



# Voices

for  
MEDIA DEMOCRACY

## Women's Institute For Freedom of the Press

1940 Calvert Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20009

Phone: 202.265.6707

Email:  
mediademocracy  
@wifp.org

www.wifp.org

### **STAFF:**

**Director:**  
Martha Allen

**Editors:**  
Liza Aberbach  
Christen Brandt

**Staff Writers:**  
Liza Aberbach  
Christen Brandt  
Laura Gil Gonzalez  
Abby Paulson  
Ariel Perry  
Bri Riggio  
Becca Tanen

## Table of Contents

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| WIFP Associates | p. 02 |
| Associate News  | p. 03 |

### *Women Helping Women*

|                               |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Purchasing Power              | p. 06 |
| Call for Scholarship Programs | p. 07 |

### *Current Concerns*

|                               |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| The Thin Line                 | p. 08 |
| Media Dem. & Iranian Election | p. 10 |
| Crimes Against Women          | p. 12 |
| A Market for Abstinence       | p. 14 |
| Sotomayor Slammed by Media    | p. 17 |

### *Response to Pop Culture*

|                            |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Total Eclipse of the Heart | p. 18 |
| Highlight: Target Women    | p. 20 |
| Oxygen has Snapped         | p. 20 |
| Now Hear This              | p. 22 |

*Summer 2009*

The following individuals are some of the hundreds of associates of WIFP. Many have been with us since the early days of the 1970s. Not all of those we work with are Associates, but the network of Associates helps us experience continuity in our endeavors over the years. We've shared projects and ideas. We've lent each other support. We continue to look forward to the energies of the newer Associates joining with us to bring about a radical restructuring of communication that will bring about true democracy in our countries.

Dorothy Abbott  
 Jennifer Abod, Ph.D.  
 Jo-Ann Huff Albers  
 Martha Leslie Allen, Ph.D.  
 Joy Allen  
 Donna Caledonia Allen  
 Mark Allen  
 Ana Maria Alvarado  
 Emily Ballengee  
 Christian Barclay  
 Maurine Beasley, Ph.D.  
 Julia Beizer  
 Carolyn Bennett, Ph.D.  
 Farika Fayola Berhane  
 Eleanor Biddle  
 Eleanor Blalock  
 Ester Bloom  
 Kathy Bonk  
 Marcia Boruta  
 Denise Bostrom  
 Pamela K. Bradshaw  
 Jennifer Braudaway  
 Carissa Brooks  
 Annie Brown  
 Susan Brownmiller  
 Amy Buck  
 Martha Burk, Ph.D.  
 Sara Burns  
 Carolyn M. Byerly, Ph.D.  
 Dyannah Byington  
 Lilia Cajilog  
 Patricia Campbell, Ph.D.  
 Lydia Carey  
 Bonnie Carlson  
 Jessica L. Chestnutt  
 Danielle Chynoweth  
 Elayne G. Clift  
 Erin Conroy  
 Reverend Cheryl Cornish  
 Nikki Craft  
 Pamela J. Creedom  
 Sena Christian  
 Thelma Dailey  
 Dorothy Dean  
 Zermarie Deacon, Ph.D.  
 Christen Deloatch  
 Valerie E. DeMatteo  
 Dana Densmore  
 Alix Dobkin  
 Ariel Dougherty

Ruth Dropkin  
 Valerie Eads  
 Jane Esberg  
 Caitlin Esch  
 Howard Fisher  
 Laura Forester  
 Jo Freeman  
 Margaretha Geertsema  
 Sheila Gibbons  
 Amanda Glensky  
 Sarah Glover  
 Grace Goodeagle  
 Ruth Gottstein  
 Elaine F. Graves  
 Heather Grimm  
 Elsie Gutches  
 Alison Hardin  
 Fann Harding, Ph.D.  
 Francesca Harding  
 Grace Haring  
 Teresa Haring  
 Sandy Hayden  
 Doris Hess, Ph.D.  
 Jamine Hillyer  
 Maureen Honey, Ph.D.  
 Michael Honey, Ph.D.  
 Natalie Hopkinson  
 Frankie Hutton, Ph.D.  
 Margaret R. Johnston  
 Deanna Kaplan  
 Paula Kassell  
 Susan Kaufman, Ph.D.  
 Ann M. Keller  
 Jean Kilbourne, Ph.D.  
 Lucy Komisar  
 Andrea Korte  
 Cheris Kramer  
 Kimberlie Kranich  
 Arlene Krebs  
 Patti Krueger, Ph.D.  
 Nancy Lang  
 Jennifer Lee  
 Kristin Lee  
 Cindy H. Lin  
 Karin Lippert  
 Joanne Lipson  
 Alexis Luckey  
 Tatyana Mamonova  
 Lisa Kar-Wai Man  
 Anyda Marchant

Lucinda Marshall  
 Nora Massignott-Cortese  
 Paula McKenzie, Ph.D.  
 Leila Merl  
 Julie Mikalson  
 Paul Miller  
 Sarah Misailidis  
 MaryAnn Mohamoud  
 Virginia Mollenkott, Ph.D.  
 Dorinda Moreno  
 Robin Morgan  
 Karen Mullhauser  
 Judy Murphy  
 Doug Newsom  
 Jenny Odintz  
 Rebecca Peterson  
 Susan Phillip  
 Marge Piercy  
 Lana Rakow  
 Ramona R. Rush, Ph.D.  
 Diana E. H. Russell, Ph.D.  
 Corinne Sabo  
 Annette Samuels  
 Bernice Sandler, Ph.D.  
 Anna Sayre  
 Nina Shah  
 Marie Shear  
 Elizabeth Shepard  
 Andrea Singer  
 Amanda Slaughter  
 Willona Sloan  
 Jill Rehkopf Smith  
 Ann Snitow  
 Calandria Somuah  
 Gloria Steinem  
 Cecily Swanson  
 Kate Swift  
 Elizabeth Thoman  
 Julie Thompson  
 Patricia Tobar  
 Sister Margaret Traxler  
 Emily Trostle  
 Anita Varma  
 Mary Ellen Verheyden-Hilliard  
 Desirè Vincent  
 Carmen Delgado Votaw  
 Billie Wahlstrom, Ph.D.  
 Danna Lynn Walker, Ph.D.  
 Betsy Warrior  
 Frieda Werden

Marcia Yudkin  
Jonathan Zeitlin  
Zenía Allen Zeitlin  
Karen Zelermyer  
Ann Zill  
Jan Zimmerman

**Some International Associates:**

**Canada**

Milner Alexander, Ph.D.  
Julia J. Jalloh  
Mary-Catherine McIntosh  
Gertrude Robinson, Ph.D.

**Denmark**

Birgitt Jallov

**France**

Shere Hite  
Maryvonne Lecuyer

**Germany**

Frauke Richter

**Indonesia**

Dorothea Rosa Herliany  
Yasmin Muntaz

**Japan**

Haruko Watanabe

**Jordan**

Mahasen Al Emam

**Mexico**

Diana Murray Watts

**Nepal**

Rojee Kattel

**Netherlands**

Senay Ozdemir

**Palestine**

Benaz Batrawi

**Peru**

Silvia Soriano

**Poland**

Ewa Fryzowska

**Saudi Arabia**

Nourah Al-Khurajji

**Scotland**

Bonnie Robertson

**South Korea**

Jin-A Yang

Eun Yung Yi

**South Africa**

Kashini Maistry

**Ukraine**

Oksana Kuts

**United Kingdom**

Margaret Gallagher

**Uzbekistan**

Navbahor Imamova

**Zambia**

Susan Musukuma

([www.wifp.org/MoreAssociates.html](http://www.wifp.org/MoreAssociates.html))

## Birgitte Jallov

A former intern with the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press in 1982/83, Birgitte returned to the WIFP for some intense days in July this year, reconnecting and catching up.



*Photo courtesy of Martha Allen*  
**Birgitte Jallov with WIFP Director Martha Allen in the WIFP Office.**

While working under the inspiring leadership of Donna Allen and in close collaboration with Martha Allen 26 years ago, Birgitte continued the work she had begun in her native country of Denmark on the empowering potential of community radio – especially for women. At the institute, Birgitte studied women's use of and work with community radio, low power media, and general access to the media issues.

After finishing her work

in her Copenhagen-based women's community radio collective and as a reporter on Denmark's first two community TV stations, Birgitte took her conviction that people should speak for themselves forward in community

work in Denmark and in press freedom and media development work as an independent consultant. As the head of the Communication for Development Unit in the ILO and as chief technical adviser of one of UNESCO's largest media development projects to date in Mozambique, she works to assist the country in the transition of the media sector from a socialist government-controlled media to a dynamic media, and further the

country's move towards a multi-party democracy. From 1998 to 2006, the community radio sector developed from eight initial community radios to 60, which give support to the government broadcaster, women in the media, adequate HIV/AIDS work by the media, support to small newspapers and a lot (!) of journalism training and other capacity building.

Today Birgitte continues to work as an independent consultant with issues related to the empowerment of communities and people through the use of communication and media for social change and development. While visiting the WIFP, Birgitte stressed how important her WIFP work period had been for her to consolidate early convictions. She sees the work she is still deeply involved with as an immediate extension of the inspiration and courage shared by Donna and Martha Allen so long ago.

Website: [www.birgitte-jallov.com](http://www.birgitte-jallov.com).

### **Dr. Gertrude J. Robinson**

Since retiring from McGill University in Montreal in 2000,

Robinson has spent her time writing a comparative book titled *Gender, Journalism and Equity: Canadian, U.S., and European Experiences*. The book is about the increase of women in the journalism profession. It was published in 2005 by Hampton Press Cresskill New Jersey.

The cover notes: "This analysis is unique in that it uses gender as a central explanatory variable; it is comparative and it explores the impact of equity legislation on the profession in North America and Europe. The book's focus on gender as a socially constructed attribute, permits the author to address the systemic biases that are inhering in the social reproduction of the journalism profession across countries. These biases lead to classificatory and evaluative procedures that have negative outcomes for female professionals such as differences in access, promotion, and pay. It also provides evidence of how male denigration of females' managerial potential inhibits female promotions to top positions, and the difficulties females encounter in functioning in these roles." The eight chap-

ters provide evidence on female representation in print and television journalism in North America and Europe (Britain, Germany, Scandinavia); the "working climate" and "glass ceiling" in the newsroom; equal opportunity legislation in North America and Europe, as well as examples of what "equity in portrayal" demands might look like. Robinson has spent the last three years promoting the book at national and international communication conventions and has received warm responses on both sides of the Atlantic.

### **Senay Ozdemir**

Senay is a visiting professor at the University of Texas at Austin, where she created and teaches the course "Online Publishing" in the School of Journalism. She is the Director of Medusa Media Productions, a multimedia company that produces the online magazine SEN, writes articles for other publications and works as a consultant for the Dutch government about women's and media issues.

As the founder and editor-in-chief of SEN Magazine, Ozdemir

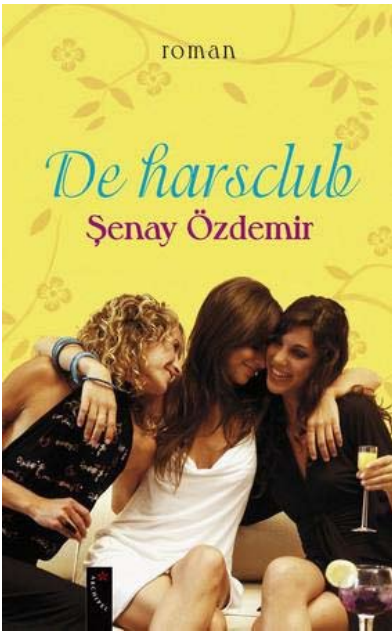


Photo courtesy of Senay Ozdemir  
Cover of Senay Ozdemir's  
new book, *De harsclub*.

tackles issues targeted toward Mediterranean women aged 20-35 with an Islamic background living in the Netherlands. She has written op-eds for the *LA Times*, *NRC Handelsblad* and *de Volkskrant* about issues regarding women's emancipation.

Ozdemir has written a book, *De Harsclub*, published June 25, 2009 (The Wax Club at Arbeiderspers). See <http://www.deharsclub.nl/>.

You can see Ozdemir's blog at: [www.senayozdemir.blogspot.com](http://www.senayozdemir.blogspot.com)

She would also like to refer you to a column of

Eileen Flynn, a fellow lecturer at UT and a columnist for *Austin American Statesman*: [www.statesman.com/life/content/life/stories/faith/06/20/0620flynn.html](http://www.statesman.com/life/content/life/stories/faith/06/20/0620flynn.html).

### Dr. Margaretha Geertsema

We welcome our newest WIFP Associate. Dr. Margaretha Geertsema is an assistant professor in the Eugene S. Pulliam School of Journalism at Butler University in Indianapolis. Her research focuses on gender and news in an international context, and her work has been published or accepted for publication in various academic journals, including *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *Feminist Teacher* and the *Journal of Development Communication*. She teaches classes in media writing, mass communication, international communication, and women's human rights. Margaretha is currently working on a research project about collaboration between U.S. women's media organizations and

women in the Middle East to improve access and representation to the news media.

### Dr. Frankie Hutton

Dr. Frankie Hutton has launched The Rose Project, a spin off of her book *Rose Lore: Essays in Cultural History and Semiotics*, which seeks to link with 501(c) 3 organizations and community groups in the creation of something beautiful and useful to serve humanity. (The rose is the flower most linked to hermetic knowledge, universal feminine qualities and female genitalia.) The first community event sponsored by The Rose Project was a joint effort with Artists Showcase of the Palm Beaches, a county wide art competition in Palm Beach County Florida at the Lake Park Public Library in February 2009. High School art students and amateur community artists were encouraged to participate in a rose art competition that culminated in an afternoon celebration and \$1,000 in prize money awarded. website: [www.geocities.com/frankiehutton/rose.html](http://www.geocities.com/frankiehutton/rose.html)

**Dr. Maurine Beasley**

Associate Maurine H. Beasley, professor emerita of journalism at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, has written chapters pertaining to the history

of women and communications in two recent books.

Both have been published by the University of Missouri Press, Columbia, Missouri.

One contribution is “Good Women

and Bad Girls,” a history of the images of women presented in the first newspaper published by the University of Missouri School of Journalism when it opened its doors 101 years ago.

It appears in the book titled *1908: Journalism At Its Professional Birth*, edited by Betty H. Winfield. The second is “Hannah Arendt: Public as Authority,” published in Clifford G. Christians and John C. Merrill’s *Ethical Communica-*

*tion: Five Moral Stances in Human Dialogue.*

Beasley also published a 5,000 word invited review essay, “Pens, Petticoats and Revolutionaries: Women and the Power of the Press,” in the *Journalism of Women’s History* 20, no. 3 (Autumn 2008): 206-218. In addition, she gave a paper at a refereed panel session of the Organization of American Historians convention in Seattle, WA, on March 26, titled “Advising Suffering Womanhood: Dorothy Dix Addresses the Lovelorn.”

**Martha Allen**

Martha Allen will be on a panel at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AE-JMC) Conference in Boston August 8, 2009. The session is entitled “The Wind Beneath Her Wings: Organizations that Support and Empower Women Journalists.”

Martha enjoyed working with a full staff over the summer (see photo on page 24), and is particularly appreciative of the great work everyone did on updating the Directory of Women’s Media.

**Purchasing Power**

By Christen Brandt



When we order products online, we rarely look beyond the brand, color, and price. While we question whether the new cardigan we’re ordering will match our old wardrobe, or if that new piece of art is exactly the right shade for our living room decor, we rarely ask how our purchase can impact the world—because usually, purchases don’t.

Rebecca Kousky is changing that. Her non-profit company Nest gives an entirely new meaning to the term “purchasing power,” as customers’ money directly improves the lives of female artisans worldwide. Nest helps craftswomen fund their small businesses in exchange for handmade products, including clothing, bags, pottery, art, jewelry, and paper. When consumers buy this merchandise, they help Nest in providing a stable future for women in the developing world.

The idea behind Nest revolves around mi-



**WIFP is now on Twitter! Follow us to find out what we’re up to.**





microcredit, a concept Kousky believes is an “awesome model for fighting poverty.” Nest supplies selected women with microloans, small loans provided in order to start small businesses. Microloans are currently growing in popularity as a

way to help impoverished people support themselves, but are generally only dispensed through banks.

“I saw a kind of disconnect between what I thought women wanted and needed and what microloan organizations were doing,” says Kousky. “And the biggest [disconnect] was that microfinance banks charge high-interest rates. For poor, illiterate, uneducated women, that seemed terribly frightening—it is terribly frightening.”

So Kousky set up a model of microcredit that would be interest-free and not at all intimidating, called “microbarter.” In exchange for a mi-

croloan, women supply Nest with a number of their creations. The Nest team sets a price on each item based on the price it can fetch in the U.S., and invariably meets or exceeds the asking price of business owners. Nest receives a small profit to keep the organization running, and the women are able to repay their loans without worrying about meeting interest rates.

“I think that working within their products gives us a language to work with them,” Kousky says. “If they’re illiterate and have no financial understanding, then talking about their bags, or their pottery, or their scarves... gives us a language to teach them financial skills.”

The Nest line also includes merchandise created specifically for Nest by designers. These products comprise the funds for microloans, allowing Nest to reach more women.

The loan recipients may continue to use Nest as a platform to

sell additional crafts beyond what they “owe” to Nest, so they may earn money throughout and after the loan process.

“Art and craft are sometimes seen as luxuries and not really a part of international development, and I think that’s wrong,” says Kousky, who founded Nest when she was only 24. “Incorporating arts and crafts into poverty reduction and working with women is really powerful. I think communities need to meet the sense of definition of self and beauty and happiness in [women’s] lives, and I think the craft often does that. Obviously education, money, health care, and all of those things are important too, but I don’t think it should be overlooked that these women often need ways of defining their families and their communities—and they need beauty and happiness too.”

To flex your own purchasing power, head to [www.BuildANest.com](http://www.BuildANest.com).

## *Needed: Scholarship Programs for Girls*

Every girl deserves a quality education. Unfortunately, many girls in underdeveloped nations get the message that their education comes second to their brothers’.

That’s the reason for creating She’s The First, a media campaign and network launching this fall to spotlight the importance of girls’ education worldwide. She’s The First is looking for schools in underdeveloped nations that offer credible, personalized sponsorship programs, allowing sponsors to correspond with the girls they support and receive their progress reports.

If you know of such a school, please help with our research by emailing Christen Brandt, WIFP Intern and Development Director for She’s The First, at [christenjbrandt@gmail.com](mailto:christenjbrandt@gmail.com).

## The Thin Line

By Bri Riggio

Eating disorders leave the body worn, ragged and weak, leaving many with the false perception that these disorders are limited to physical pains. Because of this, the general public often overlooks the psychological and emotional effects of eating disorders. Girls and women afflicted with anorexia are often referred to as having “lost their voices,” afraid to speak up for

der-afflicted individuals who once suffered alone began connecting online and sharing their stories and feelings with (what seemed like) the only other individuals who could understand and sympathize with them. Pro-ana sites provide far more than mere forums where those with eating disorders can communicate, however. Many sites often include a section for “tips and tricks” on how to avoid eating, stave off hunger pangs,

the online pro-eating disorder bandwidth. And though men certainly suffer from eating disorders, most professional studies show that females are the overwhelming majority of visitors to pro-ana sites. Studies and surveys are often self-reported, however, and because men tend to face an extra social stigma from admitting to an eating disorder, males visiting such sites may be unwilling to admit visiting them (and not releasing their gender to such studies). Nevertheless, the issue is currently understood as a primarily female sphere.

**THINSPIRATION: Images that often depict severely thin or emaciated women as inspiration for starvation or quotes that can be easily repeated as motivating mantras, like “Thinner is the Winner.”**

themselves or assert their wants, needs and feelings. With the rise of the Internet, however, these individuals have found their lost voices online – in communities of websites that call themselves “pro-ana,” short for “pro-anorexia.” Pro-ana sites glorify anorexia as a chosen lifestyle rather than a disease, posing problems for concerned parents and lawmakers alike.

The pro-ana movement took off in the late 90s as Internet use proliferated throughout society. Eating disorder-

and trick parents or friends into thinking you have eaten or are actually healthy and problem-free.

More notorious are the images and quotes entitled “Thinspiration,” images that often depict severely thin or emaciated women as inspiration for starvation or quotes that can be easily repeated as motivating mantras (quotes like, “Thinner is the winner”). In recent years, a “promia,” short for pro-bulimia, movement has also taken hold, but the anorexics seem to monopolize much of

Individuals operating and visiting these pro-eating disorder sites are first to admit that their visitors are likely the only people out there who truly understand both the horror and fascination of full-blown eating disorders. They are the only individuals who will not judge other visitors as vain, narcissistic drama queens (as societal stereotyping is wont to do). As someone afflicted with an eating disorder, engaging in an online community that seeks to validate you and your feelings rather than antagonize or ostracize you may prove ben-



eficial. Could these Web sites provide a valuable purpose even though to the general populace they appear sick and harmful? For many in the pro-eating disorder community, they can and do. But the perceived “e-benefits” can only outweigh the negatives for so long.

Pro-eating disorder sites pose obvious problems. People are quick to point fingers at website creators, claiming that they are endeavoring to turn teenage girls into anorexics. Anorexia is a complex problem, however, and while media messages may feed into the development of a disorder, merely looking at skeletal women will not “turn someone anorexic.” But those images might trigger someone who is on the verge of a full-blown eating disorder or purport the unhealthy mind set of those who have fallen into the disease and struggle to keep up their anorexic “lifestyle.”

Whether one sees pro-eating disorder Web sites as helpful or harmful, these sites call a myriad of other media-related issues into question. Inspired by Oprah Winfrey, who in 2001

aired an episode detailing pro-ana websites, many media outlets have begun covering the pro-ana movement. Outcries emerged among the public and pro-recovery organizations, and social pressure

issue of free speech rights. Is deleting a pro-eating disorder Web site a violation of the First Amendment, or is it merely upholding the rules and regulations of Web site hosts who say they will delete any content which may

**“Does the positive impact of alerting people to these sites outweigh the potential damage that may be caused to eating disorder sufferers who are also consuming these articles?”**

consequently led to censorship of pro-ana sites by Web site hosts. Though at first there appeared to be a downturn in the number of pro-ana sites in existence, many sites simply went underground or began masquerading as pro-recovery sites to avoid deletion. With the rise of social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook, pro-ana groups and connections continue to thrive and remain an impossible force to contain. The introduction of YouTube has even led to “thinspiration” videos and video blogs of individuals’ experi-

ences. While censoring a pro-ana website, group, or video seems logical due to the images and ideas being purported, it actually touches dangerously upon the

prove harmful to users? Who decides what constitutes what will “harm users?” And how does a regulator distinguish between what is “pro-ana” and “pro-recovery?” It should seem like the two should be highly distinguishable, but some who support recovery will actually try to appeal to the mind of an eating disorder sufferer by presenting common pro-ana images and sayings and then trying to dispel their allure. But couldn’t those Web sites be just as triggering as the ones that use the images for the more blatant and straightforward purposes?

The mainstream media coverage of pro-ana Web sites poses similar problems. Articles revealing the existence and true destructive nature of pro-ana sites are helpful to those who do not suffer from

an eating disorder but perhaps are dealing with someone who is - doctors, psychiatrists, or parents of afflicted children. Articles are sometimes blatant, naming actual websites in existence or providing examples of “thinspiration” or “tricks or tips” that are commonly listed. Those who are trapped in an eating disorder can read these articles and add new sites or tricks into their repertoire of destructive behaviors. Where, then, should the line be drawn in the mainstream media that cover the pro-ana phenomenon? Should there be a line at all? Does the positive impact of alerting people to these sites outweigh the potential damage that may be caused to eating disorder sufferers who are also consuming these articles? If so, by what criteria does one decide that? (It is a problem concerning even an article like this that struggles to provide information yet remain as vague as possible so as not to trigger any susceptible individuals who may stumble upon it.)

To those unfamiliar with eating disorders, the pro-ana and pro-mia movements tend to evoke a universal reaction of horror and

desire to eradicate them. But the answers are not so simple and require much consideration and deliberation if this issue is ever going to be resolved in a fair and just manner.

## *Media Democracy & the Iranian Election*

*By Abby Paulson*

The social and political unrest following the disputed Iranian election has highlighted the growing and changing importance of the media in civilian empowerment. Following the results announcement, the Iranian government issued an order banning foreign journalists from reporting from the streets. The order specifically banned the use of images or eyewitness accounts of any protests or violence. Demonstrators had already gathered in protest of Iran’s state-run media in early May in anticipation of the presidential election and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s administration had used censorship to its advantage throughout

the campaign process. The government shut down the reformist and Moussavi-affiliated newspaper Yas-e-No in mid-May and the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), Iran’s state-run television service, repeatedly censored appearances and speeches by reformist candidates. Iran’s ministry accused the BBC and Voice of America of interfering with domestic affairs, while the BBC claimed that the Iranian government was impeding its ability to broadcast. According to Reporters Without Borders, an international organization for press freedom, 41 journalists have been imprisoned since the election. Most of the detained journalists are Iranian and are being held without clear explanation of their crimes.

International news sources are relying on Twitter feeds from the streets of Tehran for their sources as their journalists are forced away from the public or out of the country. The Iranian government blocked social networking sites Twitter and Facebook following the election. Iranians must now utilize other sites that post tweets for them to avoid government blocking. The success



## Crimes Against Women on the Rise in Guatemala, Despite the 2008 Femicide Law

By Laura Gil Gonzalez

Since 2000, over 4,000 Guatemalan women have been murdered, many of them first abducted and subjected to brutal sexual violence, mutilation, and torture. An estimated 98 percent of the cases reported remain in impunity and the conviction rate stays below 1 percent. According to Dr. Carlos Castresana, Commissioner of the International Commission Against Impunity

This problem is not a new or isolated phenomenon, however. The current wave of brutal and unpunished crimes against Guatemalan women is partly rooted in a 36-year internal armed conflict (1960-1996), which resulted in the rape,

**Statistics on femicide in Guatemala according to the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office:**

| Year          | Number of Women Killed |
|---------------|------------------------|
| 2001          | 317                    |
| 2002          | 317                    |
| 2003          | 383                    |
| 2004          | 497                    |
| 2005          | 517                    |
| 2006          | 603                    |
| 2007          | 590                    |
| 2008          | 722                    |
| <b>Total:</b> | <b>3,946</b>           |

in Guatemala, the lack of rule of law, with corrupt or indifferent police, strong gender bias, and a dysfunctional judicial system, is the overwhelming factor in the femicide crisis currently hitting the Central American country.

torture, and murder of tens of thousands of Guatemalan women and girls. Though internationally condemned and officially classified as genocide by the United Nations, the wounds of war remain silenced in the country as many wom-

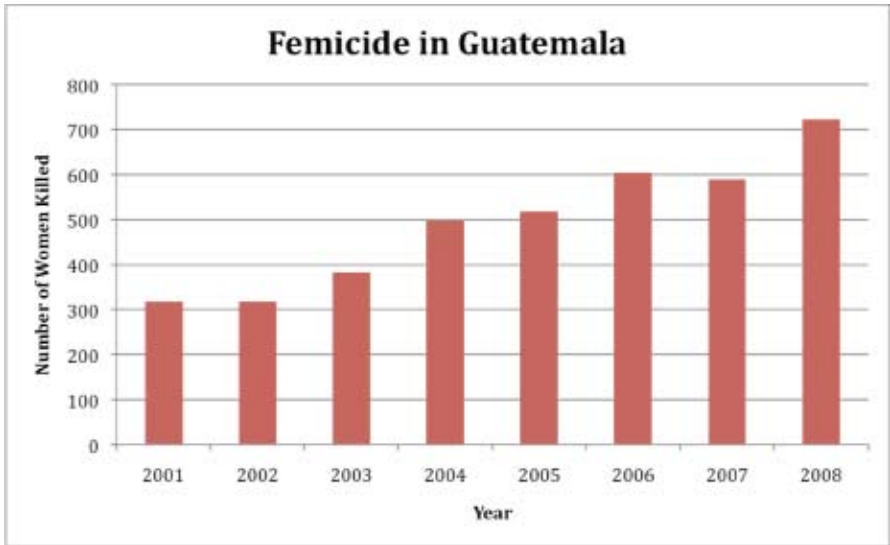
en who were victims of wartime violence (torture and rape) have never spoken out due to stigmatization, fear, shame, and trauma.

As a turning point in this long history of violence and rampant impunity, the Guatemalan Congress passed a new nationwide law on April 9th, 2008, recognizing femicide as a punishable crime. Unfortunately, statistics have revealed that despite the legislative efforts and small advancements, 2008

was the most violent year to date for women in Guatemala, with 722 reported violent deaths and many more cases of abuse. Most significantly, there has not been an increase in the

number of perpetrators brought to justice: Under the Femicide Law, 11 cases have been tried as of February 25th, 2009; only one of them has resulted in a conviction.

The above data and graph on left are pro-



*Courtesy of GHRC/USA report "Guatemala's Femicide Law: Progress Against Impunity?"*

vided by the U.S. based Guatemala Human Rights Commission (GHRC), which in its last report "Guatemala's Femicide Law: Progress against Impunity?" monitors the implementation of the law a year after its successful passage. As stated in this research, "the law has yet to make a marked impact on national statistics." The humanitarian organization points out among the problematic factors in the accomplishment of greater advancements the lack of understanding of the law, the continued social unrest, the poor media portrayal, and the inadequate efforts on the part of local authorities.

Regarding the media, the GHRC condemns

an excessive focus by reporters on blood, gore, nudity, and torture when talking about femicide and violence against women. According to March 2008 research, an estimated 90 percent of over 3,000 cases of violent deaths were depicted from a sensationalist perspective. In order to raise community awareness, GHRC together with Guatemalan organizations and other US NGOs claim for "greater media participation in spreading the message of gender equality, the dangers of domestic violence, and a no-tolerance approach to violence against women."

Besides education, the GHRC and its partners

specially stress that "first and foremost, the law must be fully implemented in order to bring victimizers to justice," and underline that "there remains much to be done within the investigative and legislative arena in order to ensure the safety of Guatemala's women and girls." These assertions include among other recommendations the improvement of crime scene investigation, prosecution of femicide cases to help restore public confidence in the judicial system, arms regulation to decrease weapons on the street, and the creation of a national public database of femicides and crimes against women.

Finally, the GHRC report draws attention to the need of greater protection for the victims of violence and their families, and also advocates for healing the wounds of war, violence and hatred on a national level as necessary steps to move forward into gender equality in Guatemala, and thereby, to contribute to a paradigm shift in recognizing women's rights.

Website for viewing the Full Text of the Guatemala's Femicide Law Report Online: [http://www.ghrc-usa.org/Publications/Femicide\\_Law\\_ProgressAgainstImpunity.pdf](http://www.ghrc-usa.org/Publications/Femicide_Law_ProgressAgainstImpunity.pdf)

Sources:

GHRC/USA Fact Sheet about Femicide [http://www.ghrc-usa.org/Programs/ForWomensRight-toLive/factsheet\\_femicide.pdf](http://www.ghrc-usa.org/Programs/ForWomensRight-toLive/factsheet_femicide.pdf);  
 Washington Office on Latin America Report "Hidden in Plain Sight: Violence Against Women in Mexico and Guatemala" <http://www.wola.org/media/ViolenceAWomen.pdf>;  
 United Nations Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Mission to Guatemala [http://cgrs.uchastings.edu/documents/advocacy/special\\_rapporteur\\_guate.pdf](http://cgrs.uchastings.edu/documents/advocacy/special_rapporteur_guate.pdf) ;Boix, Montserrat. "Guatemala. Mujer, violencia e impunidad". RTVE. May 21, 2009. <http://www.rtve.es/noticias/20090521/guatemala-mujer-violencia-impunidad/277489.shtml>

## A Market for Abstinence

*The purity movement provides marketable goods to impressionable youth*

By Abby Paulson

Adolescent women are screaming, in borderline hysterics. They are waving signs and wearing homemade t-shirts. It's a scene that has become common

since the 1960s, but these girls aren't fighting for liberation

or respect—they're fighting for an autograph. Creating a female frenzy around entertainment acts, from Elvis and the Beatles to the Jonas Brothers and Miley Cyrus, is growing stronger and more lucrative, but it's also shifting away from its original roots of creative release and rebellion to an imposing message of constricting and dangerous "purity."

Marketers today are using pressurized ideals of abstinence and purity to create a fierce, widespread loyalty to products and stars among adolescent girls. When entertainment giants like Disney see their profits explode, they see lines of screaming young girls, screaming for the latest manufac-

ured star, and desperate to display their loyalty with clothing, accessories, and even home-wares.

They're creating sexless groupies with wallets, and they're combining adolescent confusion and discovery with the intense draw of wanting

**Not only do pledge takers engage in pre-marital sex at the same rate as non-pledge takers, but they are significantly less likely to use condoms or take birth control.**

exactly what you can't have.

The days in which sexual frankness lead to massive consumption are waning as the power of adolescent (and parent) spending is realized. Parents aren't shaking their heads as their daughters sneak Beatles albums into their rooms. Instead, they are shelling out hundreds of dollars to take their daughters to a Jonas Brothers concert, where pyrotechnic displays and purity rings go hand in hand. As media conglomerates intensify their focus on the buying power of adolescent females, they are able to lock themselves into a market that is both lucrative and loyal.



"The teen market is very recession resistant," Eric Beder, retail analyst for Brean Murray, Carret & Co. told *Retailing Today*. "You're going to see teen spending continue. If you look at the return on pure teen retailers, they are very reliable."

A 2008 University at Buffalo study concluded that low-involvement consumers, meaning those who did not see significant relevance of the product to their lives, were likely to be more easily persuaded by sexual appeals in advertising. High-involvement consumers were more

likely to look at the advertisement critically. Fathers and mothers who carefully monitor their children's entertainment consumption are comforted by entertainment that distances itself from sex to the maximum extent.

The purity market seizes upon societal pressures and natural adolescent insecurities to make its strength indomitable in appearance. By placing purity as one of the top identifiers of performers like the Jonas Brothers or Miley Cyrus, Disney ensures that when young girls see their favorite boy band on a

poster or a t-shirt, they are directed towards ideas of intrigue. The stigmatizing of female sexuality and discovery can create a fierce frustration in the adolescent consumer. This frustration, however, can cultivate an obsession as strong as the idea that "you want what you can't have." It's the theme that runs consistently through Disney acts and the incredibly popular *Twilight* series. The vampire series has proven to be frenzy-inducing among younger girls as well as their mothers. It's been lauded for its message of abstinence even though the books are centered entirely on dangerous desire.

Feminist blogger Jessica Valenti's book *The Purity Myth* examines the damaging messages the purity movement sends to young girls.

"In the Bush administration, the rising virginity movement was colliding with a hyper-sexualized pop-culture," Valenti said.

Valenti said that companies like Disney wanted to present purity-centered stars as an faux alternative to a sexualized cultural trend.

"It's really the same thing," Valenti said.



Artwork by Liza Aberbach

“They’re still presenting a sexual image. When you’re talking about Miley you’re not talking about what a great actress she is, you’re talking about her sexuality.”

Teens also recognize that their idols’ examples have a significant impact on their material, moral, and lifestyle choices. A 2002 University of Calgary study found that 60 percent of teenage respondents said “an idol had influenced their attitudes and personal values, including their work ethic and views on morality.”

Abstinence itself is the constant subject of commodification and marketing as virginity movements undergo constant rebrandings to ensure their wait-until-marriage messages are noticed on the walls of high schools and the fronts of billboards. The Abstinence Clearinghouse sold plastic “Vir-

ginity Vouchers” on its website, allowing teens to have a regular reminder of their pledge to abstain every time they fish a credit card out of their wallets. True Love Waits is a clothing and accessory brand that capitalizes upon the growing publicity around declarations of abstinence. Girls can commodify themselves in cap sleeved t-shirts with messages like, “Notice: No Trespassing on this Property—My Father is watching!” and boys may reinforce their manliness with muscle tees emblazoned with the message “True Gentleman.” Apple launched an iPhone application in July that allows users to sign a abstinence pledge and displays a silver ring on the phone’s main screen.

The purity movement’s rise has continued despite recent studies that prove the ineffectiveness—and even the danger—of abstinence pledges. In 2008 Janet Rosenbaum, Ph. D., of the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, analyzed data collected through the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health and found that not

only did pledge takers engage in pre-marital sex at the same rate as non-pledge takers, but also that abstinence pledge takers were significantly less likely to use condoms or take birth control. Teens who pledged were also more likely to substitute other high-risk behavior for intercourse. The Obama administration’s proposed budget reflected the research’s findings and cut almost all funding for abstinence-only education and redirected \$178 million towards programs proven to reduce teen pregnancy and increase contraceptive use.

“The abstinence only organizations, they know these programs don’t work,” Valenti said. “Their agenda is not on teen health, it’s about reinforcing traditional gender roles.”

Celebrities and manufacturers may find it attractive to use myths of purity for profit, but the consequences can’t be measured in dollar form. The danger is most greatly realized when there is an imbalance of messages for young girls. Messages enforcing the commodification of girls and their virginity drowns out information encouraging ownership of one’s body and health.



Photo courtesy Wait Wear

## Sotomayor Slammed By Media

By Liza Aberbach

Sonia Sotomayor is a woman to be celebrated for being nominated as the first Hispanic Justice elected to the Supreme Court. Since President Obama's nomination, Sotomayor has been under intense scrutiny. In the days leading up to and during the confirmation hearings, her 2001 comment, "I would hope that a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experiences would more often than not reach a better conclusion than a white male who hasn't lived that life," came under intense criticism from Republicans aiming to peg her as a liberal who would be inhibited in her new role by her race and gender.

Mainstream media have attacked her, as evidenced by a compilation video The Women's Media Center has aired on YouTube<sup>1</sup>. Dennis Miller on Fox News said, "Not nearly as textured & rich as I could be, if I had lead the life of a LATINA WOMAN! Sorry, It's my Sonia Sotomayor junk" as he put a flower in his side of his mouth and snapped his fingers in the air. On the May 26 broadcast of Premiere Radio

Networks' The Glenn Beck Program, Glenn

Beck said, "They're just like, 'Hey, Hispanic chick lady! You're empathetic?' She says, 'yep.' They say, 'You're in!' That's the way it really works." On May 26, when Pat Buchanan was talking to Chris Matthews on MSNBC's Harball with Chris Matthews, he said, "She is also an affirmative action pick, Chris. Clearly. The president was down to four choices, all four of them women, and he picked the Hispanic."

Such comments focusing only on her gender & race take away from a focus on her actual background, personal stances, intelligence, and credibility. By saying Sotomayor is only being elected to the Supreme Court because of her race makes Sotomayor seem like she would need to apologize for her race instead of be proud of the background and insight a minority understanding would give her in such a high position.

Sotomayor's 2001 quote speaks to this "richness of...experiences" and instead the media chose to intensify and highlight the scrutiny of the hearings by denoting her down to a "Hispan-

ic chick lady" who is "empathetic," according to Glenn Beck. Mainstream media negatively focused on her race, at one point even comparing her nomination to the nomination of David Duke, a former Republican Louisiana State Representative and Klu Klux Klan leader. ON May 29, Rush Limbaugh commented, "The real question here that needs to be asked—and nobody on our side, from a columnist to a TV commentator to anybody in our party has the guts to ask: How can a president nominate such a candidate? And how can a party get behind such a candidate? That's what would be asked if somebody were foolish enough to nominate David Duke or pick somebody even less offensive."

Mainstream media ripped Sotomayor apart regarding her race and gender and seemed to forget there was a competent judge who was nominated for a reason beside her cultural identity.

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJdAlwwQww;watch>  
[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/sonia\\_sotomayor/index.html?inline=nyt-per](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/sonia_sotomayor/index.html?inline=nyt-per);  
<http://mediamatters.org/research/200907130047>;  
<http://www.feministing.com/archives/016639.html>

## Total Eclipse of the Heart

A look at the influence of  
The Twilight Saga

By Becca Tanen

“About three things I was absolutely positive: First, Edward was a vampire. Second, there was a part of him — and I didn’t know how potent that part might be — that thirsted for my blood. And third, I was unconditionally and irrevocably in love with him.”

The Twilight Saga, the four-volume series about a human teenage girl and a striking vampire who fall in love, is an unexpected sensation. Penned by Mormon housewife Stephenie Meyer, the novels dominated *USA Today’s* Best-Selling Books list upon release. The third book, *Eclipse*, even ended the final Harry Potter novel’s reign in the number one slot. There’s no question that Bella and Edward, the series’ protagonists, have become the object of obsession for thousands of girls the world over. But what is less clear is what message they are taking away from a story about a girl who (spoiler alert!) gives up her mortality to be with the vampire of

her dreams for all eternity.

By *Breaking Dawn*, the fourth and final novel of

the series, Bella has forgone college despite being a very bright girl, risked her life to bear Edward’s half-vampire child, and finally given up her humanity to be a vampire herself. Sarah Seltzer of the *Huffington Post* points out, “Bella’s willingness to sacrifice her physical safety, her education, and her family and social ties for Edward—and the well-meaning but stringent control he exerts over her—are reminiscent, as some readers have said, of abusive relationships.” “Stringent control” refers to the series’ theme that in an attempt to curb

his near-unbearable lust for her blood and her body, Edward becomes highly protective of both. Leonard Sax agrees with these points in *The Washington Post*, and points out that throughout the series, Bella is consistently saved from every dangerous situation by one of the novel’s strong male characters. And when Edward leaves Bella in *New Moon*, the second book, she enters a catatonic state for several months.

Author Stephenie Meyer has responded to these accusations on her website by pointing out that Bella willingly chose “romantic love over everything else...to marry at an early age and then... to keep an unexpected and dangerous baby.



Artwork by Liza Aberbach

I never meant for her fictional choices to be a model for anyone else's real life choices." As for Bella's damsel-in-distress complex, Meyer points to the fact that she is a human and the two males in love with her in the series are, respectively, a vampire and a werewolf. "When a human being is totally surrounded by creatures with supernatural strength, speed, senses, and various other uncanny powers, he or she is not going to be able to hold his or her own."

Sci-fi technicalities aside, there is a marked difference between who Bella is at the beginning and end of the series, and not just in terms of mortality. At the start of the first novel, she is a bright honors student who is able to complete advanced assignments with ease. In *Eclipse* she says, "I'm not that girl, Edward. The one who gets married right out of high school like some small-town hick who got knocked up by her boyfriend! Do you know what people would think? Do you realize what century this is? People don't just get married at eighteen! Not smart people, not responsible, mature people! I wasn't going to be that

girl! That's not who I am..." Unfortunately, that is exactly who Bella becomes. She and Edward wed immediately after graduating from high school and college goes to the wayside when they conceive a child.

Despite the fact that the baby injures and debilitates Bella during pregnancy, giving up the baby is not an option. An article in *Bitch Magazine* quotes, "I wanted him like I wanted air to breathe," Meyer writes, "Not a choice — a necessity." This creepy antiabortion allegory quickly gets literal, as the half-vampire fetus (actually an interesting metaphor for any pregnancy) starts killing Bella from the inside out." The article also points out that even more disturbing than their monstrous half-vampire child is the honeymoon scene, which appears early in the novel.

According to *Bitch*, "Edward, lost in his own lust, 'makes love' so violently to Bella that she wakes up the next morning covered in bruises, the headboard in ruins from Edward's romp. And guess what? Bella likes it. In fact, she loves it. She even tries to hide her bruises so Edward won't feel bad. If the

abstinence message in the previous books was ever supposed to be empowering, this scene, presented early in *Breaking Dawn*, undoes everything." The novel also gives a misguided impression of teen motherhood. When sleeping (vampires do not sleep), school (the couple never goes to college) and money (the Cullen family is filthy rich) are not issues, life as a teen mother is pretty fabulous.

Additionally, the series' hero, who is often described by Bella as godlike, begets unrealistic expectations of men, a fact that Meyer admits. When asked whether she felt bad for making Edward so perfect, she laughingly responded that she wrote him for herself, a guilty pleasure. Meyer may be correct that her heroine willingly chose the path she led in the series, but when those choices result in risking harm to one's health and emotional well-being, it is hard to support the messages being imprinted on thousands of young, impressionable minds.

Sources:  
*Entertainment Weekly*;  
 Huffington Post; *Washington Post*; *Eclipse*; *Bitch* magazine  
 Meyer's website; Excerpt #1:  
*Twilight*, Chapter 9, p.195  
 Excerpt #2: *Eclipse* 275-6



## Highlight: Target Women

By Abby Paulson

The cardinal rule of advertising may be "know your audience," but when it comes to marketing to women, advertisers often employ outdated stereotypes, constricting gender roles, and fear appeals in order to sell their products. It is a disappointing state of affairs, but comedian Sarah Haskins is calling out advertisers on their mistakes—and making it funny.

Haskins is a correspondent on Current TV's InfoMania, but her segment, "Target Women," has independently become an internet hit. Haskins's lampoon of yogurt commercials has over 106,000 views on YouTube. "Oh! Oh! Please mention more things I generically relate to, and then go to a wedding!" Haskins pleads to the yogurt advertisers. The segments take on everything from shallow wedding shows to sexualized burger commercials with clever humor and a critical eye.

"Target Women" does for feminism what *The Daily Show* does for politics: It illustrates the regular absurdity of the mainstream media with healthy humor and a dash of bitterness. It is comedy aimed at awareness, and Haskins pulls it off with ease.

## Oxygen has "Snapped"

By Becca Tanen

According to figures from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, approximately 16,000 people are murdered each in the United States. 7% of the killers are female.

In 2004, Oxygen, the women's television network, debuted a program devoted to scrutinizing that seven percent. The show, delicately titled "Snapped," recently completed its seventh season and is one of Oxygen's most highly rated shows. "Snapped" looks into the "fascinating" cases



Photo courtesy of Oxygen.com

of women who kill and examines their incentive for doing so, "[w]hether the motivation was revenge against a cheating husband, the promise of a hefty insurance payoff, or putting an end to years of abuse." Despite the fleeting mention of abuse, the bulk of the episodes profile women who murder out of their own greed or Machiavellian tendencies. This has angered many feminist organizations, most notably those that represent battered women

and believe the show takes attention away from women who kill their abusive spouses in self-defense.

When the show first aired, the blog Feministing reported, "'The National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women and Free Battered Women have sent letters to over 35 domestic violence and related groups around the country, urging them to join their fight against next season's airing of 'Snapped.'"



Andrea Bible, the director of Free Battered Women, said, "Oxygen is so wrong to exploit people's fears about women and it is not an accurate portrayal of women in prison at all. More importantly this should not be the dialog and focus of intimate partner homicide." Sue Osthoff, Director of the Clearinghouse, said, "This show sensationalizes and at the same time trivializes the serious realities of many women's lives. How can you take someone's life and shove it into a half-hour?"

Women's Enews called the show's producers and asked them to respond to these criticisms. Debbie Beece, the show's program director, said, "We thought it was interesting to learn what makes these seemingly normal wives snap and commit murder." Mirian Arias, Oxy-

gen's communications manager, reiterated this assertion in a press statement, adding, "Oxygen is owned and operated by women. We do not condone any acts of violence."

The key question in the tirade against "Snapped" is why the show, which is painfully melodramatic, is so wildly popular among women. This excerpt from Laurie Fendrich's article in *The Chronicle Review* may give a clue as to why that is: "In a perverse and trashy sort of way, however, 'Snapped' is a feminist program. It's payback time for all the male serial rapist-murderers who have committed violent acts against women over the years. Its stories add up to a crude evening out of the murder score with men. 'Snapped' makes it almost refreshing to see women stand up and be murderers."

In the end, the show's main downfall is the impossible task it takes on from the get go; to give reliable insight, in the span of 30 minutes, into why a woman would commit murder. As Osthoff pointed out, to even attempt to do so is unrealistic, and the result is an oversimplification of the lives of extremely complicated women. "Snapped" may profile women who take a stand for themselves, but in doing so, those women are still objectified and denied a voice.

Sources:

"About the Show." Oxygen.com. Oxygen. 1 June 2009. <http://oxygen.com/tvshows/snapped/about.aspx>; Bellafante, Ginia. "When Bad Women Generate Good Ratings." *New York Times* 7 July 2007: 1. Online; Fendrich, Laurie. "Snapped." *The Chronicle Review* 5 August 2008: 2. Online; Vanessa. "Boo Oxygen!" *Feministing.com* 11 November 2004: 1. Online.

Check out our online  
newsletter, available at:



[www.wifp.org/](http://www.wifp.org/)  
*mediademocracyonline*

## Now Hear This

*How Podcasts are Reshaping the Feminist Discussion*

*By Liza Aberbach*

Imagine you have the ability to broadcast yourself and voice what you want to. And then have it available for free. This is the power of podcasts.

A podcast is an audio recording posted online. The thrilling aspect of about podcasts is that anyone can make one and anyone can listen to one. The only equipment needed is a computer, a microphone, and a sound-recording system, which many computers already come with. Another wonderful aspect of podcasts is that you do not need to have an mp3 player to listen to them. Podcasts use the mp3 audio file, a compressed format for audio files, so all you need is a computer or portal device with headphones or a speaker, making them a very accessible form of media.

Podcasts will wait for you— as opposed to a radio show. Once you download the show onto your computer or mp3 player, you can wait as long as you like to listen to it. Many shows also keep previous episodes

available online for download, not just the most recent episode. Listening on a

computer or an mp3 player allows you to pause the episode and come back to it when you're ready to listen.

While podcasts have proven to be a strong format for already popular media sources and well-known voices, it is also a place where lesser-known feminist podcasts and all women-produced podcasts can stake their claim and be heard. In podcasts such as Fully Engaged Feminism, feminism is explicit and enthusiastic. The show's host, Laura Craig Mason, in a June 10, 2009 episode talked about the

assassination of Kansas abortion provider Dr. George Tiller and what it meant to those working in the abortive and reproductive health industry. She talked to an abortion clinic worker, known only as Steph in the podcast, who created iamdrtiller.com, a website that tries to humanize those who work in abortion clinics. Craig Mason, who has been working for a few years with the Washington Area Clinic Defense Task Force to help patients at abortion clinics simply get in the door, heard the website was created by a friend and was, "really blown away by it." She was able to interview the creator before Bill O'Reilly



*Photo courtesy of Laura Craig Mason*

**Host Laura Craig Mason sits before her podcast equipment—a computer with recording software and a microphone.**

## Listen In...

did and described the experience of doing the podcast about Dr. Tiller and abortive care as, “a good way to cope” with Dr. Tiller’s death.

Craig Mason started her podcast after realizing a few years ago there were not many feminist podcasts, but she had topics of her own she wanted to discuss. She sees Fully Engaged Feminism as being “a two-way dialogue, that is a conversation across a public space of an evolving discussion of feminism. I want to have it be a virtual round table on where the movement wants to go, where it hasn’t gone yet,” said Craig Mason. Craig Mason’s podcast is available not only on iTunes but on Craig Mason’s blog, [fullyengagedfeminism.com](http://fullyengagedfeminism.com) where it is available to download as an mp3.

However, the world of podcasts isn’t limited to feminist discussions. In 2005, podcasts became more mainstream when Apple included a podcast section in iTunes. Podcasts are also available for download from other websites such as [www.podcastalley.com](http://www.podcastalley.com) and <http://podcast.com>. Some are a solo narration while others feature an in-depth in-

terview or panel discussions of multiple people. Many are only a few minutes long; others can be over an hour. Topics are varied from technology news to comedy shows and mainstream news.

Some podcasts also include video and most have regular updates. What sets podcasts apart from streaming audio or video is that they are often downloaded automatically through RSS, Really Simple Syndication, which is a web feed or data format that is used to publish frequently updated works in a standardized format.

Craig Mason, who said she herself listens to “a ton” of podcasts, tells those who want to start podcasting not to, “be afraid to make mistakes, listen to all the critiques you get and if you get a critique don’t stop. The more people [podcast, the more they] will raise the level of discussion.”

Source:  
Pogue, David. “In One Stroke, Podcasting Hits Mainstream.” <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/28/technology/circuits/28pogue>.

- *BBC Radio 4* produces Women’s Hour: News, Politics, Culture podcast, which is a highlight of the Women’s Hour aired earlier in the day. A June 16, 2009 episode touched upon the issues of women continuing to earn less than men and discussed the history of British district nursing with an enjoyable interview of a 98 year-old former district nurse.

- *The International Museum of Women* podcast recently featured the curator of the exhibit “Women, Power and Politics” talking with a female business owner and activist, Rasha Hifzi, in Saudi Arabia. The podcast, dated August 2009, discussed how women’s rights are still lacking in many ways such as the freedom to vote and drive.

- *Women in Science on the Air* on April 3, 2009 interviewed a research and development manger, Darlene Solomon, who helps create tools that can help medical research.

- *For Women. By Women.* is a podcast produced by Seal Press, which publishes books for women. Their April 27, 2009 podcast featured an interview with the author of *Travel Therapy* who talked about how a getaway trip can be just what people need and that it’s all about finding out where you need to go. The author also stressed that women shouldn’t be discouraged from traveling alone just because they are female.

# Stay in the Loop!

Follow WIFP on your favorite social networking sites, including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.



## Summer 2009 Staff

Back L-R: Liza Aberbach, Ariel Perry, Bri Riggio, Abby Paulson;  
Front L-R: Martha Allen, Christen Brandt, Becca Tanen, Laura Gil Gonzalez

*Help Support Media Democracy:  
Donate to the Women's Institute for  
Freedom of the Press!*

Name:  
Address:  
Phone:  
Email:

Yes! I would like to contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ to WIFP.  
 Yes! I would like to become a sustaining supporter at \$15-  
\$20 per month

Contributions are tax-deductible.  
Please make checks payable to WIFP.