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Director: Laura Lockwood, M’95
Assistant to the Director: Lauren Donais, UCONN ’08
Director’s Assistant: Rosalia Abreu, ’11
Violence Prevention Coordinator: Becky Loeb, ’10
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MAC (Multicultural Affairs Council) Representative: Nicolette Laume, ’11
“Coming Out” Network: Nicolette Laume, ’11; Lacey Rose, ’11; Charley Wedeen, ’12; Kristen Doesch, ’12; Isis Irizarry, ’10 (abroad)
Student SART Members: Elizabeth Stannard Gromisch, ‘09
Office Volunteers: Channon Miller, ’11; Yodalis Moran, ’11; Dulce Imbo, ’09

WGRAC Mission Statement

The Women & Gender Resource Action Center is a place of advocacy, support, and welcome for all members of the Trinity and surrounding community. Through educational, social, and cultural programming, it seeks to promote women’s self-determination and empowerment; awareness of gender inequalities; understanding among people of different economic classes, cultural backgrounds, religions, and gender identities; and the creation of a campus environment conducive to respectful interaction between women and men.

Some of our fabulous WGRAC Warriors!
(bottom from left): Laura Lockwood, Cristina Conti, Becky Loeb, Yodalis Moran and Elizabeth Stannard Gromisch
(top from left): Lauren Donais, Nicolette Laume, Rosalia Abreu, and Channon Miller
Not Pictured: Lacey Rose, Charley Wedeen, Dulce Imbo, Kristen Doesch, Jocelyn Schur, Lindsey Eichler, & Isis Irizarry (abroad)

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Letter from the Editors

As such a strong presence in our culture, the media affects all of our lives and perceptions visibly, but most deeply, in subliminal ways. In this newsletter, we seek to expose some of the hurtful effects of the media, especially how it manifests itself in college life and on Trinity’s campus. The most important way to combat the media’s negative influence is to respect ourselves and others.

Love,
Beth and Cristina

Disclaimer: The opinions of the following “Reality Campus” articles do not represent our feelings or the WGRAC.
To contact us, email: cristinaroseconti@gmail.com or elizabeth.gromisch@trincoll.edu

Letter from the Director

Rihanna & Chris. What happens in celebrities’ lives also happens in ours, with much less press. The media tends to glamorize and romanticize violence against women, to the extent that there’s a normalcy established. This is frightening. Here is a checklist for both gals and guys who are dating or in a relationship.

Does Your Partner…
* Constantly put you down? Check up on your whereabouts?
* Embarrass you in front of your friends?
* Intimidate/threaten you? Blame you for everything?
* Pressure you to have sex when you don’t want to?
* Glare, give you the silent treatment, grab, shove, kick or hit you?

Do You
* Always do what your partner wants, not what you want to do? Make excuses for your partner’s behavior?
* Feel like you walk on eggshells to avoid partner’s anger?
* Stay with your partner out of fear? Believe if you just tried harder, everything would be OK? — These indicate potential abuse. If you answered yes to any of these, please consider seeing a counselor.

For help/info: Hotline: 888-774-2900; www.ctcadv.org

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WGRAC Calendar of Events

April 15: Take Back the Night Rally, 6-7pm, Cave Patio. In case of rain, Gallows. For more information please email: Rebecca.Loeb@trincoll.edu.

April 17 & 24: Start Smart! 1-2:30pm, Alumni Lounge. Learn how to negotiate higher salaries/better contracts! Sponsored with career Services. RSVP: Laura.Lockwood@trincoll.edu

April 21: Does Porn Make Sexism Sexy? 12:15-1:15pm, Common Hour. Student and Faculty panel discussion. Pizza served. RSVP: Jocelyn.Schur@trincoll.edu

April 23: Take Our Daughters to Work Day, 12-1pm, Reese Room, Smith House: Speaker: Marwa Aly, Muslim Chaplain: please RSVP ASAP to Laura.Lockwood@trincoll.edu.

SUPPORT GROUP FOR VICTIMS & SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE AND THEIR FRIENDS

Thursdays, 6:15pm: WGRAC Lounge, 2nd floor, Mather

Victims & survivors of any kind of violence, and their friends, are welcome to come together in a safe space for a night of discussion. Open to all students regardless of gender, gender identity or expression. RSVP: Lauren.Donais@trincoll.edu.

Have a Great Summer!
Campus Resources

Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Information

The Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) provides assistance to survivors of sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence and stalking. Assistance may include counseling, advocacy, medical care, academic interventions and referrals. SART members will explain what options and resources are available, and will assist you through whatever steps you decide to take. When you tell a SART member about the incident, you do not have to use your name, nor the alleged perpetrators’. That is up to you. SART Members will preserve your confidentiality to the greatest extent possible. We encourage you to formally report, using names, so the incident can be investigated and to prevent further crimes. But you don’t have to. We would rather have you report the incident, without names, than not at all. We can’t help you if you don’t come forward.

We will encourage you to get help and support for what you’ve gone through. You may opt to meet with a counselor at the Counseling Center, the Women’s Center, or talk with a Peer Counselor, to get help with the emotional issues that will arise. We can also refer you to off-campus therapists.

If you have any questions about reporting procedures, SART, or any related issue, please call Laura Lockwood at the Women & Gender Resource Action Center (x2408), or ask your RA, Coach, Mentor, Chaplain or another SART member that you feel comfortable with. We encourage you to report. We will not judge you, blame you, or report it if you were drinking and under 21. It’s just important that we get to talk to you, and get you some help. For member names, photos, contact info, & date rape drug information, please visit: www.trincoll.edu/StudentLife/HealthSafety/CampusSafety/SART/

Promoting Healthy Awareness of the Body (PHAB)

PHAB is a student-led group that educates the campus on the issues of eating disorders & body image. WGRAC has resources to help you learn more about eating disorders, and how to help a friend or roommate who is suffering. Here are contact numbers and web sites to learn more.

Women & Gender Resource Action Center: Laura R. Lockwood, Director: x2408; Lauren Donais, Assistant to the Director: x4131
Health Center: Martha Burke, Director: x2018; Joyce O’Dea, Nutritionist: x2018
Counseling Center: Randy Lee, Director: x2415
Dean of Students: Dean Fred Alford: x2156
Eating Disorders Hotline: 1-800-931-2237
Institute of Living: 545-7718 – on Washington Street, across from Learning Corridor Eating Disorders Awareness and Prevention: www.nationaleatingdisorders.org
National Association of Anorexia Nervosa & Associated Disorders: www.anad.org
Overeaters Anonymous: www.oa.org

WGRAC seeks a student for the PHAB Coordinator position for 2009/10! Please email Laura.Lockwood@trincoll.edu for more information.

REALITY CAMPUS

Students’ views on Nightlife at da Trin...

An anonymous sophomore woman writes:

Loud music, strobe lights, crowded spaces, friends, frat houses. This is the way I like to spend my weekends. A lot of people here don’t like the fraternity atmosphere, but I think it is a great way to end a stressful week. Everyone there is just trying to blow off some steam. Some people have called the guys who hang out at the frats creepy or pushy. To those people I say, don’t judge so quickly; live a little. I find it flattering when a guy starts dancing with me. Usually I even start a conversation with him and try to get to know him a little. Just because you dance with someone does not mean you have to hook up with him. Some people think it does, but it is not true. I never let a situation go further than I want it to. I go to the frats to have fun, and I always accomplish my goal. Around campus, I have heard many negative comments about fraternity life and people’s bad experiences there. But I say don’t ever put yourself in a situation you don’t like. If you think the frat guys are creepy, then stay in your dorm and let others enjoy them. I know I will.

My Perspective of Men at Frats

By Cydni E. Kantor

You know the guy at the frat who is only there because he is hoping to get lucky that night? He doesn’t actually talk to the girl, and if he does, he just pretends to sound interested so he can get into her room. It’s because of these men that I tend not to go to frats as much as I used to. Back in the day when I was still a freshman (granted that was last year so really not that long ago), I use to go to frats to meet new people. Weird concept, I know, but I used to love talking to these individuals and hearing their perspectives on life. I soon learned that the frats aren’t exactly conducive to this type of ideological exchange; instead, they are a breeding ground for random drunken hook-ups.

Don’t get me wrong, I love dancing and that’s what made the frats such a fun place to hang out. However I went to the frats to dance with my friends, not random creeps who come behind you without permission. I am not saying all the guys at the frats behave this way, but I am saying that a lot of guys do. To be completely honest, if I am dancing with my friends, that does not mean I want a guy to come up from behind and start grinding with me. (Cont. on next page)
My Perspective of Men at Frats, cont.

I understand that some girls are okay with this—maybe she does not mind dancing with this guy. So maybe they dance together, but that does not mean she wants to walk with him. Even if she makes out with him, that does not mean she wants him to walk her back to her room at the end of the night. Maybe she does let the guy walk her back to her room, but that does not mean he is welcome inside. He very well could be back to her room, but that does not mean she wants him to walk with him. Even if she makes out with him, that does not mean she wants him to make out with this guy. So maybe they dance together, but this may seem completely basic and obvious, it can be hard to maintain a sense of what to expect in different circumstances. No matter how much we analyze situations and find excuses and reasons to excuse actions that are anything less than what we deserve, we should strive towards standing our ground and claiming our basic rights. The same goes for how women treat men—this article is not to say that all men treat women disrespectfully or unfairly. However, as reported in a recent article in the Tripod, from “Trinity’s report for the 2007-2008 academic year, there were…10 forcible sex offenses that occurred on campus.” With this number in mind, it must be acknowledged that there is absolutely no reason to be treated with anything less than respect. The more we establish and enforce these rights, the more we will be treated in a positive and respectful manner.

The Search for Life in a Frat

By Cristina Conti

After waiting, with bare legs that shrink from night’s icy straight jacket
And battling the clattering BB gun heels,
She is finally allowed to enter:
Heavy fog of sweaty strobe light flash black,
icce sloge of stale muddy beer puddling—
stiletto pierce, splashing
cool rush of rustling metal
and cigarette smoke fumes
incarcerate clenched throat, arms push
past bodies dense and dark. Beads of moisture
kiss strangers.
Bumpy wall grinding legs—
cheap thrill, two colliding rhythms,
mechanical knob in her lower spine,
push sticky tangle behind ear.
She stares into
the swiveling glow of familiar, transient eyes
touch then turn to another’s. Her glance roves far, detecting
his shape: six foot, baby cream muscles and bronze bristle hair, who turns
her belly into quicksand…
Her frosted lips part eyes dance pull down saved soft citrus curls, ready for
—not him.

Gender Stereotypes

victim is less likely to get a “rape kit,” especially if the assault occurs during the relationship. In many of those cases, the victim will not see this as an assault, and will not seek medical attention. When males do report the assault, they face even more challenges, especially if their assailant is a woman. In those cases, men deal with comments such as “didn’t you want to have sex?” or “how can a woman sexually assault a man?”

Immaturity and the City

as the negative reviews that usually doom a movie. I do not blame audiences for going to see the movie, though, since they might have been as hopeful as I was. The New York Times wrote, “The weekend opening also ranked as the strongest ever for a movie carried by a female lead.” Parker said, “I’m so excited for the possibilities for mov-}

Watchmen

of what his penis looks like—yet another great portrayal of women. And that is not the last time you see his penis; you can even count on seeing it in every scene that he is in. I understand that Jon is above wearing clothes because he has become a living God, but Snyder could have left something up to the imagination occasionally.

Despite its many problems, Watchmen did have a few rewarding qualities. The hyper-violent scenes with Rorschach were visually stunning, and Snyder did a great job with these bloody scenes. Also, the visuals on Mars and those of the world ending were amazing. But, had I known about all of Watchmen’s misogynistic problems, I would not have wasted my time and $10 sitting through the film just to see Rorschach throw dead dogs through windows at a child-murderer.
“Okay. So, um, I probably should really go, but do you think you’ll be okay or whatever?”

“You sure?” He is already standing, his coat halfway on.

“Definitely.”

“You’re tensing up. Don’t be scared.” She sips the orange juice with his other hand. “Sit down, okay?” She sits on the carpet, and he sits facing her. “Are you ready?” He gives her the orange juice. “Sit down, okay?” She sits on the carpet, and he sits facing her. “Are you ready?” He gives her the orange juice. “Sit down, okay?” She sits on the carpet, and he sits facing her. “Are you ready?” He gives her the orange juice.

Ariana. Let me open the bottle for you.” She gives it to him and bites down on the edge of her index finger. The cap unscrews easily in his hands. “Do you take them both now?”

“Yeah.” He hands her the pill. It feels like nothing in her palm, and that’s how she places it in the back of her throat. The taste is somewhat bitter and she lets her gag reflex push the pill toward the front of her mouth. He gives her the orange juice and all of her breath goes into her chest.

“Yeah.” He hands her the pill. It feels like nothing in her palm, and that’s how she tries to think of it as she places it in the back of her throat. The taste is somewhat bitter and she lets her gag reflex push the pill toward the front of her mouth. He gives her the orange juice and all of her breath goes into her chest.

“You’re tensing up. Don’t be scared.” She sips the juice and curls her tongue backward, letting the pill slide down her throat. It’s stuck in the middle somewhere and she has to take another gulp. It joins her stomach then, and she closes her eyes.

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“What’s it?” She opens her eyes again and presses her teeth over her bottom lip. He touches her wrist, gently.

“Okay. So, um, I probably should really go, but do you think you’ll be okay or whatever?”

“Yeah.”

“Cool. So, bye.”

“Bye.”

He’s gone and Ariana stares at the bear in her hands. She feels nausea building in her body and she reaches under her bed and pulls out a pair of scissors, the ones she used for her AP Art collage. She slices through the bear’s stomach with her right hand. She pulls it apart, then lifts the stuffing from the inside. She empties it completely, then pauses, emitting a noise from inside herself that she doesn’t understand. Eventually, it ends. She takes out her sewing kit.

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Sex and the Media

The WASP Nest

By Emma Darvick

Stabbings and suicide, booze and blow, breakups and makeups, cheaters and hos. Underage drinking and not too much thinking, drunken nights of drunken fights Girl talk of boy talk chick flicks and catfights. Shots, cans and bottled tans outfits, misfits and one night stands. Tap Tap tipity Tap Slither off in pairs of two. If only a DJ could save our lives from tests, teachers and gossip like knives.

Cigarettes and no regrets long distance phone calls and come hither texts. bar tabs, punches and jabs, back stabs real stabs and six pack abs. Buzzing chatter and stinging remarks Sunlit walks and deeds done in the dark. Backs of cars and battle scars hospitals, rehab and back to the bar. Vodka and Redbull, Jack and Coke out the window goes the smoke. Football games, formals and guns we dance and scream 'til we see the sun. One to the psych ward while the other one scored--when you're in this hive, you'll never get bored.

Another positive trend that is being accepted by the fashion world is the plus-sized model. I remember a story in Seventeen magazine when I was a teenager about one model who decided that her health was worth more than being a size 0, and she became a plus-sized model. And she was one of the most beautiful models I had ever seen in a magazine! It was one of those moments where young girls could see that beauty does not mean your ribs have to be showing.

In the August/September '07 issue of Bust magazine, there was a story on Velvet, a plus-sized model and photographer who walked down the runway of both John Galliano and Jean Paul Gaultier shows. She was confident and brushed off nasty comments from the likes of Joan Rivers. And in the past few cycles of America's Next Top Model, there have been plus-sized models in the house, though they have to deal with weight criticism even more than the skinny girls (as well as issues with wardrobe). But it is the magazines that use all types of models, showing what a "real woman" looks like, that speaks the loudest, because this is one of the main forms of media that reaches the younger generation, shaping how girls see beauty.

Nevertheless, fashion has also been fighting the negative images through socially conscious designers and brands that have been giving back and making a change. Stella McCartney has made her name known in fashion through the creation of clothing that is animal friendly, which has helped make a statement, especially now that public figures have become voices for PETA. Other groups, like Ichabod's and (RED), have been giving portions of their profits to help rebuild communities and aid research organizations.

It is a combination of all the positive trends coming from the fashion world, and the protests of the damaging views of women that can make fashion, and the media that presents it, a better portrayal of women.
Fashion and the Media, cont.

Sex and the Media

Fashion and the Media: Negative Past/Positive Future

By Elizabeth Stannard Gromisch

Fashion and the Media are tightly interlinked: the media brings us the images of models strutting down the runway in the newest multi-thousand dollar dress that would never work in real life. But it also sends the message that women must be a certain size, look a specific way, and must be sexually tempting while being innocent at the same time, or else we fail as women. After all, it’s America’s Next Top Model, not America’s Next Top Successful Businesswoman with a Positive Body Image. It’s not that I hate fashion. I live and breathe it, and I watch America’s Next Top Model marathons whenever they are on. But, more often than not, a woman’s body image is under fire, and it is an accepted part of our society.

Probable the most stereotypical image of a model is extremely skinny with large breasts. This is not a realistic body image, unless plastic surgery is involved, and there is still airbrushing during the editing process. Despite this, women are forcing their bodies to fit into this order to be attractive to men. However, they still must be virginal, like the Britney Spears model (and we’re seeing how that’s playing out).

It is at an earlier age that women are developing unhealthy eating and exercising habits. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women’s Health, 1%-4% of women have eating disorders, with anorexia nervosa ranking as the most prevalent. Instead of enjoying childhood, girls as young as eight years-old have begun dieting and wearing makeup. An example of such is a 13-year-old model from Australia who has been doing shoots considered overly sexy. At what point is the line drawn and girls can just be girls?

In addition, there is a poor representation of women of color in the fashion industry.

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Untitled Story

By M.J. Geier

The bus is quiet Sunday morning. The rain is finally stopping, but the sky doesn’t turn blue. Ariana watches for rainbows in puddles through the bus windows. A few years ago, she played this game with her mom, and usually found at least two. Now, she can’t see any, so she turns back to the boy resting his head on her shoulder. It’s early, and most of Manhattan is asleep. Her eyes won’t close.

“Only one more stop,” she says. The boy squeezes his eyelids together and stretches upright.

“Okay. You’re sure we took the right bus and everything?”

“Yeah.”

“Cool.” He puts his hand on her knee, then lifts it up again. “I really think it’ll be fine.”

“I know.”

“I mean it’s not a huge deal is all I’m saying.”

“Yeah. I know. Thanks for coming with me anyway.”

“Oh.”

“Sure. It’s like the least I could do, you know!” He smiles at her and pats her head. “Don’t worry so much, okay?”

“I’m really not. I just haven’t done this before so it’s weird, but I’m not worried. It’s just, it’s strange or whatever.”

“Well I have church at nine thirty, so my mom’ll be up soon looking for me.”

“Okay.”

“Alright.” It’s a two-minute walk to her apartment building. They don’t say anything, and she doesn’t hold his hand even though she could. It’s just hanging at his side and she doesn’t need two hands to hold the bag.

“This is it. This is where I live.”

“Great. So I’ll see you.”

Katie—her girlfriend of Jon, the blue guy who has the powers of a god superhero “Dr. Manhattan.” Jon works for the government and lives on a military base, and Laurie lives with him. Their relationship reaches a breaking point when she realizes that he has duplicated himself in order to have sex with her and work simultaneously. After breaking it off with Jon, Laurie is forced to leave the base, and she decides to call on a fellow ex-superhero “Nite Owl” Dan Dreiberg. Following the sexist overtones of the movie, these two end up attempting to have sex, but Dan has some erectile dysfunction due to the apocalyptic times the world is facing. The two decide to go out and try to fight crime again, and after they save some people from a fire, they are able to have sex.

In preparing to see Watchmen, I read the graphic novel, and was surprised by some of the sexist overtones. All of the characters have serious flaws—part of the point of the novel; however, both of the women have flaws based on their sexuality, which is problematic.

The mother-daughter characters in Watchmen, who both acquired the crime-fighting moniker “Silk Spectre,” are completely defined by their sexual relationships with men. “The Comedian,” the man killed at the film’s opening, had attempted to rape the mother, Sally, but apparently Sally enjoyed it because he ends up being her daughter’s father. As a woman, reading about those events was completely disgusting to me—they feed into the rapist’s fantasy that his victim is actually aroused by him. At the end of this rape scene in the film, the camera focuses on Sally’s face and she seems to be smiling. What does that say about women?

In the scene where Jon first materializes from after his nuclear accident, the camera pans out from just a shot of his face to one of his entire naked blue body. While this may seem acceptable because it is his first appearance since his transformation, I think the choice to have the next shot as his girlfriend saying “Jon!” right after we see his dong, was not a very good one. It implies to the viewer that she only recognizes him because

Continued on Page 17
Immaturity and the City

by Cristina Conti

As an enthusiastic of the Sex and the City television series, I was deeply disturbed by the overarching message the movie sends to its largely female fan base. It was: a man can skip his wedding, and his fiancée should take him back because “love conquers all.” At the end of the movie (surprise, surprise) Carrie ends up with Mr. Big again, a man who has continually mistreated her. One would think that after a painful ten year relationship, let alone his decision not to show up at the first wedding, Carrie would move on. Instead, she enters into a second marriage ceremony with him, this time on his terms, i.e. no fluffy dresses, guests, etc.

In this marriage debacle, Carrie’s one sided devotion to Big is crystal clear as he refuses to participate in a wedding of her style. If love is about making sacrifices, then Big certainly does not have much love for Carrie. The screen writer tries, unsuccessfully, to blame Big’s failure to appear at the wedding on Carrie’s friend Miranda’s indiscreet comment about the corrosive nature of marriage. A mature adult suitable to marry Carrie, the postmodern feminist heroine of the series, would have a strong enough backbone to withstand the remarks of a bitter woman. It is not apparent who is the more immature—Big or Carrie. Along with taking him back, Carrie blames Miranda for her selfishness and fear of commitment, holding herself responsible for letting the wedding become overly elaborate—despite the fact that she repeatedly attempts to include Big in the plans. Producer Sarah Jessica Parker, who also stars as Carrie, said, “it’s a movie about being a grown-up.” Right.

In the movie, love is a crutch that disables the single woman. Carrie is not the only love-struck woman who compromises her worth for a man. Jennifer Hudson makes an unnecessary appearance as Louise, Carrie’s personal assistant, who moves to the city after she is jilted by a lover who said that she “just wasn’t the one.” After a few months of growth as an independent single woman in the city, she, too, marries her former unappreciative boyfriend. Parker’s antiquated theme is reinforced.

Parker’s message is potentially harmful for women who subscribe to the ideology that women do all the flexibility. Setting for a hurtful man like Big for “love” could entangle people into abusive relationships instead of egalitarian partnerships based on trust, compromise, and love. Candace Bushnell’s novel is the basis of the television series, which is dedicated to the empowerment of the single woman. Whatever happened to this refreshing and liberating theme? As the role model for so many women, Carrie has the responsibility to uphold women’s self-worth. From this perspective, she has failed miserably. According to the movie, in the year 2008 and after six seasons of the supposedly postmodern feminist TV show, gender relations have not evolved in their most basic elements. The film is a prosaic repetition of the American ‘chick flicks’ of yesteryear where the woman sacrifices everything for “love.” Unfortunately, this shallow, materialistic circus was a huge box office success even though it combines cinematic disasters like bad acting and substandard writing, as well as

Continued on Page 17
Where to Draw a Line?

By Anonymous

As his hand slid down my lower back and past the comfort line to the danger zone, he refused to meet my gaze. Forcing eye contact, I caught his attention and firmly said “Really!...No! What are you doing!” He sheepishly grinned and mumbled something about how he didn’t mean to. It’s another Saturday night on Vernon Street...

The boy in question was a non-Trinity student visiting his sister on campus. I had briefly been introduced to him earlier (when he informed me that he “didn’t believe in handshakes, only hugs”), which apparently was enough to give him the right to feel me up.

As a freshman girl, it’s incredibly difficult to draw the line between invoking the right amount of attention and going too far. So often we find ourselves running into the balancing act of wanting attention, but not wanting to get too much attention. Besides having classes with people, it seems like going to the frats is the main place to socialize. Even if you’re not looking for any sort of romantic relationship, going to the frats with friends is a popular event. How does a young girl navigate between expressing interest in someone and giving potential grounds for “getting in trouble!” If you’re trying to meet new people, how do you express interest in a stranger without giving him what he may consider “the right” to take things too far? Some argue that by going to the frats you have to acknowledge what situations you might be getting yourself into. Things might get out of hand and you have to go with that knowledge.

Several acquaintances have shared similar experiences they have had. In each scenario, the girl would meet someone at the frats and start hanging out with him. When she finally began to know him, she’d run into someone who would warn her to “stop hooking up with so-and-so’s boyfriend.” That’s right. On more than one occasion, these girls would find themselves with a guy that had a secret girlfriend. What kind of society is this where a guy thinks it’s OK to have random hook-ups at a frat when he has a “girlfriend”? And what kind of girl wants to put herself through the ordeal of actually dating one of these guys?

One thing that strikes me, in particular, is this unbelievable power of expectation. A boy that I didn’t know very well invited me to a formal at one of the frats. I was hesitant and nervous to go as we had only hung out a few times, and I didn’t know a lot about him. I ended up going and having a lot of fun, but leaving relatively early. I gave him a hug goodbye and thanked him for a fun evening, but I felt unbelievably guilty. Even though we weren’t very close and he had no reason to have other expectations, I felt like I hadn’t fulfilled my role as his...

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Gender Stereotypes in Sexual Assault

By Elizabeth Stannard Gromisch

Sexual assault is a crime that affects thousands of people around the world. According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, in the USA, one in six women, and one of thirty-three men will be sexually assaulted at one point during their lifetime. This is not a crime that discriminates, but there is much biased public opinion. The general perception of a female victim is she brings sexual assault upon herself. In addition, the general public defines sexual assault as “stranger assault,” i.e. someone jumps out from behind a bush on a dark night. In reality, the majority of victims know their assailants, and victims never ask to be assaulted. As the RAINN statistics indicate, men are also victims; it is suspected that their numbers are lower than the reality, because men, more often than women, do not report. Far too often the public believes that men cannot be victims of sexual assault, or, if assaulted, they must be gay. In a crime that is so devastating to the victim, these stereotypes make it even more difficult to move past the physical and emotional pain and become a survivor.

The most important thing to note in sexual assault cases is no one ever asks or deserves to be assaulted. A person’s dress, previous sexual activity, or location are not justifications for assault. Rape is a crime of violence and power, not one of love or sex. Both women and men can be assaulted, and both women and men can be the assailant. Eighty percent of victims know their assailant; many times, sexual assault is a part of relationship violence. Unfortunately, because of the overhanging belief that women are at fault for the assault, victims are not believed. Due to this obstacle, many women don’t report the crime.

How do these gender stereotypes arise in sexual assault? Sadly, many of these images come from the media’s representation of rape. Like domestic violence, sexual violence against women is glorified. If you open to the last page of Ms. Magazine, the “No Comment” page is full of advertisements depicting the woman as a sexual object; or, violence is glamorized. One ad by Sisley shows a woman tied up on a couch with a man’s face lowered towards her. She looks emaciated, and her face appears to have been beaten but this is supposed to be “fabulous.” In the porn industry, sexual assault is painted as a sexual fantasy, further perpetuating the myth that women ask for it. In this light, it is harder for society to accept the woman as a victim of the crime.

Under these assumptions, sexual assault cases that don’t fall into the “norm” receive less scrutiny. Because most assaults occur with a known assailant, the...