, and having kids—in order to enjoy the lad lifestyle of “online porn, drinking, and poker.” This trend has its big-screen avatar in the hero of the upcoming *Failure To Launch*, which stars Matthew McConaughey as a thirty-something slacker whose desperate parents “hire the gorgeous and talented girl of his dreams to get him to move out of the house.”

More significantly, however, this resistance to adulthood is closely associated with a market-driven consumerist culture that feeds and sustains a Peter Pan version of masculinity. “To be grown up is to be settled, comfortable, stable, responsible, and

secure,” Kimmel says. “Those are bad conditions for advertising, which depends on our sense of insecurity, anxiety, and incompleteness.”

The market also has little time for the old-fashioned male virtue of self-denial, the imperative to do the “right thing” at the expense of pleasure. A stoic John Wayne has been replaced by the “metrosexual,” a man who is all about self-indulgence and defined almost entirely by his wallet. At the beauty salon, designer boutique or exclusive health club, a metrosexual spends, therefore he is.

Susan Faludi foreshadowed the rise of the metrosexual in her 1999 book, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, which describes an “ornamental culture” that tells men “manhood is displayed, not demonstrated. The internal qualities once said to embody manhood—sure-footedness, inner strength, confidence of purpose—are merchandised to men to enhance their manliness. What passes for the essence of masculinity is being extracted and bottled and sold back to men. Literally, in the case of Viagra.”

Before it was hijacked by marketing gurus to peddle body lotions and pedicures, British author Mark Simpson coined the word “metrosexual” in 1994 to connote an “epochal shift” to a narcissistic form of mediated masculinity; a man who “has clearly taken himself as his own love object and pleasure as his sexual preference.”

Contrary to popular understanding—fueled by conservatives who are fond of caricaturing liberals as well-coiffed and manicured wimps—Simpson does not define the metrosexual as particularly feminine or

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even gay, but as “a collector of fantasies about the male sold to him by the media.” Thus George W. Bush strutting around on an aircraft carrier is every bit as metrosexual as a teen idol like Orlando Bloom. In a media universe ruled by marketing gods, “the traditional forms and sufferings of stoic, self-denying, self-sacrificing old-fashioned masculinity are merely cutesy, quaint props for the new, aestheticised, moisturized self-regarding variety.” In the new millenium, it’s more important to look like a hero than act like one—as John Kerry could well testify.

That this market-driven narcissism finds expression in an adolescent version of masculinity should be no surprise. “In males, narcissism is something that has been associated with immaturity. Classically, it’s something men are supposed to abandon to become adult males,” Simpson says. “Today, consumerism tells all males that ... they never need abandon their narcissism. That they never need grow up. Just so long as they buy the right products.”

This isn’t good news for either men or women. By defining domestic chores literally as “homework,” the teen slacker version of masculinity offers no respite for working women struggling to balance their lives. And if adult responsibilities are defined as emasculating, then it’s no wonder that popular culture now defines “commitment” solely as a woman’s goal.

Domesticity may have always been a feminine realm, but marriage and children were once defined as integral to the traditional gender roles of both men and women. Today, it’s the woman who is cast in the role of caveman, eager to club some unsuspecting, reluctant male on his head and

drag him to the altar. While progressives and feminists have rightly championed a woman’s right to reject marriage and motherhood, they rarely address the consequences of living in a culture where pair-bonding and parenting—the basic processes that form the foundation of all societies—are constructed as the antithesis of masculinity.

As Neil Chethik, author of the newly published book *VoiceMale: What Husbands Really Think About Their Marriages, Their Wives, Sex, Housework, and Commitment*, found, most American men—the flesh-and-blood variety—embrace their roles as fathers and husbands. “I found in my research that the values of duty, honor, and taking responsibility are far from forgotten by men in our culture,” Chethik says. “Certainly, most men struggle to fulfill the ideals they set for themselves in this area. But they recognize that being a ‘real man’ requires that they are honest and respectful and willing to sacrifice. I saw this among men who worked at jobs they didn’t love, who took care of an ill spouse or child, who helped in their communities without recognition or compensation. There are millions of such men.”

American men may be doing their best to figure out what it means to be a man in the 21st century, but it’s no accident that these men—and more importantly, their sons—aren’t getting much help from the larger culture. “Consumerism wants to make us as atomized as possible—because the more individualized we are the better consumers we are,” says Simpson. “This is why masculinity is so fragmented today and incoherent—and irresponsible. It used to be the tradition. Literally passed down from father to son. But we live in a society where

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tradition stands in the way of profit. So bye-bye daddy.”

Discussions of masculinity on both the left and right inevitably circle around women’s equality, either as a curse or boon to men. Where some argue that the women’s movement has freed men from the straightjacket of traditional machismo, others have blamed it for depriving them of their identity. Yet the greatest threat to modern manhood may lie elsewhere—in the flickering images on our television screen,

bought and paid for by corporate America. Feminism may have sparked the battle over gender roles, but its outcome may well be determined by market forces determined to make voracious consumers of us all.

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Women's organized protests against violence began in the late 1970s in England, with Take Back the Night marches. These women-only protests emerged in direct response to the violence that women encountered as they walked the streets at night. These activities became more coordinated and soon developed into a movement that extended to the United States and, by 1978, the first Take Back the Night events in the U.S. were held in San Francisco and New York City. Over time, sexual assault awareness activities expanded to include the issue of sexual violence against men and men's participation in ending sexual violence.

By the early 1980s, substantial interest developed in coordinating activities to raise awareness of violence against women. As a result, time was set aside during October to raise awareness of violence against women issues. Over time, October became the principle focus of domestic violence awareness activities. Sexual assault advocates looked for a separate time to focus attention on sexual assault issues.

In the late 1980s, the National Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCASA) informally polled state sexual assault coalitions to determine when to have a national Sexual Assault Awareness Week. A week in April was selected. Over time, however, some advocates began focusing attention on sexual violence throughout the month of April. In the late 1990s, many advocates began coordinating activities throughout the month of April on a regular basis, promoting an idea for a nationally recognized month for sexual violence awareness activities.

From 2000-2001, the Resource Sharing Project (RSP) and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), polled state, territory, and tribal coalitions and found that the color teal was the preferred color for sexual assault awareness and prevention and April was the most preferred month to coordinate national sexual assault awareness activities, respectively. As a result, Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) was first observed nationally in April 2001.

Since then, the NSVRC has continued to promote a degree of national unity in voice and action regarding SAAM activities, encourage interaction and feedback from across the nation, and build momentum based on the previous years' activities. The NSVRC has provided resources to advocates nationwide to help them plan SAAM activities in their communities during April and throughout the year. These resources have included publications (e.g., newsletters, booklets, and directories); prevention materials (e.g., palm cards and online resources); and awareness-raising products (e.g., pins, posters, stickers, and postcards). Additionally, the NSVRC has taken an active role in making sexual violence awareness and prevention resources available to the U.S. territories and the healthcare community. More recently, the NSVRC has placed increasing emphasis on the prevention of sexual violence. As a result, its SAAM campaigns have included a greater focus on prevention as well.

It's About Time



TO
Prevent
Sexual
Violence

SAAM Five-Year Plans

Current Five-Year Plan

Building upon the last five-year plan and feedback from community members and professionals concerned with ending sexual violence, this new five-year plan for the SAAM campaign is designed to incorporate lessons learned from previous years, garner increased support from various communities nationwide, and work more effectively and efficiently to heighten awareness and promote prevention of sexual violence in our communities. Additionally, this new five-year plan for the SAAM campaign will promote prevention at various levels for a more comprehensive and effective campaign.

The priorities for the next five years of the national SAAM campaign are to:

- Assist communities and those in the anti-sexual violence movement in moving increasingly from raising awareness to preventing sexual violence;
- Enhance collaborative efforts with other organizations, government entities, corporations, and media outlets;
- Increase the number and variety of awareness and prevention tools available to communities across the nation.

Many of the characteristics of this campaign are discussed in greater detail in the 2006-2010 Plan below.

Women's Gathering Gives Peace a Chance

By Penelope Bragonier - WeNews correspondent

SALZBURG, Austria (WOMENSENEWS)--
Sitting among daffodils in the garden of a castle in the Austrian Alps, I study the bios and photographs of the 57 women with whom I will spend the next week. We have come from everywhere--Burundi, Nepal, Rwanda, Russia, Costa Rica, China and more--for the Salzburg Seminar's meeting on women and political power. In the seminar's 50 years of convening the world's thinkers to forge solutions to global problems, this will be the first session devoted exclusively to women's issues.

The older women are parliamentarians, commissioners, executives of women's organizations. The younger ones--researchers, doctoral candidates, program officers--are poised for leadership. My own credentials seem modest: simply a middle-aged psychologist with a research background in gender and inter-ethnic relations. A diverse group, we are charged with a shared mission: develop strategies to strengthen women's participation in public life around the globe. A picture of a face enshrouded in a black veil startles me. The woman is from Iran, a point on George Bush's "axis of evil." The intensity of her dark gaze reminds me that I may be the target of anti-American sentiments here. But I want those present to know that there are Americans who shudder at our nation's conduct of foreign affairs.

Awash in Colored Robes and Saris

We gather for introductions in a seminar room awash with color: saris in shades of apricot and nectarine; African robes and headdresses of emerald green, pink, fuchsia, sunflower yellow.

"I am Naba from Iraq," says a small woman in the second row. "I come to learn how Iraqi women can help rebuild our country."

A lovely, olive-skinned woman wearing an Italian leather jacket and slim pants stuns me by saying, "I am Mariam from Iran." The veiled woman on page seven!

I sit next to Naba. "We are afraid every minute," she tells me. She and her husband--professors at the University of Baghdad--risk their lives driving back and forth to work. At night, they lie in bed listening for the sound of shell fire.

"With Saddam we lived in a large prison," she says. "First, when the Americans came, we were happy. Now we wish we never saw them."

Naba introduces me to her friend, Huda, from Jordan.

"I live in Amman," says Huda. "But, truly, I am Palestinian. And journalist." She sticks a cigarette into a holder, flicks her lighter, and draws deep.

Our time is filled with meetings. I am learning about the nearly total exclusion of women from Russian political power; the role of six courageous women in the Northern Ireland peace process; the reconciliation efforts of Rwandan women after the hundred-day slaughter; the distinction between true Islam and oppressive interpretations of sharia, or religious law.

Mariam tells me about Iranians' struggle against oppression.

"The rules are always changing. You don't know from day to day if you will get in trouble for something innocent. Mothers are frightened for their children." Her daughter was detained overnight for attending a birthday party. But there is worse, she says. "Three years ago, the

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mullahs stabbed to death 100 artists and intellectuals, people of the greatest integrity."

A Walk Around the Lake

On the third day, Naba, Huda and I walk around the castle lake." Saddam used to fool the world," Naba says. The perfect host, he would indulge visitors to his palaces while starving and torturing his own people behind the scenes.

"Such a generous man," they all say. "It cannot be true that he buries people alive in dirt pits!"

"Oh, yes, very nice man. He gave me a house," says Huda. "True! When he started the war in Iran, he told his boys, 'Get every journalist in Amman a new house.' But we did not write good things about Saddam. You cannot buy a journalist."

Winded by her outburst, she says her son teases her about getting old. He's 31, like mine. "Mine, too!" says Naba, grabbing Huda and me and marching us along the path, a phalanx of mothers. Huda declares, "Mothers will make peace, so sons will not die."

The next night, we dance to Naba's CDs in the castle's underground bierstube. Six middle-aged women in a circle, swinging our hips and waving our arms, while Naba undulates in the center with the grace of one who has danced to these sensuous sounds since childhood. She cups her hand over her upper lip and emits a high-pitched warble that rises above the music. On my third attempt to copy her, she leans close and warbles into my face. I've got it right.

When the song ends, she says, "We call that 'helulah,' our sound for something good. And you, do you know what I call you? 'Habibti,' dearest friend."

Atar, a young Israeli jumps into the circle. At our meetings, she has described her efforts to unite Arab and Jewish women for peace.

Huda, the Palestinian living in Jordan, has kept her distance from Atar all week. Now she watches her and scoffs. She cannot forgive those who forced her family to flee Jerusalem when she was a child. Just last month, she says, the Israelis bulldozed the old homestead to make room for the wall that will separate Arabs from Jews. But now, finishing her second glass of wine, she breaks into the circle and grabs Atar by the hand.

Leaving for Home

The last afternoon, Mariam shows me the veil she will tie around her face before boarding the plane to Tehran. Then Naba's cab arrives.

"You will come to Baghdad," she says, embracing me. "Yes, habibti." She grins at my use of the Arabic word she has taught me.

I leave Salzburg energized by the vitality, courage and resolve of the 50 women with whom I have spent the week. Together, we have devised strategies to expand women's access to political power. The day after I arrive home, Huda writes by e-mail that she has contacted Atar in Tel Aviv. "Maybe one day we will make real peace, telling our governments, 'Stop practicing your disgusting attempts to maintain power on our blood.' Bless you, dear."

Bless us all, I think, marveling at this web we have created, delicate and tough as a spider's. Someday Naba and I will sit in her living room in Baghdad, drinking tea and sharing pictures of our sons and their families. Insh'Allah, or as it's said in English, God willing.

I continue to exchange e-mails with Naba and the others. We celebrate when there is a success (one of our colleagues elected to Parliament in Burundi) and commiserate over setbacks (a female journalist is imprisoned in Iran.) Now, two years later, I am packing for a trip to Amman where I will meet with Jordanian

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women working against formidable odds to empower women in their country. Had it not been for my week in Salzburg, I might have let the opportunity pass. But Huda writes that her husband is preparing the water pipe for our reunion dinner. I will be there. Penelope Bragonier is a developmental psychologist and freelance writer living in Boston. She has served as the executive director of three psychology-based organizations, including the Boston

Institute for Psychotherapy and the Harvard-affiliated Center for Psychology and Social Change.

Women's eNews welcomes your comments. E-mail us at editors@womensenews.org.

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SENIOR HONORS PROJECT

Focusing on Femicide: Democracy through the Lens of Women's Rights in Guatemala

Departmental Honors Project
Presented by Jill Seibert

Monday, May 1, 2006

Focusing on Femicide: Democracy through the Lens of Women's Rights in Guatemala

Abstract

Ever-increasing levels of violence and human rights abuses have plagued post-war Guatemala, undermining the country's attempts at democratization. Recently scholars have noted the growing prevalence of femicide, the murder of a woman in which her gender played a significant causal role. Femicide in Guatemala functions in two ways: to create doubt about the efficacy and durability of democracy and to effectively hinder further democratic consolidation. Through an exploration of published literature on femicide, democratization, and Guatemala's political history, this paper seeks to understand what will likely become of democracy in Guatemala, drawing the conclusion that femicide and substantive democracy cannot coexist in the country. The paper also seeks to make prescriptive recommendations regarding the role of the police force, the military, and international actors in fostering an increasingly liberal democracy.

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May 14th: Mother's Day - Celebrate Women in Your Life



The celebration of Mother's Day was inspired by women's movements to improve environmental and community conditions mothers faced during Civil War times. It also has origins in peace advocacy movements appealing to women after the Franco-Prussian War. Give special women in your life the unique gift of women's history.

**Given the following possibilities,
how many of us could pick the right answer?**

Mother's Day began:

- ▶ In 1858, when Anna Jarvis, a young Appalachian homemaker, organized "Mother's Work Days" to improve the sanitation and avert deaths from disease-bearing insects and seepage of polluted water.
- ▶ In 1872, when Boston poet, pacifist and women's suffragist Julia Ward Howe established a special day for mothers --and for peace-- not long after the bloody Franco-Prussian War.
- ▶ In 1905, when Anna Jarvis died. Her daughter, also named Anna, decided to memorialize her mother's lifelong activism, and began a campaign that culminated in 1914 when Congress passed a Mother's Day resolution.

The correct answer: All of the above. Each woman and all of these events have contributed to the present occasion now celebrated on the second Sunday in May.

History of Mother's Day:

The cause of world peace was the impetus for Julia Ward Howe's establishment, over a century ago, of a special day for mothers. Following unsuccessful efforts to pull together an international pacifist conference after the Franco-Prussian War, Howe began to think of a global appeal to women.

"While the war was still in progress," she wrote, she keenly felt the "cruel and unnecessary character of the contest." She believed, as any woman might, that it could have been settled without bloodshed. And, she wondered, "Why do not the mothers of mankind interfere in these matters to prevent the waste of that human life of which they alone bear and know the cost?"

Howe's version of Mother's Day, which served as an occasion for advocating peace, was held successfully in Boston and elsewhere for several years, but eventually lost popularity and disappeared from public notice in the years preceding World War I.

For Anna Jarvis, also known as "Mother Jarvis," community improvement by mothers was only a beginning. Throughout the Civil War she organized women's brigades, asking her workers to do all they could without regard for which side their men had chosen. And, in 1868, she took the initiative to heal the bitter rifts between her Confederate and Union neighbors.

The younger Anna Jarvis was only twelve years old in 1878 when she listened to her mother teach a Sunday school lesson on mothers in the Bible. "I hope and pray that someone, sometime, will found a memorial mother's day," the senior Jarvis said. "There are many days for men, but none for mothers."

Following her mother's death, Anna Jarvis embarked on a remarkable campaign. She poured out a constant stream of letters to men of prominence -- President William Taft and former President Theodore Roosevelt among them -- and enlisted considerable help from Philadelphia merchant John Wannamaker.

By May of 1907, a Mother's Day service had been arranged on the second Sunday in May at the Methodist Church in Grafton, West Virginia, where Mother Jarvis had taught. That same day a special service was held at the Wannamaker Auditorium in Philadelphia, which could seat no more than a third of the 15,000 people who showed up.

The custom spread to churches in 45 states and in Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Mexico and Canada. The Governor of West Virginia proclaimed Mother's Day in 1912; Pennsylvania's governor in 1913 did the same. The following year saw the Congressional Resolution, which was promptly signed by President Woodrow Wilson.

Mother's Day has endured. It serves now, as it originally did, to recognize the contributions of women. Mother's Day, like the job of "mothering," is varied and diverse. Perhaps that's only appropriate for a day honoring the multiple ways women find to nurture their families, and the ways in which so many have nurtured their communities, their countries, and the larger world.

THE GENDER STUDIES PROJECT INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Palestinians Debate Women's Future Under Hamas
By Brenda Gazzar - WeNews correspondent

BIRZEIT, West Bank (WOMENSENEWS)--Only Ghada Ewais' spirited brown eyes can be seen from the niqab, a full veil that covers her head and nearly all of her face. The fourth-year university student is among the few women on campus who wear this ultra-modest Islamic covering, which she says, brings her closer to Allah and to paradise. But even Ewais believes no one has the right to obligate women to change their choice of dress or become more religious.

"Allah will punish us, or let us go to the paradise," said the 21-year-old English major during a break at Birzeit University near Ramallah in the West Bank. "This is not the work of Hamas."

Since Hamas' parliamentary victory in January, the Palestinian Islamist organization has faced intense international scrutiny. The United States and the European Union have cut off aid to the group arguing it must renounce violence, recognize Israel's right to exist and accept previous agreements the Palestinians have made with Israel. Israel has also cut off all ties with the Hamas-led Palestinian government and is boycotting foreign diplomats who meet with Hamas officials. Beneath those headline-grabbing events, however, a lower-volume debate goes on here about the Islamist organization's intentions toward women. Is it only a matter of time before the Hamas-led government tries to impose the traditional Islamic veil or headscarf, close coffee shops where men and women mix freely, or demand separation of the sexes in all schools and

universities?

Will the fundamentalist women who conducted a successful grassroots campaign that spurred women in their homes to vote and helped Hamas to their stunning victory become dominant while secular women are marginalized? While Hamas officials say no, some women's rights activists worry about the movement's long-term influence and see hints of a more restrictive attitude in an increasing number of signs posted by Islamic organizations on Palestinian buses urging Muslim women to dress modestly and wear the veil.

Open Atmosphere in West Bank

Palestinian women are both veiled and unveiled and enjoy an atmosphere of greater openness, particularly in the West Bank, than women in many Arab countries.

"We are a secular community. Religion has never been a practice in our code of life," says Eileen Kuttub, director of the Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University. "Our lifestyle has been more of an open lifestyle." Although domestic matters for Muslims such as divorce and inheritance are handled by Islamic courts, religious adherence is not strict. During Ramadan, the Islamic holy month of fasting, for instance, it's not unusual to see someone eating on the streets during the day in diverse cities like Ramallah.

Women make up 14 percent of the Palestinian labor force. While they mainly work in traditionally female fields such as teaching and as secretaries, some also work as police officers, judges and journalists, according to

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2005 data from the government's Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. But women such as Kuttab and Rose Shomali, general director of the Women's Affairs Technical Committee, a Ramallah-based coalition of prominent Palestinian women's organizations, worry about their fate under the new Hamas-led government. "We fear that this pluralism, this diversity of culture, this diversity of thought that gives space for dialogue and creativity and for development will not be there," said Shomali, who is a Christian. Other activists, however, were more sanguine.

"It's not the strategy of Palestinian Islamists to impose any type of social code on women," said Islah Jad, a secular Muslim and an associate professor at Birzeit's Institute of Women's Studies. "They have enough political burden . . . that they wouldn't think to apply something that might bring on them more problems than support."

Hamas Says No Obligations

Hamas officials say they will not obligate women to wear a veil, or force other changes upon them. Instead, they talk of the importance of education, equal opportunities in employment, improving life under Israeli occupation and raising the standard of living of Palestinian women, 30 percent of whom lived in poverty in 2003-04, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. Islam does not force anyone to do anything against her will, says Muna Mansour of Nablus, who in January was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council on a Hamas ticket and wears the veil.

"It's a religion that gives women their rights and their freedom," said Mansour, whose husband was a popular Hamas leader assassinated by an Israeli air missile strike in 2001. "Among these rights is the women's right to work, to get an

education, to her beliefs, political participation, choosing whom to marry, inheritance . . . We will use Islam to deliver those rights."

Sheikh Mohammed Abu Teir, who was elected as Hamas' No. 2 candidate on its electoral slate, agreed. "Women can do whatever they want," he told Women's eNews during an interview in his elegant East Jerusalem home. "Hamas is not holding swords." But secular activists worry about the new minister of women's affairs, Maryam Salleh, an Islamist who will be working closely with Islamic women's groups.

"She will favor women Islamists, and she will also develop and promote the programs to convert women" to a more Islamic lifestyle, said Walid Salem, the Jerusalem director of Panorama: Palestinian Center for the Dissemination of Democracy and Community Development. Similarly, with the rise of Islamist women, the voices of secular women could become more marginalized in political and social realms, Salem said.

Converting the Populace

At the Islamic University of Gaza, for instance, Salem said it is understood that unveiled women would not be hired to teach because they are not considered devout Muslims. Hamas might promote similar practices at other universities and schools. "They will not do that by force, but try to convert people to such positions," he said.

Today, personal status issues such as marriage and divorce are adjudicated under Sharia, or Islamic law, which some argue discriminates against women. For example, a Muslim man can marry more than one woman and when it comes to inheritance, a Muslim son usually receives double the share of his parents' wealth than that of a daughter. Hamas is expected to maintain such laws, Salem said. On the other hand,

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Salem expects Hamas to ensure that Muslim women receive their rights to inheritance, which--even at half that of their brothers--are often denied entirely to Muslim women in villages and conservative areas such as Gaza, Hebron and the northern West Bank.

"What Hamas will be doing will be better than social practices that deprive them of their right of inheritance," Salem said.

Ewais, the Birzeit University student, believes Hamas might benefit women in very conservative Muslim families on several fronts.

Because it is an Islamist movement and is respected by many religious families, it could

clarify women's many rights under Islam and encourage families to loosen unfair restrictions on women, such as forbidding daughters to choose their own husbands or hold a job.

"This is very wrong in our religion," said Ewais, who married a suitor of her choice earlier this month. "A woman has to choose her life."

Brenda Gazzar is a freelance journalist based in Jerusalem.

Women's eNews welcomes your comments.

E-mail us at editors@womensenews.org .

May 14-20th 2006 About National Women's Health Week

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National Women's Health Week is a national effort by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and an alliance of organizations to raise awareness about manageable steps women can take to improve their health. The focus is on the importance of incorporating simple preventive and positive health behaviors into everyday life.

What is National Women's Health Week?

National Women's Health Week is a national effort by an alliance of organizations to raise awareness about manageable steps women can take to improve their health. The focus is on the importance of incorporating simple preventive and positive health behaviors into everyday life. It encourages awareness about key health issues among all women, including women with disabilities, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latinas, and American Indian/Alaska Native women, since research has shown there are significant health disparities among these groups.

When is National Women's Health Week?

We will celebrate the 7th annual National Women's Health Week May 14-20, 2006. The week will start on Mother's Day and end on the following Saturday, a time when there is much attention already being focused on women.

Where is National Women's Health Week?

Across America — in communities, neighborhoods, towns, cities, counties, the Internet, job sites, places of worship, recreation centers, and wherever people choose to celebrate the role of good health practices in the lives of women.

Who participates in National Women's Health Week?

National women's groups, local and national health organizations, disability-related organizations, businesses, social service agencies, and others will participate in a national education campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the week and its goals. In short, it will include anyone who wants to help make women's health a top priority. Founding partners of National Women's Health Week hope that each year it is celebrated, more groups will join in a groundswell of activity that will lead to healthier women and a healthier America.

Why celebrate National Women's Health Week?

When women take even the simplest steps to improve their health, the results can be significant. But women need to be able to choose the most effective steps for their individual lifestyles and circumstances. They need to be informed and take responsible actions to improve their own health. For example, heart disease is the number one killer among women, but cancer ranks first among Asian/Pacific Islander women. When it comes to lung cancer, however, white women have the highest mortality rate, while African American women have the highest mortality rate from heart disease. Stroke is the third leading cause of death for American women, but it occurs at a higher rate among African American and Latina women. Women with disabilities often require additional technological and accessible features when seeking health care services; the lack of these features coupled with the lack of cultural competency among providers often prevents them from seeking and achieving proper health care. These differences show the importance of taking appropriate health actions based on individual backgrounds and risk factors.

For information about hosting or participating in this and other National Women's Health Week activities, visit the National Women's Health Week Web site at www.womenshealth.gov/whw or call 1-800-994-WOMAN (9662), or TTY: (888) 220-5446.

Student Entry

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Take Back the Night Chapel
Sponsored by:
Gender Studies Project
International Justice Mission
One in Four
Community Development

Amanda Schoeneberger
Human Development and Family Science Major

On Monday, April 10, at 7:00 PM in Hostetter Chapel, Messiah College hosted its first Take Back the Night event. This chapel, a conglomeration of efforts from Gender Studies Project, One in Four, International Justice Mission, and Community Development, continued in the 30 year tradition of Take Back the Night, an international event that protests and raises awareness of sexual violence.

During the late 1970s, Take Back the Night took the world by storm as women from across the globe participated in candlelight vigils, rallies, and demonstrations to protest rape, pornography, and other forms of violence and forced subordination towards women. Since then, the events have grown and now include participation among men and children as well as women. Today across the world, thousands of individuals collaborate for one common goal: fighting crimes of sexual violence.

The Take Back the Night event at Messiah College was a strong continuation of the tradition of raising awareness. Students heard speeches from rape counselors at the Harrisburg

YWCA, information from Messiah senior Sarah McDonald, whose Senior Strategies project revolved around abuse and sexual violence, and data from representatives of One in Four and the International Justice Mission. One of the high points of the chapel was that it raised awareness of sexual violence on more than one level. The chapel didn't revolve around one demographic; instead, speakers offered information revealing that abuse is not limited to one type of person; it can happen anywhere. After the chapel concluded, students were invited to attend a prayer walk as a sign of support for victims and survivors. It is the hope of all involved that the events on the evening of March 10 herald the beginning of a new tradition here at Messiah College, one that shows a proactive approach to taking back the night.

Student Entry

THE GENDER STUDIES PROJECT

Book Review: *Self-Made Man*, by Norah Vincent
by *Sadie Sumner*

To what extent does gender determine our lives? Indeed, what exactly does gender mean? Norah Vincent attempts to answer these questions in her book, *Self-Made Man*. The book chronicles Vincent's experiences as she courageously transforms her outer appearance into that of a man in order to gain access to typically male dominated social arenas. She infiltrates several strip clubs, a monastery, an all male coping group, a men's only bowling league, an advertising company, and the dating scene. Her book conveys the vast differences that exist between the sexes. But Vincent also discovers a feminine pride previously hidden by her homosexuality.

Vincent recognizes the stark paradoxes of the male ego. She struggles to find the balance between her newly found male self esteem and the comfortableness of what being a guy means—no one expecting too much from you, either in words or actions. Towards the end of her study she notes how one man in her male coping group comments on the necessity of being the center of his universe. Male insecurity is met with an attitude of manifest destiny: I'll take mine and whatever else I can get, just so that I'm not left short in the end. Yet men are left emotionally dwarfed by societal expectations to "act strong". This daily measuring of male self worth by power and achievements, Vincent observes, is often made worse by female expectations.

Vincent's femininity has most recently been suppressed by the acknowledgment of her homosexuality. Before writing the book, she surmised that becoming a male for a year and a half would continue to diminish her feminine side. In fact, the experience gave her a new appreciation for her gender. She revels in her discovery that social conditioning cannot outweigh nature and that gender is not discounted by her sexual orientation. Vincent has learned to appreciate and value even slight hints of her femininity, such as over exaggerated hand movements when conveying stories to friends and frequent apologies. These, she realizes, define her as a female and will not quickly be compromised regardless of her libido.

Vincent acknowledges the exploitation of her subjects in this study, about which she carries considerable guilt. She ends her journey into manhood with a "passive" breakdown, triggered by two genders fighting for recognition in one body. She checks herself into a clinic for four days. During this time, she vows to empathize with the socially dejected male. Yet she curbs her maternally instituted crisis instincts when dealing with men. She recognizes the all-too-common emotionally suffocating female role in times of male despair. Finding a balance between suppression and over analysis of feelings molds a healthy environment in which both women and men can communicate freely without ignoring gender differences. She ends by suggesting that more attention is needed to explain the fundamental differences separating the sexes. A healthy acknowledgment, appreciation, and pride in our gender is necessary for harmony between women and men.

Riegsecker Lecture

March 29th

Speaker: Joe Ehrmann

Anderson Auditorium, Frey Hall (open to public) 7-8pm

Reception and Book signing, Frey Hall, 8pm

Reaction by: McKenzie Griffin

The annual Reigsecker Lecture was a great opportunity to hear from former Professional Football player Joe Ehrmann about gender and faith. He shared with us many personal stories which have created his passion for addressing issues of gender and faith. He told us that in our culture today, young boys are taught that they are only masculine if they have superior athletic ability, participate in sexual conquest, and achieve economic success. He also believed women are told their femininity was in the perfect body and achievement of beauty. Joe told us these beliefs were lies that we were all being fed and he had a passion to change these definitions. Joe shared with us some personal stories that made him believe in the lies of what culture says it means to be a man. He talked about the influence of his “macho” father and how he was told to keep all his emotions inside. He shared with us about his great success in sports which defined who he was. He shared with us about the unexpected death of his younger brother which made him reach out to God. During this crisis, he realized that there was no worth or value in his definition of what it meant to be a man. Because of these experiences, Joe decided to do what ever he could to help others break the mold of what it means to be a man or a woman. He is doing this through coaching a high school football team, being a pastor to a flock of 4,000 people and through organizations like The Ronald McDonald House or Building Men and Women for Others. During the Lecture, Joe reminded me that each one of us is perfect and God made our insides and outside for his perfect purpose. He inspired me to make a difference in the lives of others by sharing genuine empathy through Christ which gives us a healing power. Lastly, he encouraged all of us to make the decision to love everyone and start to heal ourselves. This lecture was successful in its mission to bring a speaker to campus and the greater Messiah community which would bring about awareness of important gender issues.

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We would love to hear from you! If you have ideas or submissions for *Who I Am* please contact McKenzie Griffin, Box 5540, email GenderStudies@messiah.edu.
Or stop by the Gender Studies Project office in Hoffman 315
Phone ext. 7214