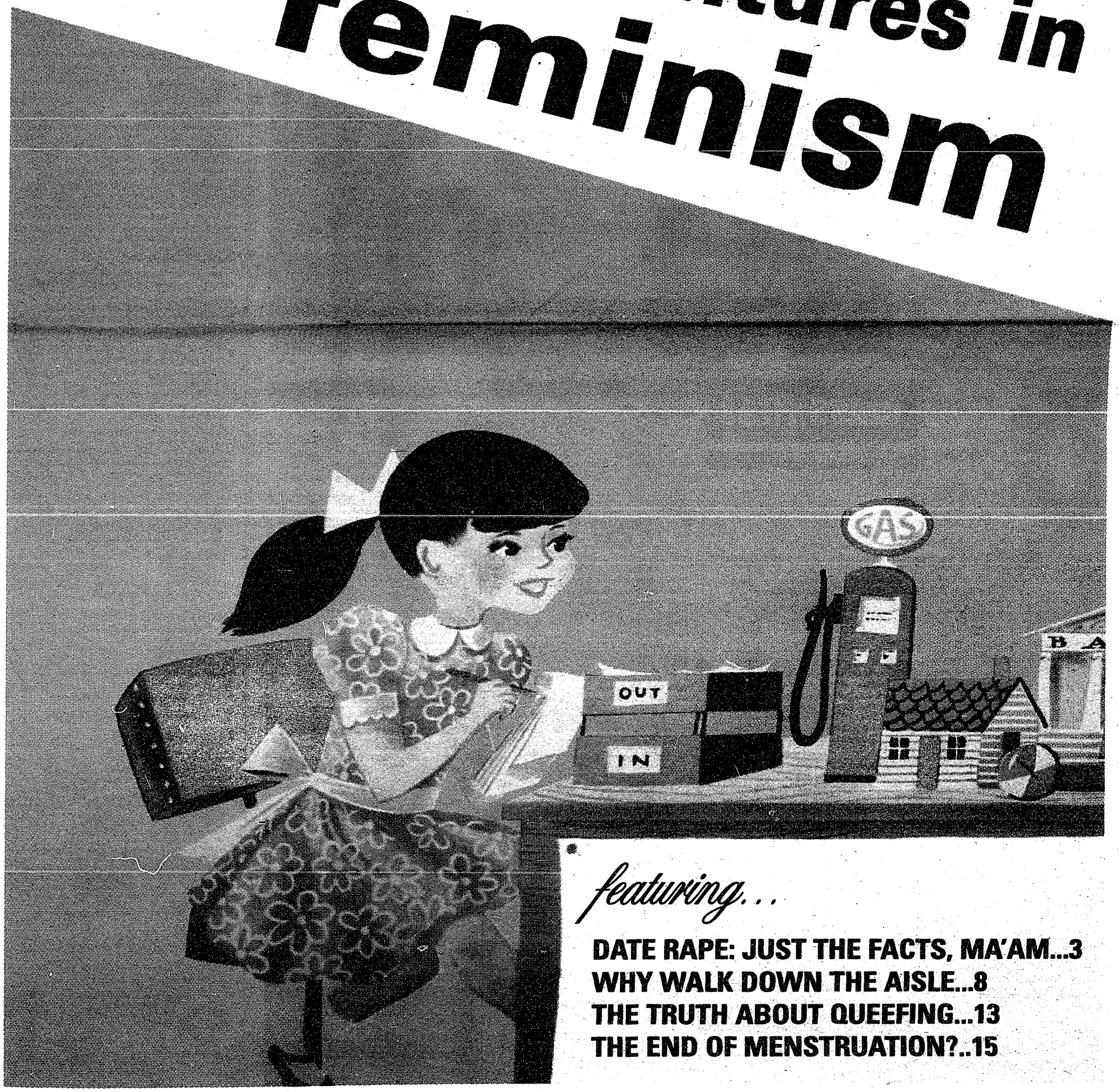
PAGE WOMEN

The Odyssey

3 MARCH, 2006 | VOL. LXXXVII N°39

Don't give me that "wow" since 1918

Further adventures in feminism



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THE LOVE AND LAUGHTER OF WOMANHOOD, UBYSSEY STYLE

Plastic menstrual flow collectors. Brangelinafer. Romance novels. Theorising rape. What do these topics have in common? And more importantly, how did they end up in the pages of this year's women's issue?

It's simple, really. We made a list of topics that we thought were important, as women, and we asked a group of writers to choose which ones were relevant to them. The result is a collection as diverse as the individuals who contributed. While the writing before you may seem to lack cohesion or a common thread, together these articles reflect the new challenges and issues that women think about and deal with on a daily basis. Women are no longer only battling patriarchal oppression; we are also battling our own dated self-perceptions.

Whether it's being embarrassed about our bodies' natural reaction to sex, or trying to eliminate our monthly cycles because of their negative stigma, issues we face today are more a reflection of discomfort with ourselves and our own place in society than the more traditional feminist issues. It is through discourse that women come to terms with themselves. We hope that this issue of *the Ubyssey* will be another positive step in that direction. Hope you enjoy it.

Love,

Carolynne and Claudia

WORDS OF WISDOM

"I am a woman above everything else"
—Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis

"Sometimes I wonder if men and women really suit each other. Perhaps they should live next door and just visit now and then."
—Katharine Hepburn

"A man who correctly guesses a woman's age may be smart, but he's not very bright."
—Lucille Ball

"I am a marvelous housekeeper. Every time I leave a man I keep his house."
—Zsa Zsa Gabor

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."
—Eleanor Roosevelt

"I really don't think I need buns of steel. I'd be happy with buns of cinnamon."
—Ellen DeGeneres

CLASSIFIEDS

Announcements

14TH ANNUAL WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY CELEBRATION. Creating Sacred Space. Friday March 3- Saturday March 4 Chalmers Institute, Vancouver School of Theology, UBC Campus. Friday evening reception, art show, and multifaith celebration. Saturday multifaith experiential workshops from various spiritual traditions. Registration $60 - $115. Contact Chalmers Institute 604-822-9815 or www.vst.edu.

UBC CIRCLE K VOLUNTEER CLUB is hosting a campus-wide food drive for the Union Gospel Mission soup kitchen in the Downtown Eastside. Drop off non-perishable items from Feb 20 to Mar 3 at any location: SUB 266,Brock Hall (south entrance),Science Advising office,Arts Advising, International House,Engineering (Kaiser Rm 1100),Forestry (by Atrium),Land and Food Systems (GRS office, Macmillan Rm 346),School of Music,SUS lounge (LSK 202),Nursing Student Lounge,PSA (Kenny 2007)

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2006. Women Stand in Solidarity Against War at Home and Abroad! Saturday, March 4th. 11AM - Gather at Broadway and Commercial. 11:30AM - March to Grandview Park. 12:00PM - Rally at Grandview Park. Questions - Dance and Celebration Saturday, March 4th 8PM. Radha Yoga- 728 Main St. Free - donations appreciated. Food and drink for sale. Organized by Vancouver Women's Health Collective

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The Ubyssey

FRIDAY, 3 MARCH, 2006
VOL. LXXXVII N°39

THE WOMEN'S ISSUE
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Women superheroes were the uproar tonight. There was Mai "Superwoman" Bui with her sidekick Champagne "Flower Girl" Choquer who were rescuing civilians Boris Korby, Kellan Higgins and Andrew MacRae. They used their Trevor Gilks moves to defeat evil witch Colleen Tang even with her 2.5 mega Joanna Yaworksy laser. Wicked gypsies Jesse Marchand, Michelle Mayne and Liz Green came to avenge the evilness that was defeated. They came with their Eric Szeto knives and Alvina Lo guns to attack the superheroes. Claudia "Wonderwoman" Li and Carolynne "Batgirl" Burkholder flew to the scene as the girl fight on main street accumulated. Megan "Poison Ivy" Smyth and They raised their Heather Pauls shields and Catherine Hart daggers and targeted at the enemies. Policemen Paul Evans, Simon Underwood, Yinan Max Wang and Bryan Zandberg tried to break up the fight but unfortunately died amongst the battle. Ada Chen, Jesse Ferreras and Amanda Stutt came in just in time to cheer on the good superheroes as they locked up the remaining living bad villians to jail.

COVER DESIGN *Michelle Mayne*

COVER ILLUSTRATION *courtesy of "The Game of Junior Executive"*

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STRAIGHT FACTS ABOUT DATE RAPE

THE PYSCHOLOGICAL AFFECTS OF RAPE ARE STILL EVIDENT AS LONG AS 15 YEARS AFTER THE ORIGINAL ASSAULT

by Wistaria Burdge
THE ARGOSY—MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY

SACKVILLE, N.B. (CUP)—According to a 1996 study in *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, over half of female university students surveyed had experienced some form of unwanted sex. Twelve per cent of these acts were perpetrated by casual dates, and 43 per cent by steady dating partners. Date rape is not an occurrence limited to friends and acquaintances, but also can be unwanted sex with a person you are dating.

Statistics suggest that, of the university women who have reported having unwanted sexual intercourse, 84 per cent knew their assailant, 57 per cent of the episodes occurred on dates, and 41 per cent were virgins at the time of the assault. This is probably an underestimation of the true incidence of date rape, as many incidences are unreported. Date rape is one of least-reported crimes in North America.

Of course, these statistics don't provide us with any help or answers as to how we should approach the topic of date rape or how it can be avoided. Nor do they address how those who have unfortunately experienced date rape can gain access to help and support.

Men commit the majority of rapes, but that doesn't mean women are never perpetrators. Women are capable of committing rape as well; it just isn't as statistically common. Rape is generally defined as any kind of sexual intercourse (vaginal, oral or anal) that is coerced or committed against a person's will. If the victim is intoxicated or unconscious, this is also considered rape, as the victim is unable to give informed consent.

Sexual assault is the legal term for rape, but this also includes more than just forced sexual intercourse. Sexual assault is considered any unwanted sexual contact, which can include unwanted touching, kissing, fondling or groping of sexual body parts. Informed consent is also an issue, and intoxication once again plays a role in the ability of an individual to give their informed consent.

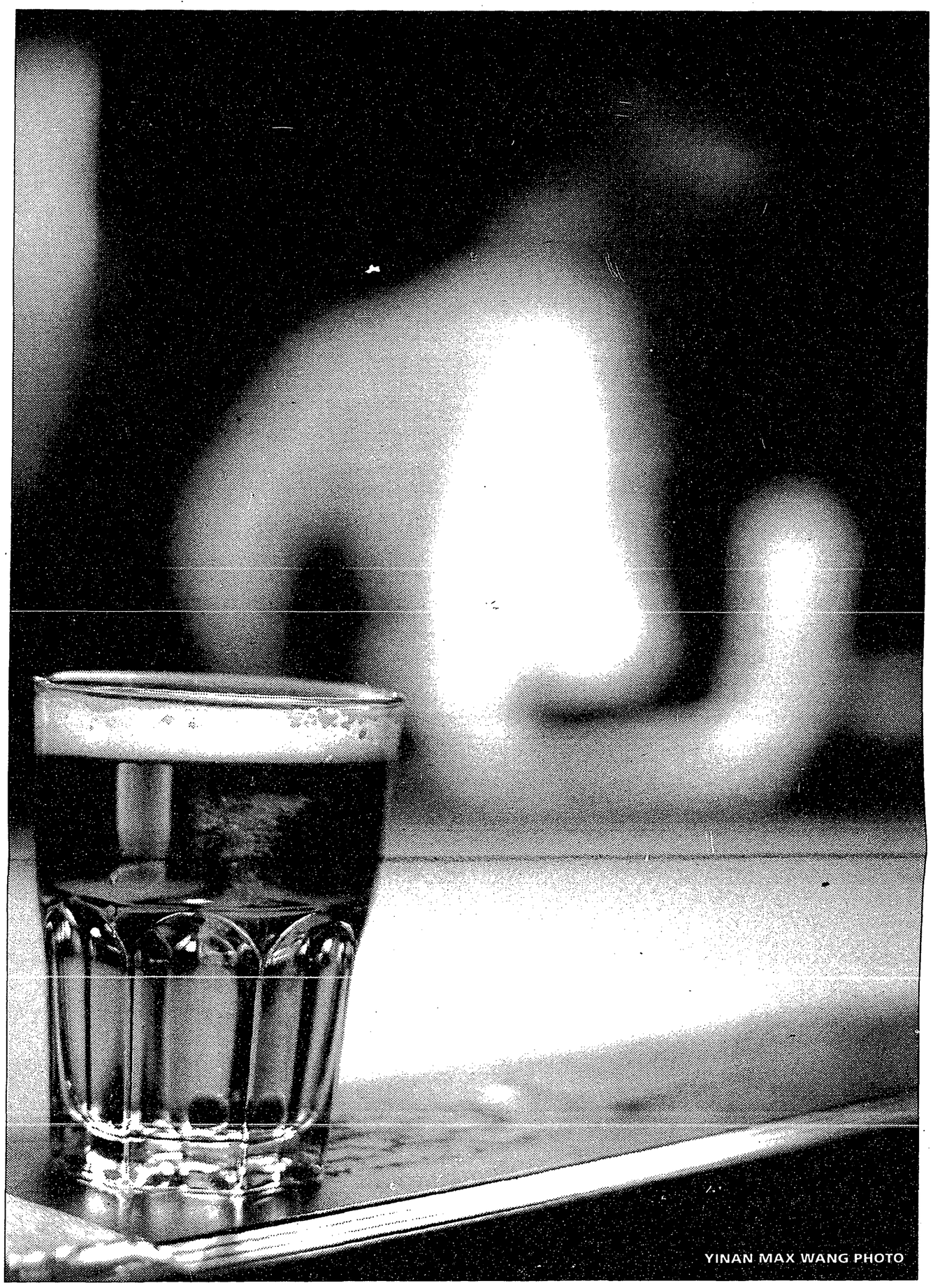
Alcohol is an important factor to consider when looking at the issue of date rape. An estimated 50 per cent of sexual assaults involve the consumption of alcohol by the perpetrator, victim or both parties involved. That is not to say, however, that alcohol directly causes sexual assault. It would be more accurate to see alcohol as contributing to existing risk factors and clouding an individual's judgement of a situation where sex may become involved.

Not as common as alcohol, though still prevalent, is the risk of date rape drugs or drug-facilitated sexual assault. The use of specific drugs, either voluntarily or unknowingly, can cause sedation and mild amnesia to the extent that a potential victim is unable to resist or may not be aware of the assault. In fact, about 25 per cent of the women who contacted the Canadian Sexual Assault Centre reported that drugs were a factor in a rape. In addition to alcohol, the most commonly reported drugs connected to sexual assault are flunitrazepam and gamma-hydroxybutyrate, or GHB, which is used as a recreational drug.

In terms of the long-term effects of date rape, victims are 11 times more likely to be clinically depressed and six times more likely to experience social phobia than non-victims. Psychological problems are still evident in cases as long as 15 years after the assault.

It is impossible to cover in one column the complete extent of knowledge on and prevention of date rape. Anyone interested in more information should contact the personal counsellors or sexual harassment advisors at their university. Pamphlets are often available from student services with tips on how to avoid date rape as well as how to avoid committing date rape. Check that out as another resource.

If you experience date rape, you should immediately contact one of your university resources, or go to the emergency room at the hospital. Reporting the incident to the police at 911 is also a good idea so no one else may be put at risk.



YINAN MAX WANG PHOTO

UBC PROFESSOR REDEFINES THE CONCEPT OF COERCION

by Carolynne Burkholder

The numbers are shocking. Over 50 per cent of Canadian women have been sexually or physically assaulted, according to a survey by Statistics Canada. And only six per cent of the cases were reported to the police according to the same study.

But UBC philosophy professor Scott Anderson hopes that, through his research on coercion, rape will be easier to understand and better defined in law, allowing authorities to respond more accurately to the crime.

As Canadian laws changed 21 years ago to include a broader definition of sexual assault, Anderson's theory is more applicable in the U.S., where laws are less encompassing. But both countries are facing the same challenges when prosecuting sexual crimes.

Although the majority of sexual assaults are not by strangers—some estimate that acquaintance rape constitutes 85 per cent of all cases—most legal attention is given to stranger rape.

According to Anderson, "getting the proper understanding of how to define rape would help make acquaintance rape more easily prosecutable."

Through his definition of sexual assault, Anderson aims to provide a better model to include all forms of rape by putting it in a gendered context—most perpetrators being male and most victims being female or children. In contrast to the common "consent theories" of rape, which focuses on the acts or desires of the victim, Anderson focuses primarily on the rapist, the coercing agent, and his actions and intentions.

Anderson also distinguishes between unwanted sex and rape. "There is a difference between unwanted sex and sex that is forced upon somebody through...use of power or use of threats," he said. Unwanted sex, according to Anderson, is akin to cancer surgery that you don't want to have, but consent to.

"You can't say that a woman who is raped is just a woman who doesn't want to have sex," he continued. "In lots of cases a woman might not want to have sex with someone, yet has sex with him anyway, without there being any crime committed, or even a harm done."

"What's the different thing about rape is the way certain uses of power are involved," said Anderson. And this power is based in societal factors.

> "GETTING THE PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO DEFINE RAPE WOULD HELP MAKE ACQUAINTANCE RAPE MORE EASILY PROSECUTABLE."
>
> -SCOTT ANDERSON
> UBC PHILOSOPHY PROFESSOR

According to Anderson, "This is what connects rape to the general conditions of gender oppression in society: rape manifests and capitalises on the general ability of men to impose their sexual wills on women by means of violence, a form of domination to which society is itself often blind." By viewing rape according to Anderson's theory of coercion, he argues that the practical and legal problems of identifying and prosecuting accused rapists are more solvable.

A problem with the current legal status of rape is that it is difficult to prove lack of consent, but by applying Anderson's theory, "it changes our presumption about a woman's consent to sex from yes to no, since we may assume that a man's aggressive pursuit of sex with a woman is backed by a willingness to use force, unless that assumption is otherwise defeated." Rather than the victim having to prove she didn't consent, the perpetrator would have to prove that she did.

So far Anderson has received mixed responses to his theory. "It hasn't won wide acclaim and converts yet, but my goal is to convince a lot of people to rethink the subject," he said.

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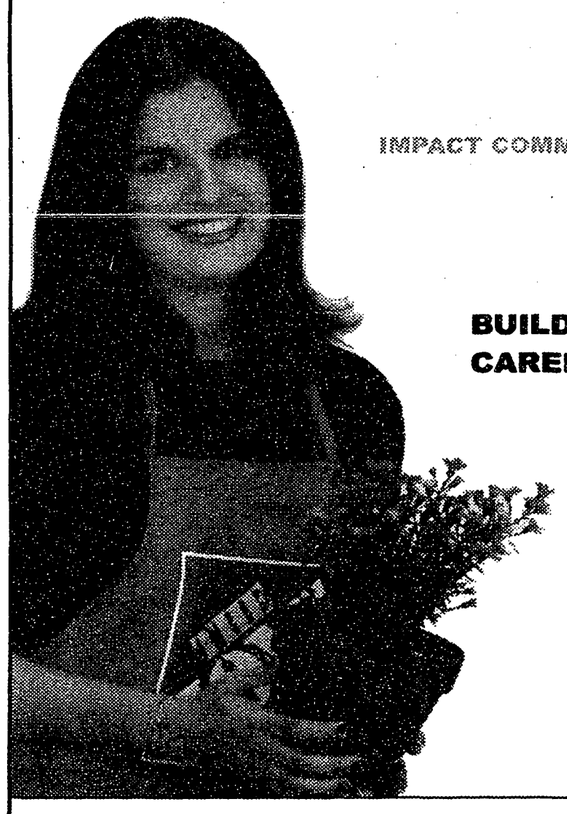
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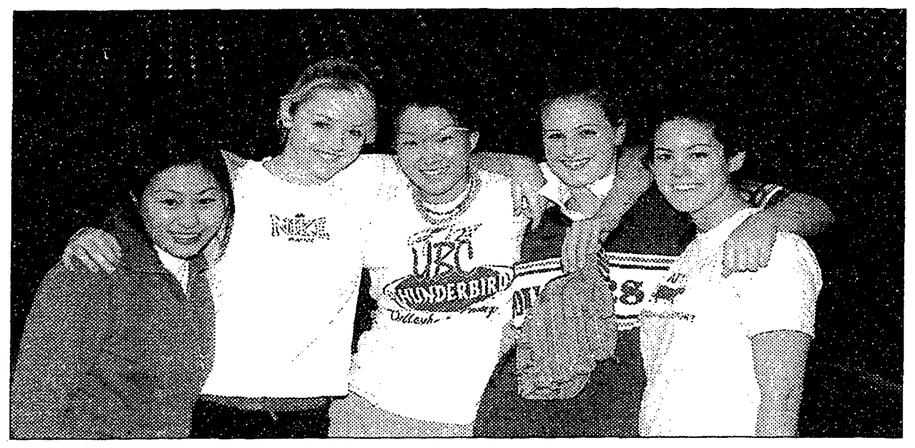
UBC addresses challenges of female athletes at conference

by Boris Korby



GIRLS RULE: Especially women athletes. **PHOTO COURTESY OF UBC REC**

Harassment and the lack of role models for women will be the first order of business at UBC's first Women in Sport Conference to be held on March 8 at the University's Robson Square campus—coinciding with International Women's Day.

Hayley Wickenheiser, MVP of the 2006 women's winter Olympic hockey tournament, is just one of many female athletes, coaches, and administrators scheduled to speak at the conference who will explore the opportunities and challenges experienced by women in sport.

The conference is being supported by a $4,000 Innovative Project Fund grant from the Alma Mater Society (AMS) that is intended to promote sport and physical activity to everyone, but especially to female and minority populations, said Katy Player, Senior Manager of Campus Sport and Recreation.

"The conference is aimed at athletes, administrators, and coaches, and [is meant] to gain more awareness for the lack of understanding around women's issues in sport, whether it's participation or in the career field," Player said.

Sessions at the conference will specifically target the obstacles facing women in or attempting to get into the sport administration field, the challenges surrounding the growing ethnic and socioeconomic diversity in women's sport—including harassment—and the lack of female role models for female athletes in, and coming out of, high school.

The conference will also include panels where coaches and sport administrators of different levels can share their experiences and insights from their respective fields.

Doug Reimer, head coach of the UBC women's volleyball team, said that events such as the Women in Sport Conference aid in addressing fundamental issues in women's sports—for example, the lack of female role models for aspiring female athletes—that often simply do not garner much attention.

"The tradition in sports in North America is professional sports, which is clearly male dominated. So if you coached or are a female athlete, you have to search very hard on the TV dial, with maybe the exception of Olympic time, to see role modeling," he said. "This is outstanding and tremendous timing for the people that organised [the Women in Sport Conference] to have somebody like Hayley Wickenheiser coming in."

Reimer also stressed a need to address issues such as harassment towards female athletes.

"There are a whole number of issues in sport, and harassment is one that has affected both genders, but it has clearly affected women to a greater degree," he said.

Participation in the Women in Sport Conference is free. The deadline to register is March 5.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Women blink twice as often as men
- On average a woman speaks 7,000 words a day, while a man only speaks 2,000 words
- The average woman will swallow four pounds of lipstick in her lifetime
- 85 per cent of all women wear the wrong bra size
- 80 per cent of women wash their hands before leaving the restroom (while only 55 per cent of men do)
- Chocolate is the number one food craved by women

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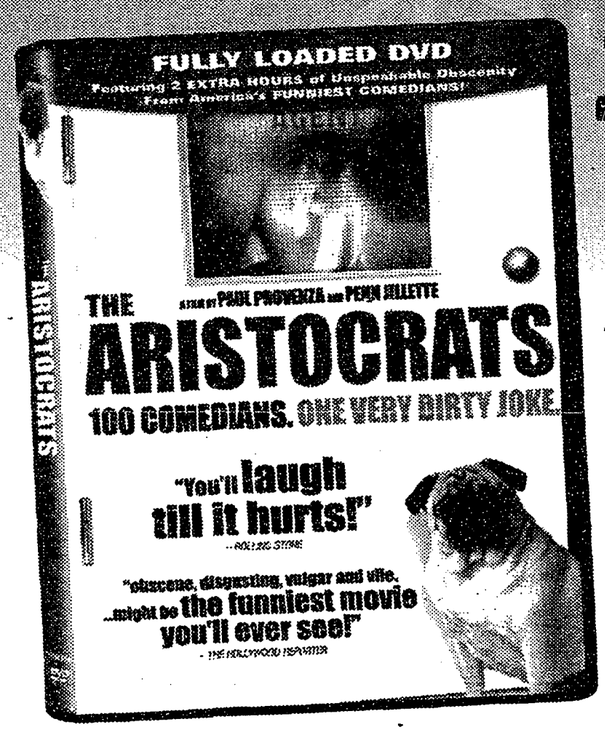

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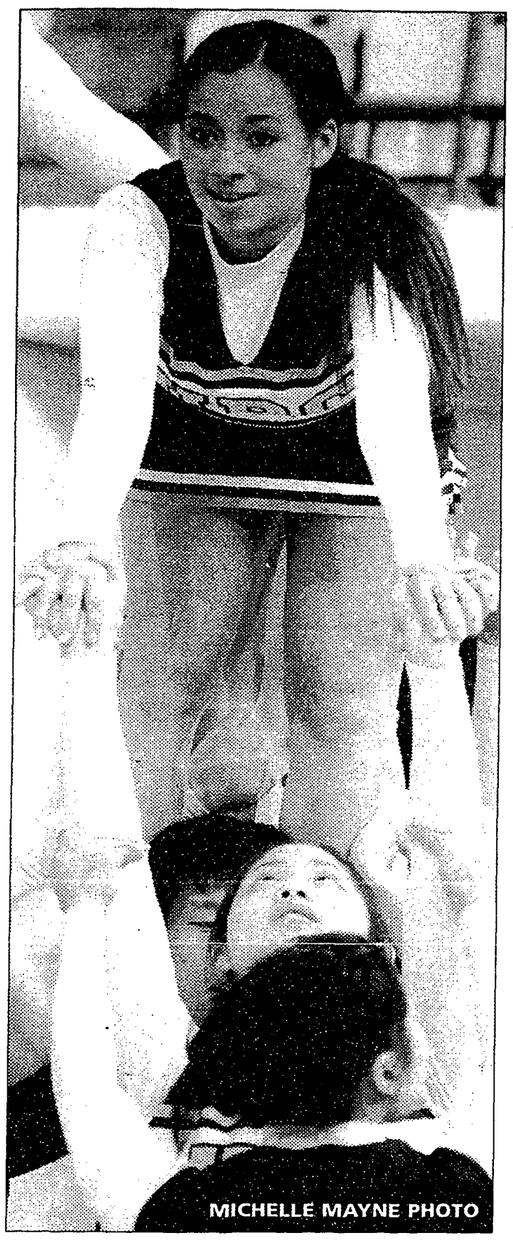
UBC CHEERLEADING SHATTERS STEREOTYPES


MICHELLE MAYNE PHOTO

by Champagne Choquer

Pom-pon waving, blonde-haired, gum-snapping ditzes: the stereotypical vision of cheerleaders has been perpetuated by the media for decades. But the UBC cheerleading team has set out to dispel this myth and prove that it's not all jazz hands and spirit fingers.

"There is always the stereotype of girl cheerleaders being ditzy, but we're not, we're at UBC, we study first and school comes first," said team co-captain Tina Lee.

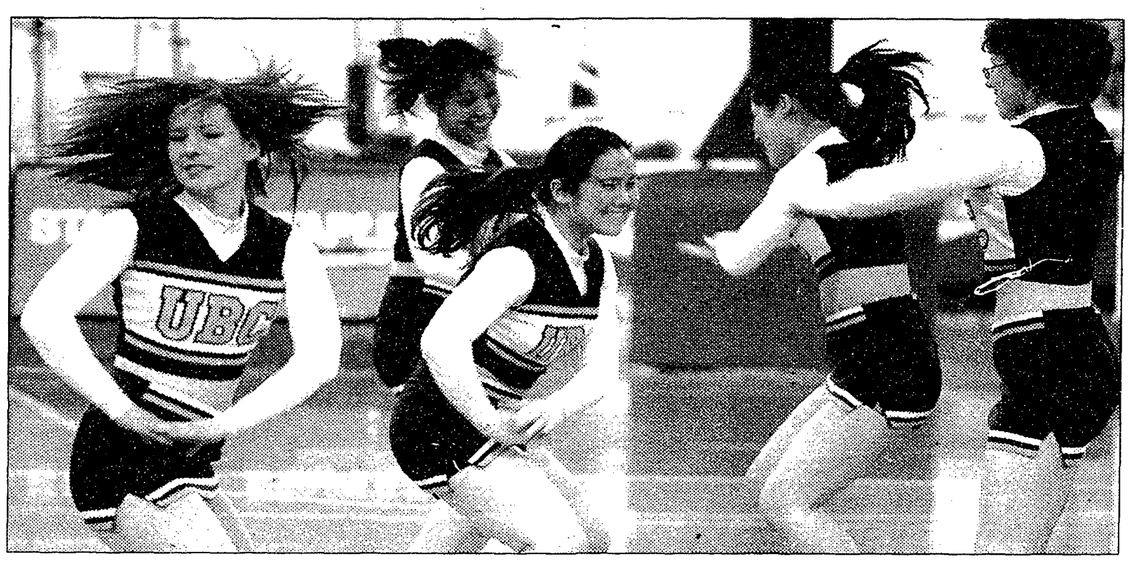
The UBC cheerleading squad is currently in its fifth year as a varsity team under the UBC athletics umbrella and has flourished in competition over the last few years with four top-ten finishes at the Canadian Cheerleading Nationals.

Despite this success, the team still struggles with people approaching the sport with preconceived notions. "It's definitely not simple and we have cut a lot of people who thought that it was all about fun and doing nothing, when really it's a highly athletic and difficult sport," said Coach Susan Davison.

"The level of activity is much more intense than most people expect. It's an explosive sport and it requires a lot of strength or else you can get hurt really easily," added Lee.

Like female athletes, the men involved in the sport also face stereotyping. Many male cheerleaders are not highly regarded as athletes and this hinders the team's enrollment. Although the ideal competitive squad would consist of 15 men and 15 women, the team finds it difficult to attract enough males.

"The myth surrounding guy cheerleaders is that they're not huge athletes; but they're strong,


YES, IT ACTUALLY IS SPELLED *POM-PON*: We're not ditzes either. **YINAN MAX WANG PHOTO**

they have to be at a certain level before they can cheerlead, otherwise you can't hold a girl who is a hundred plus pounds over your head," said Lee.

Technical coach Pete Parotta agrees. "It's something that, until people come out and actually see what the guys are doing, is always going to be there," he said.

To adjust this imbalance, UBC cheerleading has introduced a new system this year, dividing the team into a junior and senior program that will allow more people to join and may increase the number of men interested in the sport.

By having a junior performance team reserved for cheering at varsity basketball and football games, the senior team will have more time to devote to the competitive aspect of the sport. "With the idea of having a performance team as well as a competition team, we're hoping we'll be able to have athletes developing on the performance team and come into the competition team," said Parotta.

"Having the teams split, we can now focus a lot more with the senior team which means that those people will be able to focus on competitions," Davison explained.

The coaches hope, with this separation, the sport of cheerleading at UBC will come to the foreground and be recognised for the athletes' gymnastic abilities and level of achievement.

In the team's future, Davison said "our game plan is to come in the top five at nationals, and when we get to the point when we're in the top group of teams we would like to do a little bit more traveling."

Rant

UBYSSEY LITERARY COMPETITION

Theme: Travel & Mobility

Categories

We are currently accepting submissions for the following categories:

- Long Fiction (1000-2500 words)
- Long Non-Fiction (1000-2500 words)
- Snap Fiction (500-1000 words)
- Poetry

Guidelines for Submission

Please have your work typed in a standard font (Times, Arial, etc.) and double-spaced. The number of submissions are limited as follows: one entry per category in snap fiction, long fiction and long non-fiction and a maximum of five poems permitted per entry. Students may of course submit their work to all four categories. Please also include page numbers. Poetry does not have to be double-spaced.

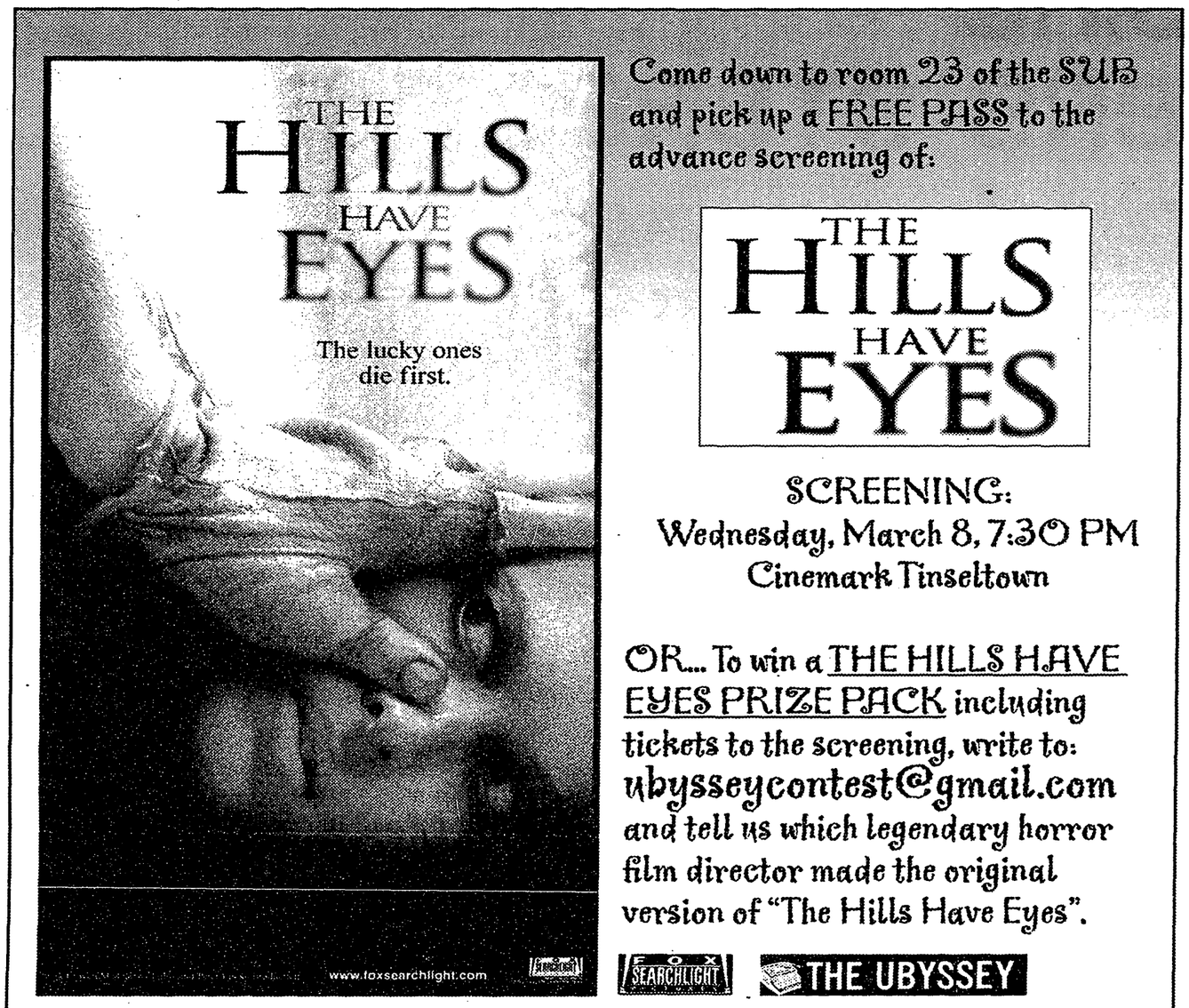
Please include a coversheet with your work. The coversheet should include your **NAME, STUDENT NUMBER, PHONE NUMBER, TITLE OF WORK**, and **CATEGORY APPLIED TO** (i.e. Snap Fiction). Your name cannot appear anywhere in the body of your work.

You must be a student currently enrolled at UBC. Previously published works are ineligible for this contest. You MUST be a member of the Ubyssey Publications Society in order to participate in this contest. (In other words, if you waived your $5 UPS fee, you are not eligible (jerk).)

We do accept email submissions.

Submit your work to SUB Room 23 (The Ubyssey Business Office) or rant2006@gmail.com. The deadline is Sunday, March 5th at noon. Winners work will appear in the March 31st issue of The Ubyssey.

If you have any questions, please email us at rant2006@gmail.com



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IT'S a KeePeR!

by Liz Green

YINAN MAX WANG PHOTO

When I was in first year, girls still wrote on the insides of bathroom stalls. The SUB women's washroom would have ongoing debates about religion, politics, love and sex. Invaluable information passed through generations via the bathroom stall, including information about a product called the Keeper.

Almost as though it was an underground drug product, I read about the Keeper in the fourth stall from the sinks in the SUB. Described (not quite accurately) as a "reusable rubber tampon-like thingy," I did a little research, and when I started to travel, I bought my very first Keeper.

The Keeper, also called a DivaCup, is made of either gum rubber or latex-free silicone and is shaped a bit like the nipple on a baby bottle (without a hole). It's reusable for up to ten years and replaces all other environmentally unfriendly products you use during your period like tampons and pads. The Keeper also completely eliminates the risk of toxic shock syndrome associated with tampons, and (bonus!) you can leave it in for up to 12 hours without having to empty it.

Because the Keeper is soft rubber and round, you squeeze it in half, and then in half again and insert it completely into your vagina. The Keeper is released slowly so that it unfolds and creates a gentle suction against the walls of your vagina. When you let go, you shouldn't be able to feel it (the way you don't feel tampons). The tip will hang down to the opening of your vagina, but it isn't that noticeable.

To remove the Keeper, you pull the tip down until you can reach up and squeeze the walls of the Keeper again to release the suction. Remove and empty it into the toilet and rinse it out. You can use a water bottle to rinse it if you're in a public bathroom or wipe it out with toilet paper and reinsert. Wash it properly with soap once a day and disinfect every three months. A lot of women empty it in the shower to reduce messiness (provided the shower has proper drainage). Bet you feel in touch with your body now!

There are no risks associated with using the Keeper, and while it may seem gross at first, it is more convenient in many ways. You should allow yourself at least three months to get used to using the Keeper—it can take a while to learn how to insert and remove it comfortably and to understand your body.

Food for thought: in your lifetime, you are likely to use 15,000 sanitary pads or tampons, and you will throw away 250 to 300 pounds of tampons, pads, and applicators. The environmental benefits of the Keeper are huge, as is the cost. The Keeper will run you up about 40 to 50 dollars right now, but you won't have to buy tampons for ten years, saving you hundreds of dollars.

For more info, just visit www.Keeper.com or www.divacup.com, or look for information on bathroom walls, 'cause I'm hoping there'll be a comeback in opinionated women sharing information like this in a public forum.

Women Dominate at UBC

by Paul Evans

If you're a UBC student reading this article, chances are more likely that you are a woman. That's because of the 43,669 students enrolled at the University, 24,158 are women.

"We see more boys failing in the elementary schools; we see more boys dropping out in the secondary schools, more girls graduating from high school, and what we see at UBC as the trend is really just a continuation of a North America-wide, perhaps a worldwide trend, where girls are succeeding academically more than boys," said Walter Sudmant, director of Planning and Institutional Research at UBC.

While Sudmant explained that the numbers of women enrolling at university surpassed men back in the 1980s, these trends are extending into the professional programs at UBC.

"There was a time when if a woman applied to law school, maybe they'd say, 'well did her husband allow her to?' That doesn't happen anymore," he explained. "There's a lot of educational equity now and law school and medical school...[are] just a reflection of society becoming more equitable."

For example, in the 2004/05 academic year, there were 90 women and 90 men enrolled in the Doctor of Dental Medicine program; the numbers this year are now 98 to 81 in favour of women.

Neil Guppy, a professor of sociology at UBC, explained that one reason the number of women at UBC is increasing is that men are being attracted to well paying blue-collar jobs that are more physically intensive.

"Since that opportunity has been there for men, there hasn't been as much pressure to obtain the post-secondary credentials that women frequently need to compete for labour force jobs," he said.

But while Guppy acknowledged women's increased presence in the professional fields of study, he noted that the trend is not true in every faculty.

"There are a couple of places where men still tend to dominate more than you would anticipate given what's happening in medicine and law," he said. "I think there are a couple of professions and semi-professions in the labour force that continue to be thought of as men's work and women's work."

This is true at the university level as well, he explained, citing a larger proportion of men in faculties like forestry and engineering, and schools like nursing and social work being dominated by women.

In terms of combating these stereotypes, Guppy highlighted the importance of role models.

"It's taken some role models and risk-takers to move into those professions and provide the kind of visibility of a successful man or successful woman operating in a particular field that has not traditionally been seen as men's work or women's work," he said.

WOMEN PITTED AGAINST ONE ANOTHER

by Megan Smyth

Women have come a long way. Women now have the right to vote and own property. But apparently women do not have the ability to receive fair and unbiased coverage in the media, especially when marital and family relations are involved.

One of the most recent examples of this discrimination can be found in the tabloid and pop culture frenzy surrounding the breakup of Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt and the subsequent relationship between Pitt and Angelina Jolie.

The Pitt-Aniston wedding occurred in Malibu, California in July of 2000. On Jan. 7, 2005—after the Pitt-Aniston marriage was already rumoured to be on the rocks and the Pitt-Jolie friendship was pretty much out in the open after some friendship building on the set of *Mr and Mrs Smith*, Pitt and Aniston jointly released a separation announcement.

"For those who follow these sorts of things, we would like to explain that our separation is not the result of any speculation reported by the tabloid media. This decision is the result of much thoughtful consideration," stated the carefully crafted press release.

Pitt's behaviour shortly after the separation announcement included extended holiday trips with Jolie and her two adopted children, Maddox and Zahara. These actions were in direct contradiction to the separation statement promoting mutual respect between Aniston and Pitt.

And then the fury began...

Jen is devastated! Angelina stole Brad! Aniston plans revenge! Jen versus Angelina—who's hotter? The battle between the former and future Mrs Pitts rages on! Headlines similar to these were plastered all over newspapers, magazines, tabloids, and internet websites.

But what about Pitt? Where did he go during the media meltdown?

As Aniston became labeled an overly ambitious career woman who was denying her husband children and Jolie morphed from Hollywood's bad girl into a U.N. Goodwill Ambassador, mother of adopted orphans and baby-producer on demand, Pitt faded into the background.

The two women were pitted against each other—not by choice, but due to the incessant public demand for scandal among the famous and wealthy—in a full out war on morals and lifestyle. This war culminated with the—impossible to cover-up—announcement of Jolie's pregnancy.

When Jolie's belly bump became rather large, rather quickly it was obvious that relations between Pitt and Jolie weren't in the early stages. Insiders and now hundreds of celebrity news publications have surmised that Jolie is about six months pregnant. If you do the math that means she conceived in the late summer.

The February 13 headline for *In Touch*, a weekly entertainment style magazine was "Jen's anger over the pregnancy cover-up." Once again the media and the public were promoting a divided stand-off between the Aniston and Jolie.

Kitson, a high-end, trend-setting boutique in Hollywood, even went as far as selling "Team Aniston" and "Team Jolie" T-shirts. Although the store's website declares "O.K. we are not one for picking sides—but we thought these baseball t-shirts from White Trash were very timely," the idea of Aniston and Jolie facing off against one another is still fiercely promoted. The "Team Jolie" T-shirts were black and red—um, implying devilish?—and the "Team Aniston" T-shirts were white and kelly green —much more innocent. Why exactly did the consuming public feel the need to publicly back either one female or the other? And where were the "Brad Sucks" T-Shirts?

There was no end to the opposition of Aniston and Jolie. Neither could escape from the labels stamped upon them. Either Aniston was portrayed as evil and self-absorbed because she did not want children, or she was said to be a helpless victim who had her man stolen away by a younger woman. Jolie, on the other hand, was labeled both a conniving adulteress, blamed for the breakup of the Pitt-Aniston marriage or was hailed as a family oriented woman who was determined to provide a poor male with children all while maintaining UN duties and a career.

Nowhere in the pop culture media did anyone openly discuss the idea that maybe Pitt had a larger role to play in the whole scenario. Perhaps Pitt—like countless other unfaithful, wandering husbands out there—just became tired of his relationship with Aniston and searched for something else.

But in the portrayal of this love triangle, placing the blame isn't really the issue. This latest controversy accentuates how dated Hollywood ideas about women still are. When one high profile marriage falls apart and another potential celebrity marriage begins and the male involved in both is not in the forefront of the public eye and the women end up taking the entirety of the blame, then really what impact has the female equality movement had on society?

As Aniston commented in the Sept. 2005 issue of *Vanity Fair*, "A man divorcing would never be accused of choosing career over children...that really pissed me off."

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GETTIN' HITCHED

Marriage has a history of giving women the short end of the stick. But weighing all the odds, women are still getting married, so what does marriage mean now?

by Heather Pauls

"I'm getting married." When I tell people that Gabriel and I are engaged I have no idea what reaction to expect. Sometimes it's the romantic-comedy-style squeal of girlish excitement. There has been joy, laughter, and congratulations. Other times it's a raised eyebrow and a raucous, "Why?!" A few people have advised, "Just live together. It's cheaper and you can get out when the magic is gone." But I don't want getting out to be easy, even when the butterflies calm down and that dopamine love-rush is replaced by a deep sense of commitment. I want lifelong companionship with my best friend and lover. We're getting married, even when I'm told that marriage is not only a ball and chain, but is also a way of participating in a patriarchal system where a man owns a woman.

Why is marriage so awful?

I assume I'm writing to a particular audience: university students, particularly female. We're empowered, and we have a damn-the-man attitude about most things that have anything to do with institutionalisation or patriarchy. Religion is dogmatic, so screw it. Marriage is legalised rape (I've read that somewhere), so to hell with it. Marriage has fallen out of popularity, at least among my university contemporaries.

This could be due to the 1950s model of the perfect housewife—the goal of feminine perfection that ultimately collapsed. When we think of a married woman, often we think of the wife in post-WWII North America—1940s to somewhere in the 1960s—who is self-sacrificing, dependent, and subordinated to her husband who is head of the household simply because he's male and hence makes more money. If you're a woman marrying a man, getting married means losing your identity, and getting caught in a relationship that is burdensome to your pursuit of happiness. Marriage somehow equals children, a mortgage, lacklustre sex and forgotten dreams.

People say that they want to travel before marriage as though they'll be forever chained to one location when they find a permanent partner. Or people say they want to really live before tying the knot.

Marriage has been a hurtful and inconsiderate practice where women are concerned: women were pawns in financial gain, family alliances and land-owning schemes. No doubt they still are today. But in the 20th century, marriage has been put through the wringer and thank God it has. I couldn't imagine myself finding fulfillment as a 1950s-style housewife, or entering into an arranged marriage. But that brings us to our next question.

What does marriage mean now?

The question, "what is marriage?" has had some press coverage and a fair deal of controversy in the last few years because of the legalisation of same-sex marriage. Conservative hard-liners have been running around, trying to figure out why the definition of marriage can never include unions between any genders. People are suddenly asked to define what marriage is, and it's hard to come up with anything other than a legal and symbolic union based on love and compatibility where two parties promise to stay together for life. Hallelujah ladies, you can marry each other for love too. That is, if you can get over the idea that marriage can represent a male-created institution of controlling women, and celebrate marriage as an act of love and commitment. Despite everything listed above, people, including myself, are still getting married. In the Western world, it's widely understood that you marry for love.

I'm not well versed in feminist theory and my history of marriage is limited. But I come from a long line of strong and proud women, and my parents have been happily married for 37 years. Maybe I have rose-tinted lenses. But here is why I'm getting married; Gabriel is my best friend and I've never imagined I could find someone as compatible as him. He's amazing, but I'm not just getting married because of our love. So much of a relationship is trust, friendship, and companionship, and we have all three. We encourage each other's interests, and have the same goals and desire the same lifestyle. It helps that our families approve.

Yes, it's all very mushy, but why don't we just live together?

We want a wedding because it brings our family and friends—everyone that genuinely matters to us—in one place to witness us becoming an officially united couple. By attending, they give us their blessing and share in the joy of our relationship. Hopefully they will hold us accountable to our promises and help us in difficult times. It's our happy and solemn celebration that commemorates Gabriel and I becoming a family. We're getting married because we want to be a family, share our lives together and be silly adorable old people together.

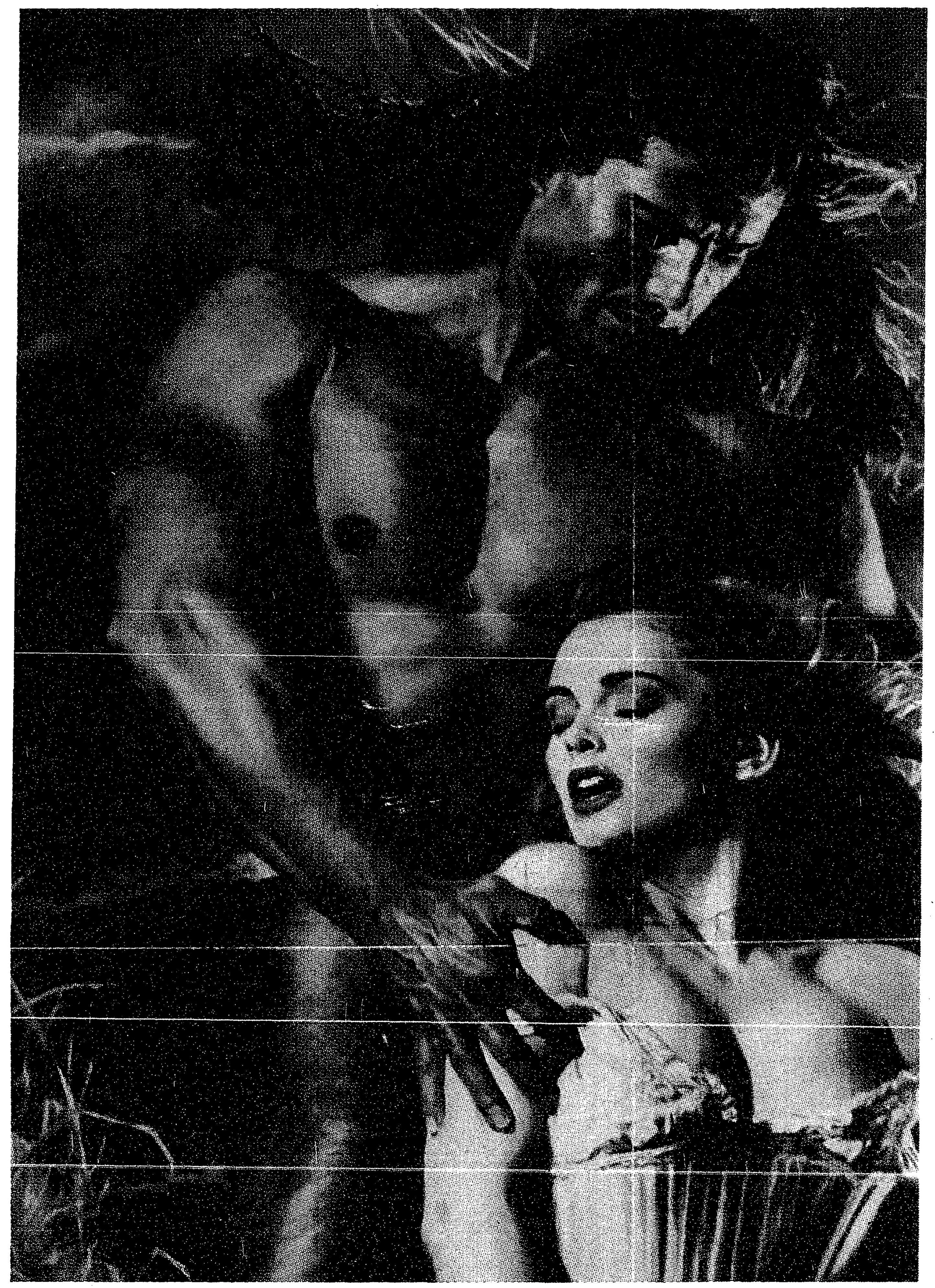
There is something so joyful and powerful about promising to do everything you possibly can to be together and nurture a great relationship. And if the going gets tough, you won't pack your bags and move out. You'll do everything you can to deal with it, making the relationship all the more stronger. There's comfort and stability in marriage, and I love that, even if it does have a bad rep.

Comfort does not imply boredom, and stability does not mean stagnation. It's warm, strong and inviting. So we're getting married, and we're in the thick of hectic, fun wedding plans.

The perfect wedding maiden?

How archaic to take on a man's last name. It's like folding your identity into the role of wife. You've moved from your father's last name to your husband's last name.

I could be Heather Pauls-Murray. Hyphening is great, but we want kids and you can't keep it going forever. My best friend Melissa is getting married a week before me, and I quizzed her on the subject. Are you changing your name? Laughingly she answered, "Yeah, and I don't feel oppressed!" Marriage to me is a beautiful, joyful and serious thing. Soon I'll be Heather Murray. But if I'm ever referred to as Mrs. Gabriel Murray I'm going to scream.



Romance novels are in for the long haul

by Colleen Tang

Steamy love scenes stolen from mommy's hidden bookcase are still a popular read for women of all ages and likely will be for centuries to come.

And there is no shortage of Harlequin romance novels to fulfill this need. The variety of novels includes Harlequin American Romance, Harlequin Blaze, Harlequin Historical, Harlequin Intrigue, Harlequin Medical Romance and many others.

"I think [the Harlequin publishing company] has been very aware of the types of readership. Thirty years ago there was only one type of Harlequin romance but now...they itemized them so that they have market shares according to particular styles of desire," said Mary Chapman, a UBC professor of English.

According to Chapman, women have conflicting views about Harlequin romance novels.

"Today, I think...those texts tend to divide along political lines. Some scholars *say yes*, these novels allow women to fantasize about change, about fulfillment, about agencies. These are great; they are politically very valuable for women," said Chapman. "Other people think maybe fixating on a marriage plot and not acknowledging other forms of fulfillment is kind of reductive for women."

Through the centuries, the genre of romance novels has not changed much in terms of plotline, but it has developed into many different kinds of stories targeted to specific audiences.

"It's really just a fashion. What are we going to depict? Are we going to depict a chess game where a man and a woman are playing chess? It's a figure of courtship," said Chapman.

"[The 18th century fiction novel] is the first kind of genre written for women by women. While many men did read it, many men also denied that they read it—again not unlike romance fiction now," said Tiffany Potter, also a UBC professor of English.

While some covers for these books may depict a dominant male figure, it by no means suggests any type of social movement, added Potter.

"I think a lot of people are reluctant to suggest something relatively as benign as book covers [as having] enough social influence to really affect the broad social movements of feminism," said Potter. "If you are standing in an airport choosing between five similar narratives, there has to be something that makes one the one that you reach for as opposed to another one."

"Sex has always sold," Potter continued. "Sex is a marketing device and the female body is a marketing device. It's certainly problematic but it is not particularly isolated to romance fiction...I think that all it is, is audience expectations."

Harlequin novels and all romance novels will always carry an interest among the female audience, said both Potter and Chapman.

"That's part of conventions of genre. One of the founding assumptions of romance fiction...no matter how successful she is, she is not complete *until* she *is* romantic*ally* linked, successfully, romantically linked," said Potter. "We have to recognise that it may be saying less about the culture than about the genre, but that's what readers expect from this type of writing when they pull it off the shelf."

"Women may not have much agency over other aspects in their lives but in their ability to court, to flirt, to dismiss someone who is irritating, [and] to encourage someone who isn't irritating, you know there's a degree of agency there. That's a compelling story for women readers regardless of the time period," added Chapman.

Women and men join the Sista'hood

Festival aims to adjust all types of gender discrimination

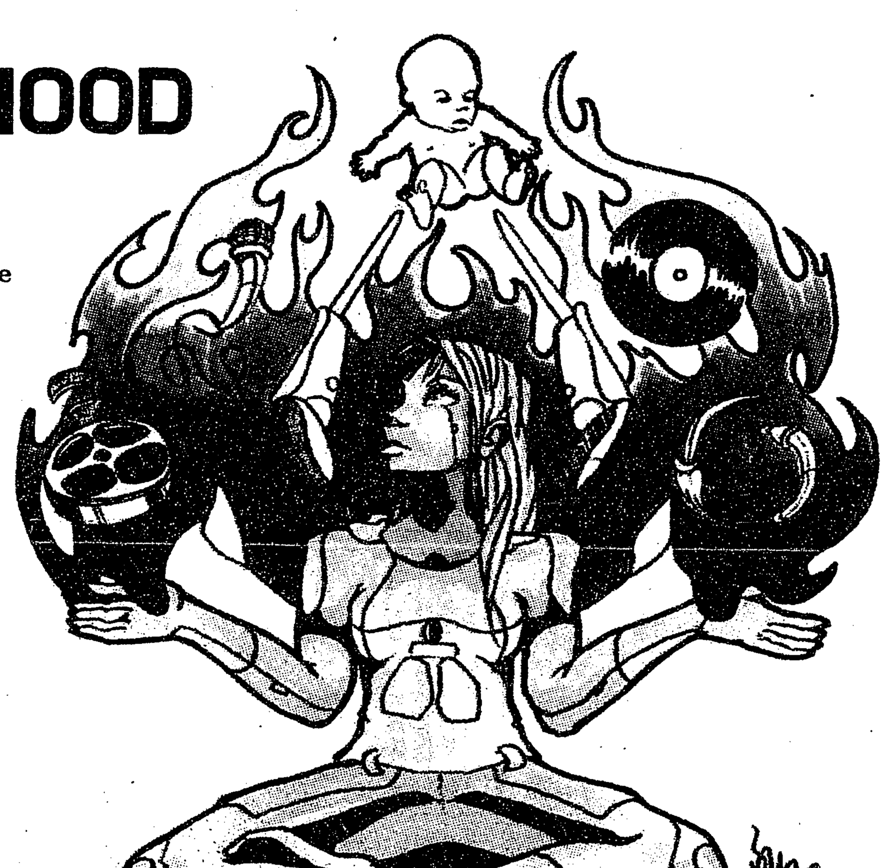
by Claudia Li

What began as a small party to celebrate International Women's Day has grown to become Sista'hood, a month-long arts festival featuring women and women's issues in various disciplines, including song, dance, spoken word and film. Sista'hood is the brainchild of Rachel Flood, the festival director and local spoken word artist, who saw a lack of activities celebrating International Women's Day and stepped in to fill the gap. Now in its sixth year, Sista'hood has more than doubled its original audience and has begun partnering with various venues, such as Lick and Celebrities, to reach new audiences.

The purpose of Sista'hood is to create a culturally diverse and environmentally sustainable festival that is challenging for both artists and audiences and is also accessible to youth. One of the mottoes of this year's festival is "all genders." "Since the inception [of the festival] there's been the idea that it's a women-only event and that only women can attend," said Flood. "But it's the work that's important, not the person making it." Because of this motto, the festival also features male artists whose work explores gender issues.

While they have been included in past years, this year is the first that the festival officially acknowledges intersexed and transgendered people in its mandate. "We realised that if we're doing a festival to adjust gender discrimination then we need to talk about all gender discrimination," said Flood. This year's theme of "gender, sex and the body" addresses the new mandate. For most people, the ideas of gender, sex and the body are related, but for those who are intersexed or transgendered, these ideas become disparate, said Flood, adding that the theme will allow artists to explore these issues.

Sista'hood will take place from March 4-28 in venues across the city with the Reel Sista's Film Festival on March 27 as one of the main events. The festival will screen multi-genre short films that were created by or feature women, such as *God Sleeps in Rwanda,* an Academy Award nominated documentary that explores the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide where 70 per cent of those left behind were women. Other events include the St. Paddy's Day Cabaret on March 17 featuring the Sweet Soul Burlesque Troupe as well as Feminine Protection, an evening of jazz, spoken word and improv. For more information on events and artists, please see the festival website at http://www.sistahoodcelebration.com.



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MARCH 4

Undergrad Research Conference
9:00AM to 6:00PM
This conference celebrates the contributions of undergraduate research at UBC by providing a unique forum that exemplifies UBC's commitment to undergrad curricula. Keep your eyes on www.research.ubc.ca/UGConf.aspx for updates!

Vancouver Institute Lecture – The Best Ideas You'll Hear Tonight
8:15PM
Bernie Lucht, Executive Producer of CBC Radio's Ideas program, has won many awards and received national and international recognition. He will talk about the show, how it began, how it evolved, and some of the characters involved. Visit the VI website http://psg.com/~ted/vaninst/ to see their full line up of lectures.
IRC Bldg. – 2194 Health Sciences Mall

MARCH 6

Forestry Research Day
12:00PM to 8:00PM
The faculty is hosting a poster session by graduate students and a feature presentation by Dr. Peter Arcese, Professor, and Co-Director, Centre for Applied Conservation Research. More details at www.forestry.ubc.ca/research/talks.html.
Forest Sciences Centre Atrium – 2424 Main Mall

UBC Health Clinic Grand Opening
Daily March 6 to 10, 12:30PM to 1:30PM & Wednesday evening 6:00-7:00PM
UBC's Health Clinic is announcing their Grand Opening to showcase their brand new facilities. Meet the care team and tour the state-of-the-art facility. Refreshments will be served. Daily event info at www.familymed.ubc.ca or call 604-822-5431.
David Strangway Bldg, Suite 300 - 5950 University Blvd (above Shopper's Drug Mart)

Internationalization & Education: Perspectives, Practices, Issues & Controversies
6:30PM Poster Session
7:30PM Lecture
Join two excellent researchers as they open and expand your knowledge of education in other parts of the world. Maureen Kendrick will focus on education initiatives in three Ugandan communities and Handel Wright will speak about: "Researching Multiculturalism in New Times." This is a free event open to everyone. Visit www.educ.ubc.ca for more details.
UBC Robson Square Theatre – 800 Robson St.

MARCH 7

Now What Do I Do? Career Opportunities After Graduate School
1:00PM to 4:00PM
The Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences will focus on Graduate Students and assist them as they explore their career opportunities after graduate school. Get answers to questions like: How did I get here? What was I missing? What do I wish I had known? Refreshments will be served. Go to www.pharmacy.ubc.ca to register.
St. John's College – 2201 Lower Mall

Science of a Changing Planet
6:00PM to 8:00PM
Understand the fascinating science behind Earth's ever-changing state. This series of short talks featuring UBC-based research on problems and solutions associated with our rapid climate changes and ways you can realistically reduce GHG emissions. Everyone is welcome. For more details call 604-822-2624.
UBC Robson Square Theatre – 800 Robson St.

MARCH 8

Sci-Trek Science & Research Trade Show
10:00AM to 4:00PM
UBC Supply Management presents Sci-Trek to all Faculty and Staff. Check out this amazing science and research related tradeshow, visit UBC's Major Suppliers, discover new scientific products and services and make new contacts at this event.
www.supplymanagement.ubc.ca
Life Sciences Centre, West Atrium – 2350 Health Sciences Mall

Venture into UBC Research Developments
5:00PM
[illegible]
UBC Robson Square [illegible] – 800 Robson St.

[illegible]

MARCH 9

Obstetrics & Gynaecology Academic Day
8:00AM to 5:00PM
UBC Dept. of Obstetrics & Gynaecology Annual Academic Day is the opportunity for clinical trainees and graduate students to present their ongoing and/or completed research to the University. To register or find out more, visit the website at www.obstgyn.ca or contact Lisa Cattulo at 604-875-2171.
Women's Hospital, Chan Auditorium – 4500 Oak St.

UBC Discovery Tour
3:00PM to 5:00PM
Discover what UBC has to offer. This is a unique tour is the first of its kind. Participants will receive a guided tour using technology from their cell phones or iPods – so bring yours! The podcast will be available for download prior to March 9 – we'll keep you posted at www.research.ubc.ca. Highlights include:
• The Faraday Presentation in the Hebb Theatre – an entertaining look at Physics Principles
• A presentation in the new Life Sciences Building by the Ubiquitous Computing Group
• A guided tour of the UBC Space telescope
• A draw for Apple iPods. This is an excellent opportunity for students to discover UBC in a fun and exciting way. Many of the tour stops are brand new facilities that the public normally would not be able to access.
Best of all, it's FREE! Pre-register with Kally Basra at 604-822-6010 or kally.basra@ubc.ca.

Celebrate Research Week Gala
5:00PM to 9:00PM
This spectacular event celebrates selected research award winners and recognizes their outstanding achievements - highlighted with video vignettes. The program also includes special performances by UBC School of Music and UBC Opera. This is a free event and pre-registration is required. Contact Kally Basra at 604-822-6010 or kally.basra@ubc.ca to order your tickets.
The Chan Centre for the Performing Arts – 6265 Crescent Rd.

Planners for Tomorrow
6:30PM to 8:30PM
Who should be the planners for the cities and towns of tomorrow? What should be their knowledge, skills and attitudes? Join the us to hear initial results and contribute to advancing the dialogue. Engage anytime at www.plannersfortomorrow.ca.
UBC Robson Square, Room C150/180 – 800 Robson St.

MARCH 10

Workshop on Future Wireless Systems
8:30AM to 5:00PM
Dr. Salim Hanna from Industry Canada and Dr. Andy Molisch from Mitsubishi Electric Research Labs will give keynote presentations on ultra-wideband wireless technologies. More details visit http://bul.ece.ubc.ca/workshop.html or call 604-822-3237.
Kaiser Bldg. – 2332 Main Mall

Engineering Open House
10:00AM to 4:00PM Friday & Saturday
Say the word "doctor" or "lawyer" and an immediate picture springs to mind of what these careers entail. Now try "engineer." It's a little harder, isn't it? Join us and learn about the exciting and diverse world of engineering at the free Engineering Open House. Visit www.apsc.ubc.ca for complete details.
Kaiser Bldg. – 2332 Main Mall

AERL Official Opening
2:00PM to 5:00PM
Everyone is welcome to attend the grand opening of the Aquatic Ecosystems Research Laboratory (AERL), an exciting new building that encourages and enhances the collaborations between natural and social scientists. There will be demonstrations and presentations of research, results and innovations. For more info call 604-827-5547.
AERL – 2202 Main Mall

MARCH 11

Diabetes Research Forum & Webcast
10:00AM to 12:00PM
A free public research forum where leading UBC researchers in the field of Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes speak on their current research. Seating is limited so those who are interested should call Canadian Diabetes at 604-732-4636 to reserve a seat. If you can't attend in person, you can still take part by logging on to www.ikebarberlearningcentre.ubc.ca.
Life Sciences Centre, Theatre 2 – 2350 Health Sciences Mall

Excellence in Research Lecture – Accelerating Sustainability in BC
8:15PM
The Vancouver Institute presents Dr. John Robinson, [illegible]

CELEBRATE UBC RESEARCH

FIGHTING FOR RIGHTS AROUND THE WORLD

by Carolynne Burkholder and Claudia Li

OFFICIAL RESIGNS OVER MORNING-AFTER PILL DELAY

In response to a further delay in the ruling on the "morning after pill," the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) top official in charge of women's health issues resigned. Susan Wood cited unwarranted interference in agency decision-making as the reason for resigning from the position she held for five years. The FDA has been accused of allowing pressure from the conservative government to interfere with its decisions.

"I can no longer serve as staff when scientific and clinical evidence, fully evaluated and recommended for approval by the professional staff here, has been overruled," Wood wrote in an e-mail announcing her decision.

WOMEN GAIN RIGHT TO DRIVE IN SAUDI ARABIA

Although women in Saudi Arabia are still under many restrictions—they cannot travel, get an education or a job without written approval from a male guardian—they are now allowed to drive. In the few months since King Abdullah ascended the throne, the country has been going through a gradual process of reform.

Contrary to former practice, Information Minister Iyad Madani said there is "nothing in the Saudi legislation that forbids Saudi women to apply for a driving license," virtually urging them to do so.

WOMEN BREAK OUT OF SOCIAL CASTE SYSTEM

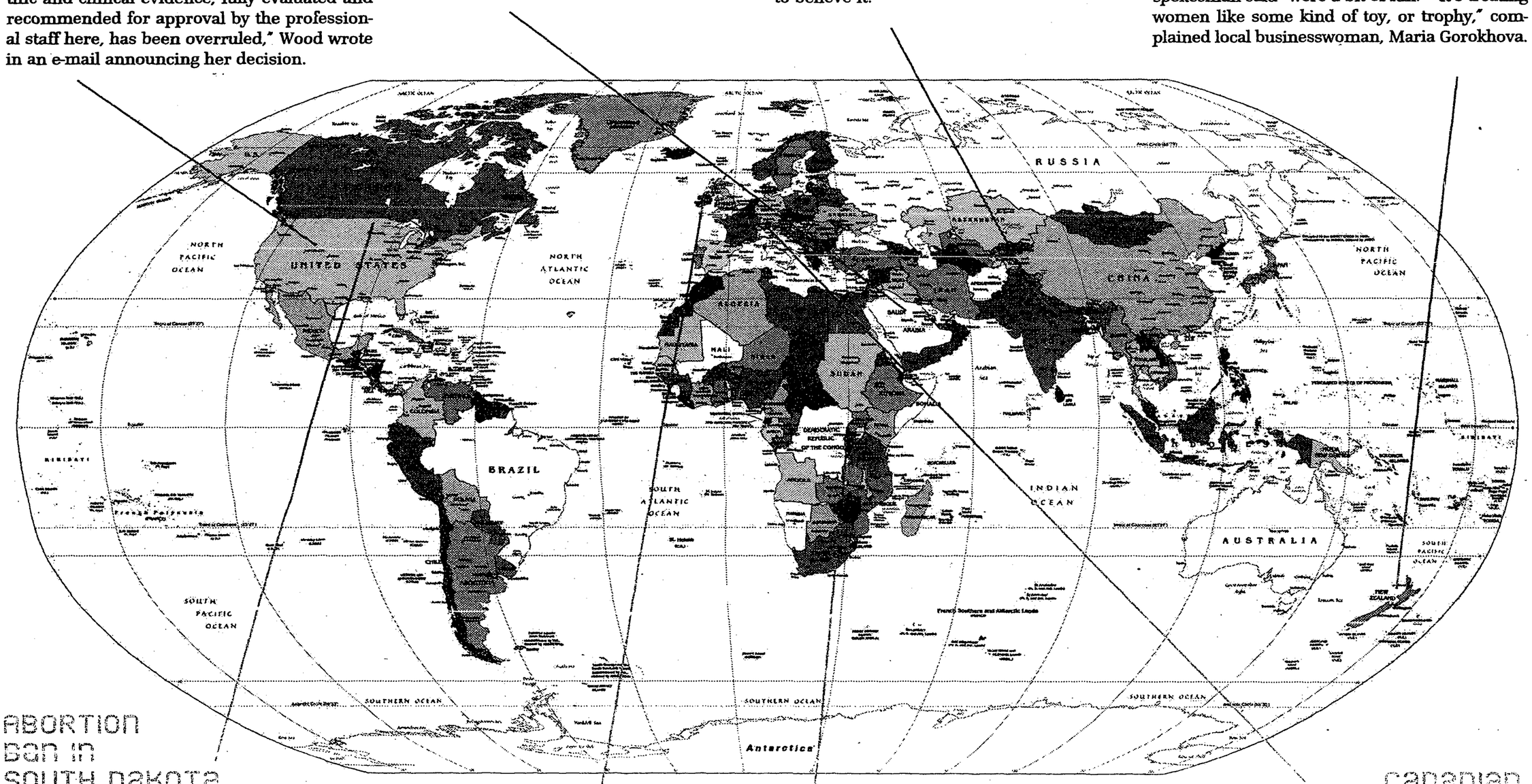
Dalit women, at the bottom of the Indian caste system, are now able to participate in a program that trains them to make clothing and food to sell. Formerly referred to as "untouchables," the women are now able to make money selling their wares to those in higher castes.

Bindeshwar Pathak, founder of Sulabh International, said he is surprised at the willingness of Indians to buy food from Dalit women. "This is a totally unacceptable thing in society," Pathak said. "I myself am not able to believe it."

NEW ZEALAND VODKA COMPANY GIVES AWAY FIND-A-BRIDE TOUR

The New Zealand vodka company 42 Below has received flack for it's promotional giveaway of a "find-a-bride" tour in Russia. The advertisement for the promotion includes a blonde woman scrubbing the floor and the caption: "They don't care if you watch cricket on Valentine's Day. Hell, they don't even care if you're short and fat. It's almost too good to be true."

Russian women living in New Zealand have been outraged at the ads—which the company's spokesman said "were a bit of fun." "It's treating women like some kind of toy, or trophy," complained local businesswoman, Maria Gorokhova.



ABORTION BAN IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Lawmakers in South Dakota recently approved a bill making it a felony for doctors to perform any abortion, except to save a life of a pregnant woman. Supporters hope this ban will lead to the overturning of the controversial Supreme Court decision Roe v. Wade, which permits voluntary abortions.

"This is a devastating day for the women of South Dakota," said Kate Looby, the state director of Planned Parenthood, the only abortion clinic in the state. "We fully expected this, yet it's still distressing to know that this legislative body cares so little about women, about families, about women who are victims of rape or incest."

LESBIAN COUPLE FIGHTS FOR RIGHTS

Katherine Zappone and Ann Louise Gilligan have been together for more than 20 years and have been married for three, but are still not recognised as a couple in their home country of Ireland. They recently brought a lawsuit against Ireland's tax service because it refuses to acknowledge their marital status.

Supporters hope the case will promote the rights of Ireland's same-sex couples, who currently have no legal recognition.

RWANDA WORLD LEADER FOR WOMEN MINISTERS

At just under 50 per cent, Rwanda has the highest level of women ministers of any country in the world. The world average is a mere 16 per cent, with nine countries with no female members of parliament.

Although it is "an incredible improvement" from a few years ago, Inter-Parliamentary Union chief Anders Johnsson, said women are still "dramatically under-represented."

CANADIAN WOMEN DOMINATE THE MEDAL PODIUM

The record-breaking number of medals Canada won at the Winter Olympics is thanks to Canada's female athletes, who won 16 of the 24 medals.

Cross-country skier Sara Renner of Canmore, Alberta told the *Edmonton Journal* that her success is due to Canada's support of female athletes. "I think Canada is one of the most progressive countries in supporting its female athletes and that comes through in the medal count," said the silver medal winner.

Feminine Facts

Almost half of all pregnancies are unwanted, and half of those end in abortion.

Every year, more than 500,000 women die from pregnancy-related causes.

In Africa, one in 16 women will die because of pregnancy; in Europe it's one in 1,400.

Two-thirds of the 876 million illiterate adults in the developing world are women.

On average, only 16 per cent of elected officials are women. Nine countries have no elected women officials, including Kyrgyzstan and Saudi Arabia.

At least one in three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused during her lifetime.

One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer over the course of their lifetime.

Women who worked full time in 1996 earned $.74 for every $1.00 earned by men.

New Zealand was the first country in the world to allow women to vote.

CORPORATISATION OF UBC HURTS WOMEN, SAYS WOMEN'S STUDIES PROF

by Mai Bui

If there is anybody at UBC who knows Women's Studies, it's Valerie Raoul.

The professor of French and Women's Studies came to UBC in 1979, and when the Women's Studies program started in 1990, Raoul chaired the committee that made the proposal for an undergraduate program in Women's Studies. Raoul went on to become the second director of the Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations (CRWSGR) at UBC.

"Back in the 1970s...our [Women's Studies] courses were very well attended, but we only had two courses," said Raoul. The program grew to include a BA, MA, and PhD program, which recently graduated its first male PhD student.

Raoul completed a BA in French and German at Cambridge, and went on to pursue an MA at McMaster and a PhD at the University of Toronto with a focus on first-person narration in French texts. Her interest lies in analysing texts written by women, which are often autobiographies.

"It's about how women see themselves as opposed to how they're seen by others, in a historical context," said Raoul, director of the Centre for Studies in Autobiography, Gender, and Age (SAGA).

These important documentations of the female experience frequently go unnoticed, said Raoul. "Women's writings were often letters [or] diaries that were not meant for publication and were further marginalised and not studied in universities," she said, adding that there has recently been a "renewal of interest in the kinds of writing not part of the literature canon."

> "WOMEN HAVE NEVER ATTAINED PAY EQUITY. I DOUBT THAT THERE ARE MORE WOMEN IN PROFESSORIAL RANKS NOW THAN WHEN I FIRST CAME [TO UBC]."
>
> -DR VALERIE RAOUL
> WOMEN'S STUDIES PROFESSOR

Recently, however, Raoul has also become aware of a damaging shift in the support for Women's Studies. "Particularly in universities, there's a big change in atmosphere and level of support for anything that's related to social justice and diversity issues," she said.

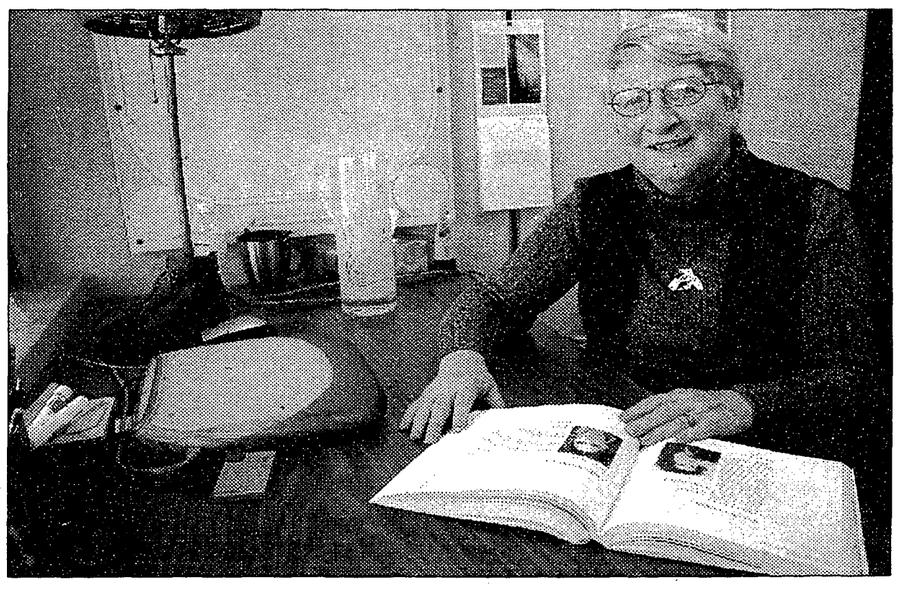
While a lot of lip service is paid to diversity and gender equality goals, said Raoul, there is not enough support backing the rhetoric to make significant progress. "Women have never attained pay equity. I doubt that there are more women in professorial ranks now than when I first came [to UBC]."

What's more, Raoul pointed out, fewer Canada Research Chairs are awarded to women. Currently, out of the 129 Chairs awarded to UBC, a starkly disproportionate 21 are held by women, versus 108 by men. "This has been an opportunity to change the dynamic, the hierarchy, to hire some senior women and minorities," said Raoul, "and they haven't done it successfully."

Raoul attributes a large part of this shift in support for the women's movement to what she calls the "corporatisation of the university."

"When you arrive now at the end of University Boulevard, you see a UBC logo and underneath it says 'Shoppers on Campus'" said Raoul, referring to the recently-opened Shopper's Drug Mart. "They're making an obvious play on words [and it] shocks me. It's like the campus is becoming one big shopping centre."

"Students [become] consumers and [professors are] providing a service. Things that should be studied are things that would enable people to make money, rather than what would enrich people personally or make their lives more interesting," said Raoul.



TAKING A STAND: Valerie Raoul works to promote awareness of women's issues at UBC. KELLAN HIGGINS PHOTO

This corporatisation of the university undervalues women's work, explained Raoul. "The kinds of areas women are concentrated in, arts and education...seem to be devalued. It's not easy to get big businesses to fund the Women's Studies program [for example]," she said.

According to Raoul, the women's movement is as pertinent now as it ever was. "Lots of young women think everything has been attained until they encounter their first barriers, and then they realise that a lot of things haven't been attained," she said.

This December, Raoul will be retiring from a prolific career in academia, and, unsurprisingly, she plans to continue working on social, gender, and diversity issues.

"We have a lot of projects. I'm involved in the environmental movement, and with creating the SAGA centre. We want to do more oral histories with First Nations people and so that those people's stories won't be lost."

"I have a background in social work, and that's kept me connected to the grassroots side."

I WEAR THIS BUTTON BECAUSE...

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CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

UBC Access & Diversity
www.students.ubc.ca/access

Centre for Women and Gender Studies
www.wmst.ubc.ca

Women's Studies
www.ws.arts.ubc.ca

Campaign adapted with permission from Boise State Women's Center

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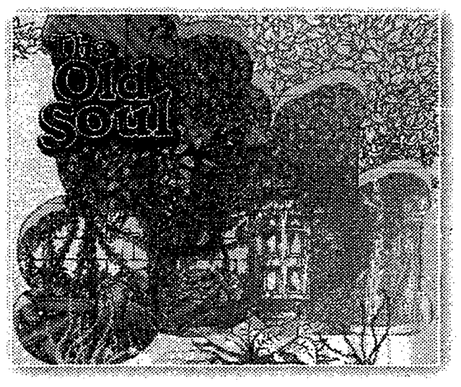
The Old Soul



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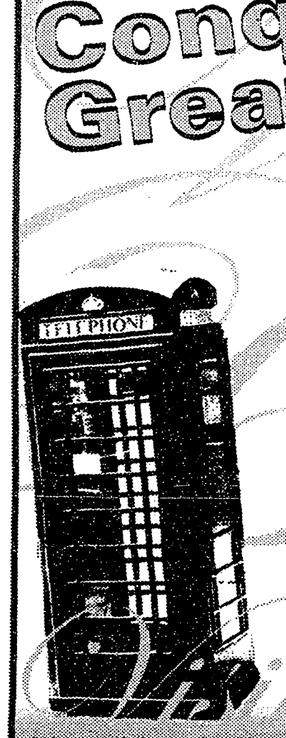

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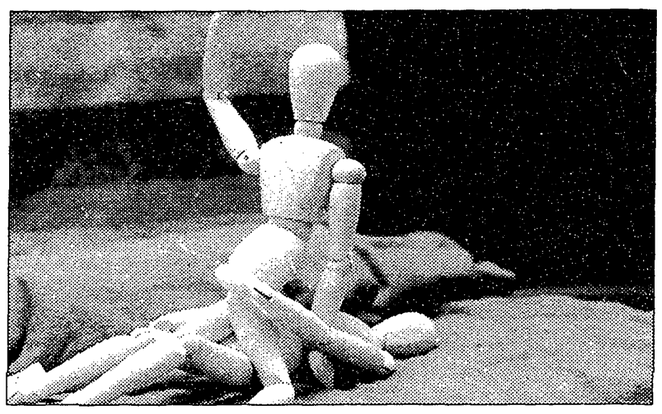
THE UBYSSEY PRESENTS...

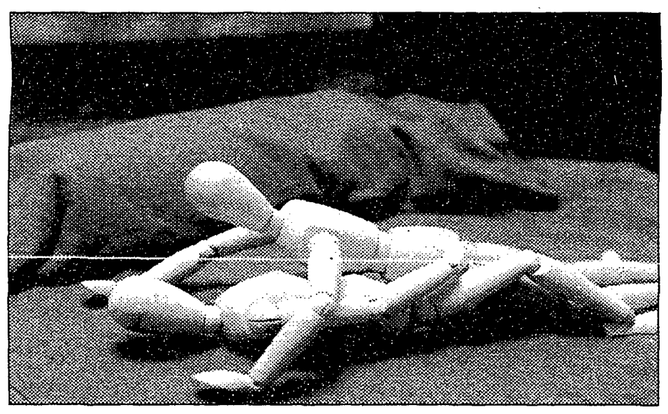
THE BEST SEXUAL POSITIONS FOR WOMEN

by Carolynne Burkholder and Claudia Li
Photos by Yinan Max Wang



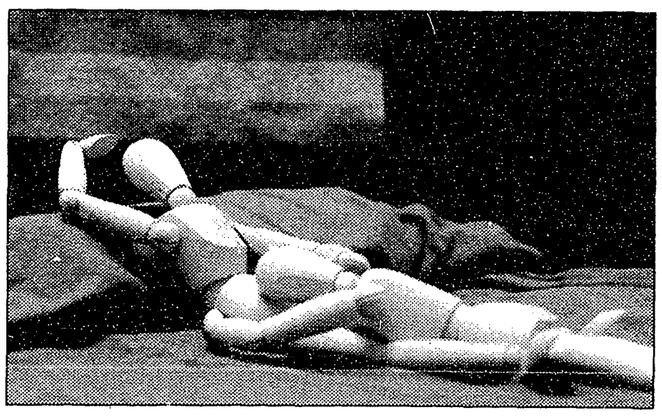
RIDE 'EM COWGIRL

Being on top puts you in the driver's seat—literally. You control the pace and the pressure and how long it will take. Try rubbing against your partner's pelvic bone for clitoral contact or leaning back on your hands. Or—if your partner's face is boring you—jump off, turn around and get into the "reverse cowgirl position. Yee-haw!



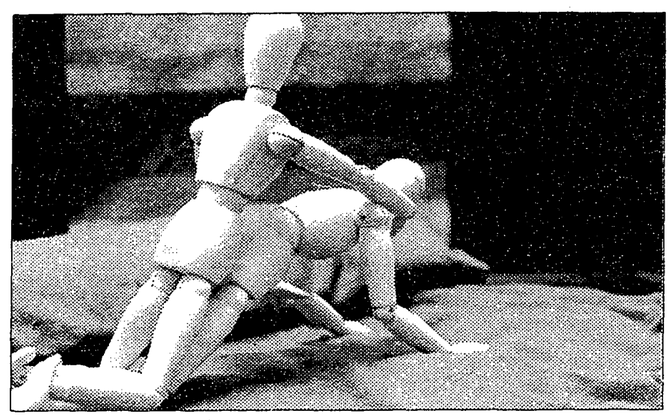
BACK TO BASICS

There's a reason that the missionary position is a staple in so many couples' sexual diets. The missionary will allow you to stare deep into your partner's eyes or scratch your fingernails into their back—depending on the kind of sex you are having. Change it up with the help of a strategically placed pillow or by wrapping your legs around their back.



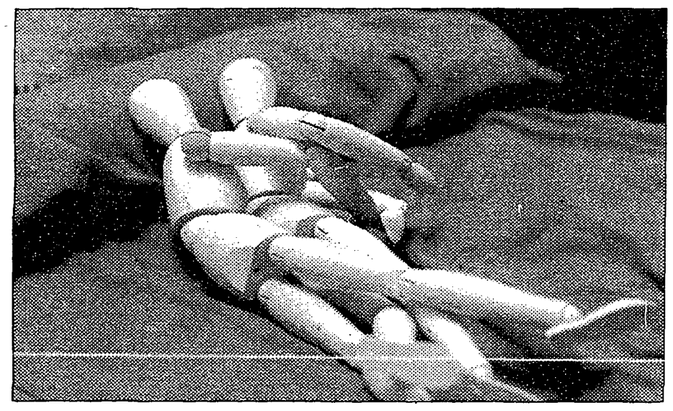
ORAL ACTION

Sometimes you just want to lie back and be pampered and that's why God invented oral sex. At the beginning, a variety of licking, sucking, and teasing can put you over the edge. But towards the end slow and steady wins the race. For something slightly different, flip onto your stomach. Not only can your partner get their tongue in deeper, they can stimulate different nerves from this angle, including the G-spot.



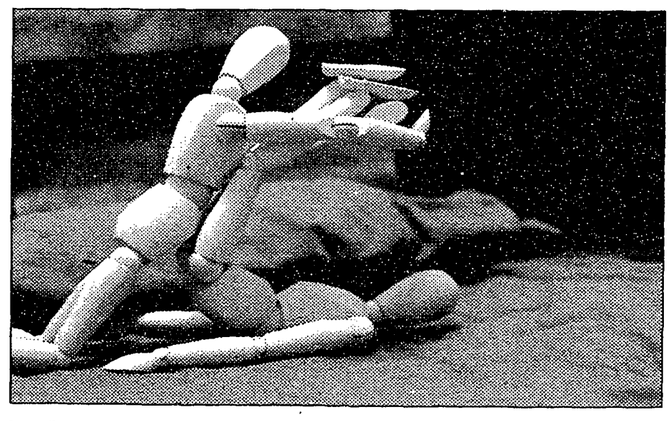
DOIN' IT LIKE THE MAMMALS

Not only can you both watch the Discovery Channel by doing it doggy-style, it also allows for deep penetration. And because of the way the penis or strap-on is angled inside the vagina in this position, a g-spot orgasm is much more likely than in any other position. As your partner controls the action, make sure to communicate what you're in the mood for.



MOONING OVER SPOONING

Break out the lavender candles and the Sade because spooning is what they were made for. You can lie in your partner's arms and be cradled from behind, or turn around with one of your legs over theirs. Perfect for slow and rhythmic penetration, this position is more about "making love" than "doing the nasty."



THE MODIFIED WHEELBARROW

Here's another way to achieve a g-spot orgasm: start out by lying on your back with your partner kneeling in front of you. Put your legs over theirs so that the backs of your knees are lying in the crooks of their elbows.

Then, have them lift your legs and ass up so that the backs of your thighs are resting on their stomach. Throw a few pillows under you for support. This position, like doggy-style, allows for deep penetration. Even though there's no direct clitoral stimulation, there's nothing stopping you from helping yourself out!

—with files from Tim Peppin.

DEMYSTIFYING THE QUEEF

by Liz Green

She wrapped her legs around his back, passionately pulling him down to kiss her at the same time. He thrust deeper and deeper into her wet and welcoming embrace. She arched her back in ecstasy and together they came, waves of pleasure radiated through them both. Suddenly there was a loud, wet farting noise and she turned bright red, looking awkwardly away, hoping he hadn't noticed.

Ah, the true romance of sex. The pinnacle of the romantic situation is embodied in the ultimate indication that the greater powers do indeed have a sense of humour: the queef, a.k.a. pussy farts, beaver burps, vaginal trumpet music, or cunt coughs. The names we've given this totally normal, all-too-frequent sound are almost as bad as the effect it can have on a romantic situation. However, the most ridiculous thing about queefing is how embarrassed people get about them.

Queefing is a sudden expulsion of air from the vagina that makes a fart-like noise as it is forced out of the vulva, usually during or immediately after sex, although there are websites that instruct a woman how to queef on demand. Now there's a party trick! During sex, air can get pushed or sucked into the vagina, and what goes in must come out! Contrary to some weird beliefs, it is not gas and shouldn't smell any different than the rest of the vagina. So stop being embarrassed and laugh, because as a girl said to me the other day: "what's funnier than a farting noise?"

Not convinced? Here's another way to look at it, as quoted at www.collegesexadvice.com: "Queefs are really nothing to be ashamed of. Really, they just mean that you're having good, vigorous sex. In some cultures, it's considered good manners and a compliment to your host if you slurp your soup loudly or belch. It shows you're enjoying the meal. Try to think of queefing in the same way!"

MORE FARTING FUNNIES

And then there are body farts. The second funniest thing to happen during sex, body farts are when you are somehow inexplicably pressed against your partner in just the right way to create a suction between your chests and again a farting noise erupts from between your soft, slick bodies. If you and your partner are not laughing at this pleasantly surprising farting noise, you should stop having sex right now and find someone who isn't so serious in bed! Then of course there are real farts and their humour is more perilous, being tightly dependent on whether there are any unpleasant lingering smells unwelcome in the bedroom.

HERE KITTY

Getting hair in your mouth every five minutes is a bearable, if oddly frequent, distraction during sex, but choking on a hair can be more awkward. Pausing while someone yaks like they're going to cough up a hair ball can really kill the mood. The only solution I can find for this is to keep your mouth closed, which doesn't sound like much fun, or date a baldy who likes Brazilians (the wax, not the South Americans).

SQUISHY!

Recently, a friend asked her boyfriend if a girl could ever be "too wet." Sometimes it feels like there's more lubrication there than could possibly be pleasant, but his reply seemed to dispel notions that this is anything to worry about: "More gushin' for the pushin'!" he joyfully chirped. So, if you're lucky enough to be this turned on, don't stress, just enjoy, and keep pushin' on.

If you're having the opposite problem, which is less fun, invest in some water-based lubrication. It's a problem quickly and painlessly solved to everyone's enjoyment. Vaginal dryness during sex can be caused by several things. It may just be that you are not turned on enough yet and you need a little more foreplay. Everyone knows how important it is to preheat the oven, and women work in a very similar way. There are other causes to watch out for though, including side effects of medication, yeast or vaginal infections, sexually transmitted infections, decreased estrogen levels or other conditions you can talk to a doctor about. Douching can also upset the normal chemical balance in your vagina. Which brings me to my next point...

ARE WE HAVING FISH FOR DINNER, HONEY?

The smell. Everyone complains about the smell. It's been described as fish, cheese, mould, damp and other such pleasant analogies. Frankly, if you are healthy down there and someone is complaining, withhold their bedroom privileges. Unless you have an infection, the smell is normal and healthy.

The best counter argument to this concern I've ever heard comes from Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*: "My vagina doesn't need to be cleaned up. It smells good already. Don't try to decorate. Don't believe him when he tells you it smells like rose petals, when it's supposed to smell like *pussy*!" Besides, when he's all sweaty, he doesn't exactly smell like Ralph Lauren either, but you still love it because it smells like it's supposed to—like sex!

WETTING THE BED...IN A GOOD WAY?

Urban legend suggests that every six hundred years, a woman is lucky enough to find either by herself, or with the aid of her sexual soul mate, the Holy Grail of sex: the G-Spot Orgasm. The g-spot is a soft, spongy section about a quarter-inch in diameter on the front inner wall of the vagina. The orgasm associated with the g-spot is often relegated to the realm of mythology. "Oh, a friend of a friend of my boyfriend's sister's friend once had a g-spot orgasm. There was all this liquid and he thought she had peed the bed!"

The truth is they exist, and yes, accompanying the g-spot orgasm is the release of a strange amount of clear fluid (ranging from a cup to two litres!) from or around the urethra. It's not urine and its origin seems slightly fuzzy. Some sources say it comes from the lining of the urethra and bladder and is a product of the kidney. It is more closely related in composition to male ejaculate and *is not urine*.

My theory is that the reason women retain water during certain times of the month is because we're retaining it in hopes that this orgasm will happen! There may or may not be any scientific basis to my theory.

In any case, if this happens and your partner is looking confused (or a little soaked), just explain that you've just had the best orgasm of your life, thank them and tell all your friends how you did it. There are lots of suggestions for pursuing this orgasm that can be found online. Study, study! Practice makes perfect! And why be embarrassed about something that's just so much fun?

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Open Letter Regarding The Coca-Cola Company's Commitment to Labor Rights

As someone who has devoted my career to labor issues, I share the concerns of student activists regarding labor conditions around the world. Through my work with the United Nations International Labor Organization, I have seen firsthand the manifold difference it makes in the lives of individuals, families, communities and entire countries when employers live up to their responsibilities to workers.

Committed to Fair Labor Practices.

My employer, The Coca-Cola Company, is committed to fair labor practices everywhere we do business. Around the world, Coca-Cola workers are free to exercise their rights to union membership and collective bargaining without pressure or interference. In fact, we are one of the most highly unionized multinational companies in the world, and we keep working to improve our labor relations practices.

Given the state of the world today, many of the countries where we operate are burdened with ongoing conflicts. Concerns have centered on Colombia, where violence against trade unionists and many others has been going on for decades and has deterred most people from joining unions. Even so, more than 30 percent of Coca-Cola workers in Colombia belong to unions, compared to a national average of 4 percent.

Working to Keep Employees Safe.

We share the concerns that many have expressed about the violence in Colombia and we are working to keep our employees safe. Coca-Cola bottlers work with unions and the government to provide emergency cell phones, transportation to and from work, secure housing, and a host of other measures to protect employees. Additional security measures are routinely provided to union leaders and special measures are undertaken when a threat against unionized employees is brought to the attention of the bottler's management.

Committed to Colombia.

We are proud of our 70-year history in Colombia and our contributions to local communities, and we are committed to supporting the country's progress. We invite universities, non-government organizations, as well as our critics, to join in a constructive engagement process to improve the conditions for labor in Colombia.

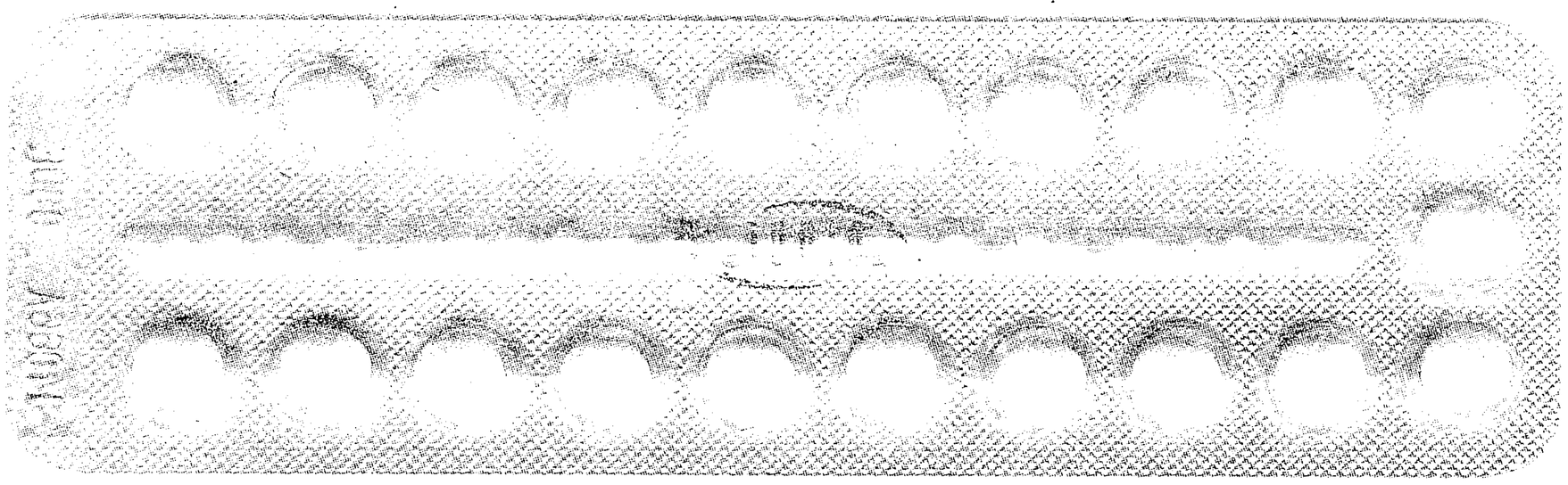
For The Coca-Cola Company
Edward E. Potter
Director, Global Labor Relations

To learn more about The Coca-Cola Company's work in Colombia and throughout the world, visit www.COKEFACTS.org.

The Coca-Cola Company

ANYA COULD BRING THE END OF THE PERIOD

by Claudia Li



Menstruation may soon become a choice rather than a necessity if the Anya birth control pill is approved by Health Canada—expected to happen sometime this year. Unlike most oral contraceptives that are taken for 21 consecutive days, with a seven-day window to allow for menstruation, Anya is to be taken every day. But the approval of this pill will not come without criticism. Many doctors have already questioned whether or not this pill is necessary, and more importantly, safe.

"It's suggested that this is a safe and reversible method, but I've done a review of the literature and there just aren't the data there," said Christine Hitchcock, research associate at the UBC Centre for Menstrual Cycle and Ovulation Research.

"There are no data on normal woman longer than a year, there are no data on return to fertility after you come off it and there are no data on the effects on breast tissue. We don't know in 20 years what the consequences are going to be," she added.

While Anya has been touted as a radical new choice in birth control for women, Hitchcock is unsure whether women will be able to make an informed choice with the limited amount of information available.

"There's a long history of women being told that things are perfectly safe and good for them and having that turn out to not be true because there weren't adequate safety data," Hitchcock said. Initial doses of hormones in oral contraceptives, for example, were dangerously high in the 1960s. Thalidomide, a drug developed to combat morning sickness in pregnant women, turned out to cause severe birth defects. Recently, problems have been discovered with hormone replacement therapy in menopausal women.

Aside from the physiology, the social implications of Anya have made many experts uncomfortable.

"It strikes me as manipulating women's discomfort with our bodies and making money from that—which seems like something to resist," Hitchcock said. "It creates an expectation that we should be able to control...our own bodies," she added.

Janice Boddy, a UBC professor of sociology and anthropology, agreed.

"We try to exert more and more control over our bodies and we see that through the need to exercise, to diet, [and] to have laser surgery on our eyes," Boddy said. "It imparts a sense of powerfulness, that you can actually choose what kind of body you have. This illusion of control is something that is part of our culture."

Boddy suggests that women may want to take this pill to distance themselves from menstruation because society sees it as linked to female incompetence, and that women use it as an excuse for why they're not feeling well while on the job. Other reasons include the fact that menstruation is viewed as dirty or inconvenient. She does, however, see a possible positive of the pill.

"[Tampons and sanitary napkins are] bleached with chlorine bleach. If you don't have to menstruate then you don't have to expose your body to these sorts of chemicals," she said.

Women who choose to take on the unknown risks of Anya may not be much different from women who decided to take the original birth control pill in the 60s, since the long-term effects were not known then either, suggested Boddy. In fact, common oral contraceptives still have side effects that are sometimes serious.

"We do know that oral contraceptives have risks, but they are rare. If you're going to take something for lifestyle or cosmetic reasons, then any risk seems too high," said Hitchcock.

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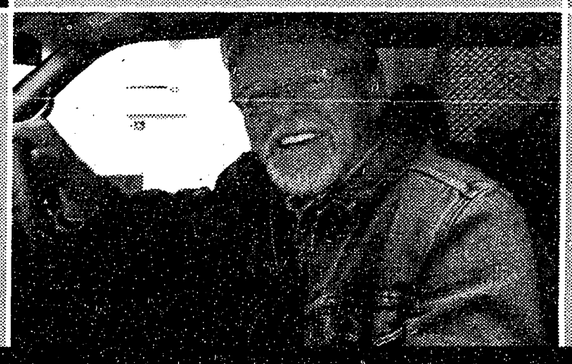

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WOMYNS' WARE EMPOWERS LOCAL WOMEN

by Carolynne Burkholder

Womyns' Ware isn't your traditional sex shop with blacked-out windows and rows of pornography. For the past 10 years, the Vancouver-based store has marketed itself as a "celebration and empowerment of women's sexuality."

Anna Stauffer has worked at Womyns'Ware—which she calls "the most safe and comfortable environment I have ever been in"—for three years. She said the best part of her job is "encouraging people to experiment in getting to know their own bodies."

Although the store's products are primarily marketed to women, the Womyns'Ware clientele is extremely diverse. "From 16-year-olds who are a little bit scared, but want to buy condoms for the first time, to moms bringing in their daughters to talk about safer sex, to folks in their 30s and 40s that want to try something new...we also have couples in their 70s and 80s coming in," said Stauffer.

Hannah McSorley, who also works at Womyns'Ware, believes the store attracts a range of customers because of the positive atmosphere.

"The whole store is about the celebration and empowerment of women's sexuality and that's really what it is," said McSorley. "I know it sounds cheesy, but I feel way more empowered since working here."

"A lot of women don't know a lot of things about their sexuality. A lot of them are very curious," she continued. "People are looking to have fun and it's nice that there is a safe and comfortable environment they can come to."

Maggie Gilbert, a Womyns'Ware customer, said the environment is what first attracted her to the store. "I found the store to be incredibly professional and not at all dirty or weird, which is kind of how I end up feeling in other sex shops," she said.

Womyns' Ware, located on Commercial drive, is large, brightly lit, and has the work of local artisans is on display. Along with many books about sex, there are rows of condoms and lubrication, and a variety of vibrators, dildos, harnesses, and other sexual props.

The products are as diverse as their patrons. The vibrators—as an example—range from $20 for the most basic model to the $200 rechargeable luxury sex toys. But all the toys are of superior quality, Stauffer assured. "We wouldn't sell anything that isn't safe or hygienic."

Education is also a major part of Womyns'Ware's mandate, another benefit for customers like Gilbert.

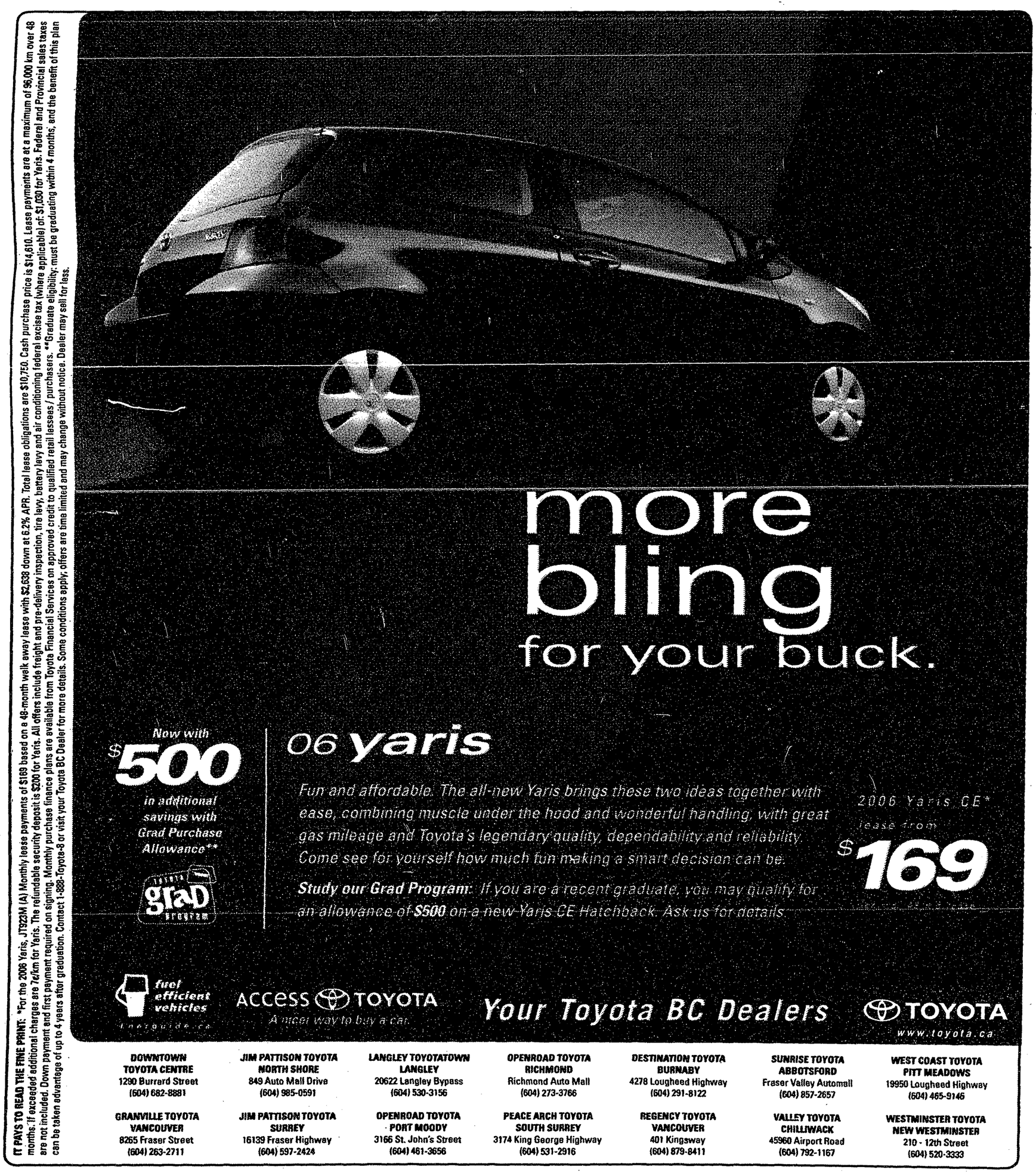
"There was...a lot of information on each of their products. The staff was very knowledgeable and helped [me] feel comfortable with the process," she said. "I don't think I would buy sex toys from anywhere else."

Stauffer said that several parents have visited the store with their children for a brief sex education. "It's always interesting for me that the people in this community respect us enough to trust [us with] the education of their kids," she said.

And Stauffer definitely believes in what she teaches.

"Sex is a wonderful, fantastic and precious thing and we've got these great bits that are there for one purpose and one purpose only," said Stauffer. "I think the most wonderful thing in the world would be if everyone could figure out that our bodies are there for a reason and we should never be ashamed about what they can do."

SAFE FUN: Providing more sex options for women—err, womyn—in Vancouver. **YINAN MAX WANG PHOTO**



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