

ATTUNE

THE TTU WOMEN'S CENTER AND THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN: ATTUNED TO TODAY'S WOMEN

"You're not too fat. You're not too loud. You're not too smart. You're not unladylike... Why go through life believing you're not good enough and that you have to change something?"

- Jessica Valenti

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Controversial web sites offer disturbing insight on eating disorders

The media, whether purposefully or not, has often played a role in glamorizing things that are unhealthy. Think about early cigarette commercials in which a woman smoking a cigarette gained intense sex appeal. A 1920s Lucky Strike magazine ad featured a young flapper telling readers, "I'm a 'Lucky Girl' because I've found a new way to keep my figure trim. Whenever the desire for a sweet tempts me, I light up a Lucky Strike."

As media has evolved and our attentions have been shifted to online social media, a more disturbing kind of glorification has emerged. What have been termed "Pro Ana," or pro anorexia, and "Pro Mia," pro bulimia, groups now have a presence on popular web sites like Facebook and Myspace and on blogs across the web. Although the presence of such groups is not new, as our lives focus more on online interaction and younger individuals join the online community, concern over the groups' growing audience has resurfaced.

Creators of these sites claim they exist as support groups for the goals of all members, be those goals of recovery from their disorder or goals of more intense weight loss. Many feature "thinspiration" images of celebrities, models, etc. that are meant to be inspiration for visitors interested in weight loss. A Google image search for "thinspiration" turns up thousands of images for this very purpose.

Blogs following posters' attempts to complete an "Ana Bootcamp," cite the University of Minnesota's Minnesota Starvation

Experiment from the 1940s as proof that cutting intake by a certain percentage will lead to an approximate percentage of weight lost. While the Minnesota study was done with the scientific intent to determine the long term effects of starvation on the human body, its findings are the basis of anorexia nervosa, and according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, anorexia nervosa has the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric illness.

While the technology in itself is relatively neutral, only in the wrong if we use it to carry out detrimental actions and information exchanges, many suggest making "pro ana" web sites and blogs illegal. The idea of the internet as an avenue of free speech has made it difficult for web site administrators to moderate content posted by users. Despite their removal, groups reappear within days and regain their following. One Facebook group states triumphantly on its web page that "WE ARE BACK! For the third time!"

In 2008, the French government became the first to consider a legal ban on such web sites. The law would call for heavy fines and a two year prison sentence for "incitement to excessive thinness by publicising of any kind." The prison sentence would increase in cases where a death was caused because of anorexia.

With arguments of freedom on one side and protection on the other, the question of a legal ban is still to be decided.

- Bailey Darrow

From the editor

This issue of Attune is all about journeys. The journeys of women and the people who help them along the way. All different, yet tightly intertwined. As you read the articles on these pages, I encourage you to consider this element of interconnectedness that we all, as humans share:

The struggle to avoid the things that only help us to hurt ourselves. The temptation to relate our own lives to those of our favorite fictional characters. The challenge of getting the most out of our careers and working with the confidence that we are receiving equal compensation for equal effort. Making the most of unfortunate economic circumstances and helping those in need when we can. Adapting to major changes to our plans as life throws new things our way. Standing up on our own and holding our heads high, despite all interruptions. And asking for help when we need it.

These are just a few of the things that we share as humans that are explored in this issue. We all face challenges. The way we face them is what makes us who we are. I hope that you find something you can relate to as the Women's Center and the rest of our campus community grow and adapt, rising to all of the challenges on our journey.

— Bailey Darrow

'Twilight' characters teach readers lesson on stalking

You have probably read, or at least heard about the *Twilight* series. From screaming tweens to many of our own Tech students, people are obsessed with the story of Bella Swan and her vampire love interest, Edward Cullen. But are these books sending negative signals to its young target audience? Is head over heels teenage love realistic? Is putting love over everything else, especially Bella's safety, really what should be set as an ideal relationship? And what about Edward's stalker behaviors? Is all of this really so romantic?

Many would argue that Bella and Edward are in love, and it is natural that Edward wants to spend a lot of time with her. However, if we look at Edward's character and compare it to classic stalker behavior, a clear connection exists.

According to the National Stalking Resource Center, 3.4 million people in the United States are stalked each year.

Thirty percent of these are stalked by a current or former intimate partner.

Stalkers will often follow their victims obsessively, invading their private professional and social lives. We can see this in Edward as he sneaks into Bella's bedroom at night to watch her sleep. He does this even before Bella falls in love with him. Some may find it romantic that Edward wants to keep watch over Bella and make sure she is safe, but this is actually an extreme form of stalking.

Often, stalkers feel that by isolating their victims from social circles, their chances of being close to them will increase. Before Bella moved to her new school, she seemed lonely, but once she moves to Forks, Wash., she makes many new friends. But as soon as Edward comes into the picture, Bella stops spending time with her new friends and

spends as much time as she can with Edward. Also, Bella's father Charlie doesn't like their relationship, but Bella ignores everything he says and continues to pursue her relationship. In a stalking situation, the stalker will often attempt to discredit concerned friends or family of the victim.

Some stalkers will put victims in dangerous situations that allow "heroic" acts by the pursuer in an attempt to gain the attention and affection of the victim. Edward frequently tells Bella that her blood smells delicious, and he can hardly fight the urge to bite her every time he sees her. At one point, Edward makes some vampire enemies, and they decide to go after Bella. Just being around Edward's vampire family becomes a huge risk for Bella.

All this, however, can't be solely blamed on Edward. While he does show the characteristics of a stalker, Bella continues to go to him. She

fuels his obsession by putting herself out there for him to have. It isn't just Edward that isolates Bella from her circle of friends, Bella allows him to. She is always blowing off friends and family to spend time with Edward. By ignoring the obvious clues and her father's advice that the relationship is a dangerous one, Bella continues to put herself in the dangerous situations that characterize Edward as a stalker. She is a willing victim.

Let's face it. There is a reason the *Twilight* saga is so well loved. It is fun and offers readers an escape. While it is important to understand that these characters are fictional and involve vampires and other fantasy characters, there are relevant lessons to be learned from their story.

Resources on stalking and how to get help are available at the Women's Center.

-Hilary Barker

Getting what you deserve: salary negotiation skills

Beginning a new job can be exciting and intimidating all at once. Understanding new responsibilities and learning the ins and outs of a new position can be overwhelming, but there is one aspect of the process that women say they find more difficult than any other: salary negotiation.

According to the National Committee on Pay Equity, women will work from Jan. 2009, until April 20, 2010 to earn as much money, on average, as men did between Jan. 1, 2009, and Dec. 31, 2009. One factor that may contribute to this discrepancy is women's hesitancy to negotiate a higher salary from the beginning.

In a 2003 study, men compared the process of salary negotiation to a wrestling match while women compared the process to going to the dentist.

Kelly Magowan, CEO of Six Figures, a job site for \$100K+ job seekers, has 13 years of experience in the field of Human Resources and Career Coaching and has some suggestions for women who are inexperienced or intimidated with the process of salary negotiation.

Speak up for yourself. Begin the conversation by "tooting your own horn." Let the employer know that you are the best person for the job and that you deserve maxi-

mum compensation for what you have to offer the company.

Use powerful and confident language. Let your prospective employer know that you would like to talk about X and Y. Do not ask if they would mind talking about it.

Research the job market. Know what other people doing jobs similar to yours are being paid. Online salary databases make it easy to find the average salary for people in fields similar to yours. Contact human resource departments at similar organizations and determine what you believe a fair salary would be.

Confidence and positive body language are key. Know

your strategy and practice pleading your case beforehand so that when the time comes to talk to your employer about an appropriate salary you are comfortable and convinced that you deserve all that you are asking for. Negotiate face to face whenever possible. Make eye contact and smile.

Practice. Practice. Practice.

For assistance with the perfection of interviewing skills, students can schedule an appointment with Tech's Career Services by calling 931-372-3232.

-Bailey Darrow

One student's journey to confidence and empowerment

I was 18, anxious and over eager to begin my life. I thought I was ready to "make it on my own" and leave my parents, my problems and everything else behind. So I packed my bags and my low self-esteem and headed to Knoxville where I thought I would spend the best years of my life.

Two years later, broken hearted, best -friendless, undecided major and an apartment all to myself, I'm here at Tech— and yes, my low self-esteem made the road trip with me. I attribute many bad things that happened at UT to its size, bad roommates, bad classes, bad food... you name it and chances are it happened to me. But I can't blame UT for everything; I was the main problem.

I started off as a computer engineering major and I was

in classes full of guys, every day of the week. I never seemed to meet any new girls. I told myself the reason I hadn't made any new friends was because I wasn't good enough to meet new people. I told myself that no one needed to get to know me because I wasn't worth the trouble. I told myself I wasn't interesting, smart or funny and that nothing I said was worth listening to.

"And that's why," I told myself, "that's why you aren't meeting people, because you're not worth it."

This attitude continued for two more semesters. I realized I was doing this to myself but didn't know how to stop it. The self-inflicted insults got worse the longer I stayed in Knoxville. I dated and, without a doubt, picked some duds. I seemed to fit

everyone else's life perfectly because I didn't know who I was or what I wanted. They could tell me what to do and who to be. They selfishly made me who they needed me to be and could sense that I wouldn't stand up for myself. I looked for my self worth and value in boyfriends and friends. But I never found the answer in these people.

I came to Tech to start over. To get away from everything UT, to get away from friends and boyfriends who I had passively collected, to get away from classes I hated, and most of all, to get away from a 'me' I didn't like.

Since moving to Cookeville I have started seeing a counselor on campus about my self-confidence and the issues surrounding it. I have come to realize that I am not the only female who suffers from low

self-worth. I am probably only one of hundreds who will read this. I was suffering in silence for so long and thought I was confined to this lifestyle and that there was no help for me. I wanted to be like other women my age that seemed so confident in themselves and were so confident in their abilities, their opinions, their own thoughts and ideas.

I'm starting to believe that I *can* be that confident woman, and I know now that I am worth it. I'm allowing space and time for self exploration. I'm getting support and learning to silence the negative messages that I so often gave myself.

Students who are ready to begin their journey of self-awareness can contact the Women's Center or the Counseling Center at 931-372-3331.

- Emily Coonce



The Clothesline Project

Witness and applaud the visual testimonies of survivors of violence created by campus and local community members.

Design your own shirt at this year's display on April 6, 2010, in the Tech Pride Room from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.

or anytime at the Women's Center located in Pennebaker Hall Room 203.



How your pocket change could change a woman's life

Think about the things we all buy on a daily basis. A cup of coffee, a new book, a few gallons of gas – all of these purchases are minor expenses. But for people in poverty-stricken areas of the world, five to ten dollars can change lives and, in turn, communities. For example, for the cost of a couple of lattes, you can help a woman in Afghanistan take a six-month tailoring course as well as provide cloth and tools to help her learn a skill. Or, for the cost of the newest bestseller, you can buy food and vaccines for an entire year for one woman's poultry business. Now, several organizations have made it possible for you to turn your coffee money into a loan for an entrepreneur, and women worldwide are taking full advantage of the programs.

Microfinance, according to CGAP (Consultative Group to Assist the Poor), is defined as “the supply of loans, savings, and other basic financial services to the poor.” The loans, usually in

small amounts, are often provided by microfinance institutions, which can be small, non-profit organizations all the way up to large, commercial banks. Women especially have benefited from microfinance. According to the International Fund for Agricultural Development, “Research shows that credit extended to women has a significant impact on their families' quality of life, especially their children.” The group, an agency of the United Nations, works especially hard to make sure that women have access to microcredit, citing that, “women's status, both in their homes and in their communities, is elevated when they are responsible for managing loans and savings.”

The trend of microfinance has become even more mainstream with the help of prominent icons. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is especially dedicated to the cause and has spoken out repeatedly in support of the movement. Clinton has been

quoted as saying that she is “inspired by the power of these loans to enable even the poorest of women to start businesses, lifting their families— and their communities— out of poverty.” Oprah Winfrey has also been a proponent of microfinance, and even featured women benefiting from microloans on her talk show. In 2006, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Muhammad Yunus, a Bangladeshi economist and banker known as the “Father of Microfinance.”

The Internet has made it easier than ever to connect people who want to assist those seeking microcredit. Sites such as Kiva.org and Global Giving allow lenders to create a profile and find people seeking loans. Members to the site can read the online journals of loan recipients, meet with other lenders, and see success stories of men and women who have used the sites. One website, Heifer.org, specializes in raising money to lend to those seeking livestock. The sites

often use money exchanges similar to PayPal, and the most reputable sites use security protection to transfer the money. They even allow you to see the rate of default on a person's loan to see how likely it will be that your loan is paid back on time.

Although some analysts have argued that microfinance is not working globally, it seems to be helping many on a local scale. Women especially seem to be succeeding in microfinance programs, and the results are visible to both the women's families and their communities. Nandawathi, for example, is a woman in Sri Lanka who has been able to raise enough money to expand her family's masonry business through a microloan of \$150. Or take Folorunsho Eniola, a Nigerian woman who sells soft drinks to support her family, now being helped by microcredit. Both women are living testaments to the power of microloans and the impact a little money in the right hands can make.

- Katey Perkins

Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act namesake to speak at Tech

Lilly Ledbetter, namesake of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay act, will be visiting Tech's campus at 7 p.m. on Sept. 28, 2010, in Derryberry Hall auditorium.

Ledbetter worked for 19 years as a supervisor at Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in Alabama. Near the end of her career, she realized that she was being paid less than her male peers. Ledbetter sued her employer for compensation in 1998. After winning her case in district court, Ledbetter lost in appeals court and the U.S. Supreme Court because laws of the time limited the number of days

that a claimant had to file a complaint. Because Ledbetter's complaint was filed more than 180 days after the discriminatory decisions regarding her pay were made, Ledbetter never received compensation.

With the attention the case received after the Supreme Court's decision, senate leaders took notice and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was born. The bill became law on Jan. 29, 2009, only two days after being passed in the House and was the first bill signed into law by President Barack Obama.



Photo courtesy of www.whitehouse.gov.

Ledbetter (right) stands behind President Obama as he signs the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

Engineering major takes challenging plunge into motherhood

In the fall 2009 semester as most students began to buckle down and get ready for long nights of studying, all I could think about was buckling down to have my son. Yes, having a baby during “midterm season” seemed like an excellent idea. As I wobbled from class to class, studying was the last thing on my mind.

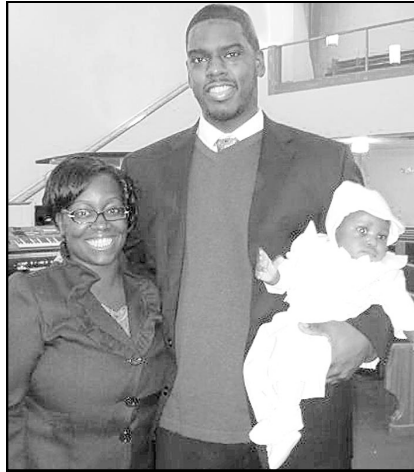
Nine months, 27 days, 14 hours, and 52 minutes is all it took to have the most beautiful baby ever to touch this Earth, as any mother would think of their child. My life couldn't reach a higher point, family and friends celebrated, nurses waited on me hand and foot and pain killers lived up to their reputations. It was when we got home that I realized that it is up to my husband and I.

I thought I knew what a late night was until I had my son. The nurses didn't follow me home to wait on me hand and foot. What's happening? After a small breakdown, I did what I needed to do for my son for the three weeks I had until I had to return to school.

“MIDTERMS! MIDTERMS! MIDTERMS!” The voice in my head screamed at me and all I could do was worry. How can I do this?

The challenge of going back to school seemed like a nightmare. However, with understanding professors, and a husband who took a four week, unpaid paternity leave and left our house in Nashville to be with me in Cookeville, I got back into the swing of school.

Raising a child while in school may be the hardest thing I ever had to handle. For mothers wondering how I tackle every-



Pictured above are senior engineering major Domonique West Townsend, her husband William Townsend Jr. and son William Townsend III.

day in school, I recommend these five things:

1. Take a deep breath. It only takes three seconds for a good one, and the results are rewarding.
2. Have some “me” time. Even 10 minutes a day of peace and quiet can go a long way. Making the time for you to refocus can result in a productive day.
3. Always know that you can do it. Women are strong and we can tackle anything we put our minds to. If I listened to what everyone said, I would not be graduating as an engineer this semester. You must believe in yourself, because your kids believe in you.
4. Ask one person you trust for advice for your child. People will give advice even when you don't ask for it. This can add stress and asking more than one person can also be confusing. To decrease the stress level, tell the unwanted advice givers that you appreciate their advice but you already have a method that is working.
5. Speak to your professors. Some professors don't have children and may not understand what is going on. Letting them know that you want to do your best goes a long way. This can help develop a relationship that will help reduce the anxiety of getting things done in class. They tend to be more helpful when you put in effort.

Nine hundred stretch marks later, I realize that I can do anything I put my mind to. With angels by the name of Joyce Townsend and Cindy Harris keeping watch over my son so that I can meet all the demands of my final semester at Tech, my graduation is becoming a reality. And sleep is the luxury I look forward to one day!

-Domonique West Townsend

First Tuesday Book Club

As our name implies, the First Tuesday Book Club meets the first Tuesday of every month in the Women's Center, Pennebaker Hall Room 203. The club is open to students, faculty, and staff.

For the rest of the semester, the First Tuesday Book Club will be implementing a B.Y.O.B (Bring Your Own Book) policy. At our first B.Y.O.B. gathering, members talked about a variety of books. One participant brought the book *You've Come a Long Way, Maybe*, which talks about the major female players during the 2008 Presidential Election. An excit-

ing discussion followed as members exchanged their views on how the women connected to the election were treated by the media, the country and fellow politicians.

Another selection was *The Handmaid's Tale*. The novel, by Margaret Atwood, is the tale of a dystopian future where people are segregated and made to dress according to their social standing, and a woman's worth is directly related to her ability to reproduce.

Bring your favorite book and join the discussion.

-Katey Perkins

***Attune* Fall 2010**
Call for Submissions

We want *Attune* to be relevant and interesting for our readers and are seeking fact-based articles on any topic profiling and empowering the lives of women. Students, staff and faculty of all backgrounds are encouraged to submit articles of 600 words or less.

If you have an idea for an article but are not sure that you would like to write about it, send us your topic suggestions. We may be able to help you develop your ideas or do research of our own. Or, if you would like to write but do not have a topic selected, we usually have plenty of ideas to share!

E-mail submissions to womenscenter@tntech.edu
or drop them off at the center.

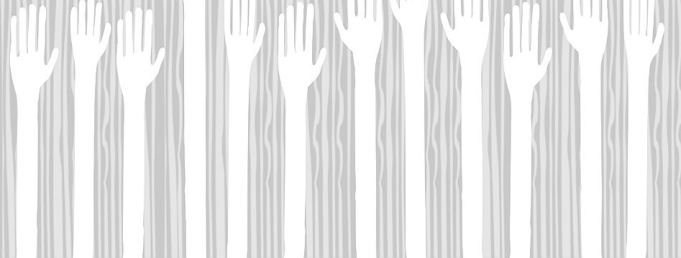
Submission Deadline: October 1, 2010

Items submitted early provide the best opportunity for editing and publication.

Get Involved!

The Women's Center has volunteer, HPEO and internship opportunities. Work- Study positions are also available are interested students upon interview. Write for our newsletter, help plan, create and host events, hang fliers and other publicity, or create bulletin boards and other informational displays with our staff.

Interns can receive course credit hours. Sociology and journalism majors are encouraged to intern but we are open to students from all approved departments. Build your resume, put your knowledge to work and help your campus community.



Get Connected to your Women's Center.
Join us on facebook!

Check out upcoming events and links to news affecting women nationally and internationally.

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=141764045318>

Or search Women's Center at TTU

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