

### WGRAC Staff & Volunteers

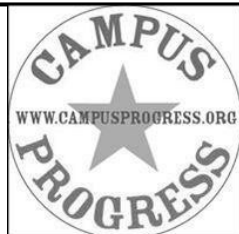
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**Director's Assistant:** Rosalia Abreu, '11  
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**Student SART Members:** Elizabeth Stannard Gromisch, '09  
**Office Volunteers:** Channon Miller, '11; Yodalis Moran, '11; Dulce Imbo, '09



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)

### 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.



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	Volume 17, Issue 2
	Spring 2009
<h1>SEX AND THE MEDIA</h1>	A Campus Progress Publication
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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



*Elizabeth Stannard Gromisch is the senior co-editor of Women Unite!. She's a senior majoring in neuroscience with minors in classical tradition and Japanese language. She's a SART member and a representative for Campus Progress.*



*Cristina Conti is co-editor of Women Unite! She's a sophomore majoring in Political Science and minoring in English. She's also a member of the Trinity College Dance Company.*

### 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 you 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**



*Laura Lockwood is the Director of the Women & Gender Resource Action Center.*



## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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/](http://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](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org)

National Association of Anorexia Nervosa & Associated Disorders: [www.anad.org](http://www.anad.org)

Overeaters Anonymous: [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

WGRAC seeks a student for the PHAB Coordinator position for 2009/10! Please email [Laura.Lockwood@trincoll.edu](mailto: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 this 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 make out 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 welcomed inside, however, that does not mean the girl wants to have sex with him.

Honestly, there are cases where the girl does want to have sex; however, not all girls want that guy's penis (personally, I don't want an STD).

I am not trying to say anything against guys or frats; I love my guy friends and some frat brothers are great guys. I am only saying that I would personally like to be treated better at frats by the guys who creep around the corner watching girls.

## 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,  
 ice sloop of stale muddy beer puddling--  
 stilettos pierce, splashing  
 cool rush of rusting metal  
 and cigarette smoke fumes  
 incarcerate clenched throat, arms push  
 past bodies dense and dank. 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.

*Where to Draw a Line cont.*

By not staying and hooking up with him, I felt like I had let him down. Through my experiences at Trinity so far, I have come to realize that in order to succeed socially, you have to keep several things in mind. No matter what happens, it is important for young women to understand that they deserve to be treated with respect. While 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. How-

ever, 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.

*Gender Stereotypes continued*

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?"

Sexual assault isn't something that can be ignored. By supporting a societal view that re-victimizes survivors, we continue these gender biases and attitudes. Through working towards preventing sexual assault and creating a better support system, we can start to change things.

*Immaturity and the City cont.*

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-

ies about women." Movies about women in similar situations can considerably detract from the feminist cause of furthering the social empowerment of women.

*Watchmen Review continued*

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.





Untitled Short Story continued

"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?"

"Just one. I'm supposed to take the other one in 12 hours." He takes one pill out and puts the bottle on the floor. He picks up the orange juice with his other hand. "Sit down, okay?" She sits on the carpet, and he sits facing her. "Are you ready?" He stares straight at her. She avoids his gaze.

"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.

"That'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."

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

"Definitely."

"Cool."

"Could you just, um, hand me that stuffed animal before you go?"

"The rainbow bear thing?"

"Yeah, that one."

"Sure." He hands it to her then walks to the door. "So I guess I'll see you tomorrow, then?"

"Yeah, probably. I mean in the hallway or something."

"Right." He opens the door. "Look, call me or text me if you need anything, okay? You have my cell number?"

"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.



## Fraternity Parties: Frontier of the Gender Role Swap?

By Alexander Champoux

In considering the average span of a Trinity party life—approximately 3.25 years, factoring in semesters abroad, budding freshman ignorance, and senior exasperation—as a sophomore in my second semester, I might be perceived as finally coming into the beginning stages of social middle age. In reflection, I can sense the passing of a phase in my partying style, and as such, am forced to also dissect my current party mentality. Freshman year was a time of bacchanal, with wild pre-gaming, schizoid fraternity hopping, and raucous displays of manliness. This was coupled with a single-minded devotion to dancing and flirting that contributed to the ultimate purpose of finding The Hookup. In hindsight, it was a necessary phase, though I'm glad it's over; through my antics, I met a lot of people and had my own lightning initiation into the world of courtship, relationships, and sexual experience.

This year, though, silly as it

may seem, I found a maturing force in pledging, and joining a fraternity. For all the drunken stupidity associated with fraternity life, joining a fraternity brought a new vantage point into my life. Fearing the manifestation of fraternity stereotypes, my fraternity, at least, has been forced to take a more careful approach to partying. Excess, abuse, misogyny, and rape are perpetually associated with

guests, and my focus is more on having a fun party environment than on finding my next sexual encounter.

With the step back this year, I've had more of a chance to observe the dynamics of Trinity's weekend social scene, and, for the most part, am impressed by it. Every weekend, there are one or two guys that push the bounds of acceptability, and we're forced to intervene, but on closer observation, people largely stick to the middle school dance mentality and cluster in groups where they feel safe—a setting that doesn't lend

Greek life and, as a result, fraternity men are driven to become proactive—or obsolete. This semester, my weekends are far tamer; Thursday and Saturday nights begin with homework until 10, walking over to the house, setting up for the party, and, once people have arrived, fulfilling a role as a host. Although I may drink (and sometimes get drunk), my party mentality has changed drastically over the past year—during parties I flit around and survey the

itself to much drama. It might be that mine is not one of the frats where one goes to find a hookup—people seem respectful and comfortable, and I increasingly see girls making the moves on guys. From drunkenly chasing girls freshman year, I'm ready to take a cue from the party scene—have fun, make friends, socialize, stay in control, show some respect, and maybe, just maybe, one of those girls will come over and ask me to dance.





# The WASP Nest

By Emma Darvick

Stabbings and suicide,  
 booze and blow,  
 breakups and makeups,  
 cheaters and hoes.  
 Underage drinking  
 and not too much thinking,  
 drunken nights  
 of drunken fights  
 Girltalk of boy talk  
 chick flicks and catfights.  
 Shots, cans  
 and bottled tans  
 outfits, misfits  
 and one night stands.  
 Tap Tap tippity 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  
 Sun-lit 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.

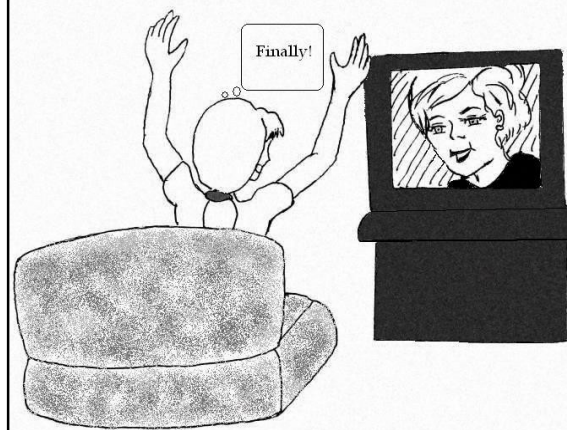
In the August/September '07 issue of *Bust* magazine, there was a story on Velvet, a plus-sized model and photographer who walked down the runway of both John Galiano

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.



Today, Hillary Clinton was sworn in as Secretary of of the State...

When the media gives women a positive image

*Elizabeth Stannard Gromisch 7/10/09*

Hillary Clinton by Elizabeth Stannard Gromisch



*Fashion and the Media, cont.*  
Sadly, it seems that the media is more concerned about covering their private lives than their modeling. Take Naomi Campbell: while she is known as one of the greatest African-American models, lately the only media coverage she seems to get is for her cell phone-throwing antics. About a decade earlier, when Tyra Banks entered the modeling scene, there was a media-constructed war between the two of them, giving the public the idea that two women of color could not be popular in the fashion industry at the same time, and, in turn, must hate each other; however, if you are white, perky, and blonde, that problem does not exist.

In *America's Next Top Model*, which provides an "inside" view into the world of fashion and modeling, the judges critique how the girl looks, what she eats, and whether or not she has what it takes to succeed. While they try to balance the critiques by having discussions with the girls about positive eating habits and being role models in their communities, the negative aspects of fashion still present themselves. For example, in one episode the girls were posing as victims, and were "dead" in the photos. Even more disturbing was the judges told them how fabulous they looked as corpses, and to some they

looked even more attractive than when they were alive; all because it was very editorial fashion.

This crossed the line. At least in this portrayal of the fashion world, not only do you have to be flawless (this includes being coerced into fixing any imperfection, or you go home), but it's perfectly all right to be beaten and glamorize domestic violence. When I watched that episode, I think what disturbed me the most is that one of the contestants who had dealt with domestic violence in her life still had to do the shoot. The perpetuation of women as victims, especially in the name of fashion, is infuriating. While *America's Next Top Model* is entertaining, continuing to make women victims only worsens the media's view of what is okay.

Advertisements sometimes are the most negative images of fashion, where women are highly sexualized and objectified. One of my favorite sections of *Ms.* magazine is the last page where three objectifying magazine ads are shown. And in every single one, the model is either a sex object or a victim of violence, thus feeding back to why that episode of *America's Next Top Model* is so objectionable.

While there are some ads that show men sexually, it is mostly women who are objectified. It is because in

our society, sex sells, and advertisers target men by using sexually appealing women in their ads. In ads targeted to women, sometimes it is an attractive man in a sensual position, but more often the ads are aimed at the stereotypical behavior of women. Sadly, these are the images that are shaping women's body image.

On the other hand, there is a more positive side of fashion that feminists can cheer. Two years ago at the Milan Fashion Week, there was a huge backlash to the overly skinny models and to the stories of models dying from anorexia and bulimia. Due to that, Milan now has a current ban on any model that has a body mass index (BMI) below 18. A BMI between 18.5 and 29.5 is considered healthy, with anything below considered underweight (so some models will still technically be underweight, but allowed on the runway). Using the National Institute of Health's BMI calculator, a woman who is five foot eleven (an average height for a model) has to weight a minimum of 129 pounds to work in Milan as a model. Comparatively, the average weight for a woman, according to the CDC, is 164.3 pounds (2002), up from 140.2 pounds (1960). If that is for the same height (the CDC did not specify a specific height), that is still more than a 35 pound difference between an average woman and a model.



## 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.

Probably 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 ever 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 mold at the expense of their health and projected self-image.

This has begun to affect the younger generation as well, with clothing for 10 year-olds that should be for much older teenagers. I remember going shopping with my mother and nothing in the junior's department seemed appropriate—everything looking too promiscuous. It is at an early age that girls are taught to be sexual in

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.

*Continued on Page 14*





## 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."

"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."

"Yeah, I hear that." The boy stands up as the bus slows and reaches his hand out. "Let me carry the bag." Ariana pulls it closer to her chest.

"I've got it, really. Honestly, it's fine."

"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."

"Nice." She takes her key out of her coat pocket and walks up the steps to the door. "So do you need me to stay now?" He looks up

at her and crosses his arms. Her mouth opens in surprise, but she quickly adjusts her expression.

"Whatever you want to do is fine. If you have to be somewhere or something, that's cool."

"Well I have church at nine thirty, so my mom'll be up soon looking for me."

"I didn't know you went to church on Sundays."

"Yeah. We should hang out more, give me a chance to tell you things like that."

"Really?"

"Yeah," he says, and sees her face, almost warm for the first time since she panicked the night before. "Yeah, we should definitely be better friends or something." He sees her face fall and wishes he knew what he had just done wrong.

"Great. So I'll see you."

"Actually, I can stay a little while longer. It's only like, eightish. I have some time." She doesn't say anything. "I mean, if that's okay with



## Despite Brilliant Visuals and "Epic" Promises, *Watchmen* Fails Due to its Misogynistic Undertones

By Jessica Ross

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?

Sally's daughter, Laurie, is no better. She has no career or friends because she is the 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 overtone 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. Not only is this scene pretty graphic and overly long in the film, but it is also cheapened by the use of the song "Hallelujah" by Leonard Cohen. Zack Snyder apparently loves his slo-mo humping, as he used that technique in *300's* sex scene as well.

He also changed or cut many of Laurie's lines to make her a less substantial character. The most memorable of these cuts was in a scene where she is trying to convince Jon to leave Mars to

come back and save Earth, but he changes her intelligent arguments into "Do it for me, Jon." Although she wasn't a great character to begin with, she at least seemed intelligent in the graphic novel. One of the most talked about changes is the cut of a squid-like creature that attacks NYC. This creature looks more like a giant, tentacled vagina. It is arguably the most powerful vagina in the graphic novel. Feminist critiques of the graphic novel have called the creature misogynistic as it a vagina causing destruction, but others have decided it's the only symbol of female power in the entire text, so I believe it was a conscious decision by Zack Snyder in order to maintain the phallic dominance of the film.

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

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## Movie Reviews

### Immaturity and the City

by Cristina Conti

As an enthusiast 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 fiancé 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 ma-

ture 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 his 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 flexing. Settling 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

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you.”

“Sure, sorry. Yeah, it’s okay.”

Her mom is sitting at the kitchen table when they walk inside the apartment.

“You’re up early,” Ariana says.

“I was waiting for you. You never called last night. You know it’s fine with me for you to crash at a friend’s house, you just need to let me know what you’re doing, sweetheart.”

“Sorry. I’ll call you next time.”

“Oh! Who is this handsome person?” Her mom jumps from her seat and grins at the boy.

“Just a friend, Mom. Seriously.”

“Nice to meet you,” he says.

“Did you run into each other at the pharmacy?” Ariana has been moving toward her room but stops short at the question.

“What do you mean?”

“You’re carrying a Duane Reade bag.”

“Oh. Right. Yeah, we were both there. I’m not feeling too well so I got some ibuprofen.”

“Ugh, aren’t hangovers the worst?” Her mom winks at the boy, and he half-smiles, shifting away.

“Yeah, you said it Mom. We’ll be in my room.”

“Here, I haven’t had any of my orange juice yet. Take it to swallow the pill with.”

“The ibuprofen?”

“Yes, honey, the ibuprofen. Take two or three to be safe, okay?” She hands Ariana her glass, and kisses her forehead. “Try to get some sleep, I won’t bother you.” She floats out of the kitchen and Ariana pulls the boy to her room. He shuts the door behind them and sits at the edge of her bed.

“I like the colors in your room. My girlfriend’s room is all pink and yellow like a little kid.”

“I know Jenna.”

“Right, right, sorry. Anyway,

I like that your room is blue. It’s like, unique.”

“Thanks.” Ariana puts the orange juice next to her alarm clock.

“You want me to open the box or something?”

“I can open a box.”

“Yeah, right, I just feel all like, useless. I want to do something.” He plays with the corner of her comforter. She watches him for a moment, then turns away and opens the bag.

“It’s just good that you’re here. That’s enough, you know?”

“Well good. I’m glad it helps.” The box opens easily, and she reviews the instructions.

“It’s pretty straightforward.”

“Cool.” Her hands are shaking and she has trouble with the bottle. “Let me open it.”

“I’ll get it in a second, it’s like stuck or something.”

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## 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. Sure, he was most likely inebriated, but where do we draw the line? How much can we use alcohol as an excuse to write off someone's behavior?

Just hours earlier I had remarked about how impressed I was by another non-Trinity student who was visiting his girlfriend. Going into Austin Arts, he went out of his way to hold the door open for me. A simple gesture, true, yet it stands out to me as how meaningful actions can be. When men show respect for women, it

seems so powerful even though it might be a small gesture. Girls feel like they're rewarded for simple everyday tasks, yet when we are disrespected, we justify it as normal or "boys just being boys." Perhaps we sometimes feel inclined to excuse this behavior so we don't risk losing their interest.

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 get 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 activ-

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



<http://www.lcconline.net/ukazi/gender/pages/sexualviolence.htm>

ity, sexual orientation and/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,

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

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