

"I have met brave women who are exploring the outer edge of human possibility, with no history to guide them, and with a courage to make themselves vulnerable that I find moving beyond words."

- Gloria Steinem

Street Harassed Women "Hollaback"

Hollaback is a website where women can post photos and videos as well as blog about being harassed on the streets. The website was founded in New York City in 2005 by Emily May and some of her friends. When asked why they started the website, May replied, "We felt like there was nothing we could do [about street harassment]. If we walked on, we felt victimized. If we yelled, we further endangered ourselves... Then we realized—why not take pictures of these street harassers and post them on a blog?" Since its beginning, Hollaback has gone nationwide with more than 30 cities posting their own blogs.

Street harassment, or catcalling, is a form of sexual harassment that usually takes place in public, urban areas. It is most often harassment by men toward women. Street harassment includes sexual comments or noises, stalking or following (walking or driving), grabbing or exposing oneself, and using derogatory names which seem to precede sexual assault. When this behavior is unwelcome or the victim is made to feel uncomfortable or violated, the action becomes harassment.

Women can add Hollaback's web address to their cell phones so they can take pictures or videos of the offenders that can be sent directly to the website. Postings include the exact location of the harassment. Anyone can sign up for newsletters and e-mail updates.

There is a flip side to Hollaback because some women find being honked and hollered at attractive. Some women seem to feel it is a compliment and have more confidence in themselves because men are whistling and blowing kisses at them.

The website offers a resource section containing information about books, articles, other groups, and self-defense classes. This is also where you can find information on legal issues relating to street harassment, though the site states that laws against street harassment are rarely enforced.

The *Movement* section lets you navigate to the other cities' websites. There is also a section called *Share Your Story*, where women can tell about their street harassment. This is helpful for women in those cities without a Hollaback blog, as is the case in Tennessee.

Hollaback started as one website and seems to be turning into a movement. The purpose of this website is to give women an empowered response to street harassment by connecting with each other and telling their stories. The website can be found at www.ihollaback.org. To get involved, women can add Hollaback to their facebook page, send e-mails to Holla@ihollaback.org, or tweet at @ihollaback.

—Shavonda Jones



From the co-editor

With cool nights and chilly mornings, the changing season is apparent. Like the seasons of our planet, our personal seasons change as well.

Each new season brings new experiences that help to shape us. Some help us to grow while others may stunt our growth. One author in this issue points this out in explaining the possible harmful repercussions of child beauty pageants.

Some seasons bring challenges and uncertainty, as experienced by our *Back Again* author which observes changes encountered in returning to Tech as a nontraditional student and by *A Not-So-Obvious Lump*, which reminds us of the importance of routine health checks even in our younger years.

Yet, new seasons often bring opportunity, inspiration, and empowerment. Articles ranging in topic from starting a rock 'n roll camp, to joining the Peace Corps, to gardening, to taking a stand against street harassment, to one author's reflection on how the changing seasons for women provided the opportunity for the experience of a lifetime in the Amazon open our eyes to the seemingly endless possibilities we as women have to expand ourselves.

— Jessica Smith

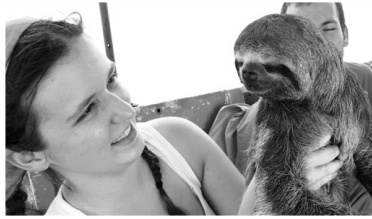
"Spring passes and one remembers one's innocence
 Summer passes and one remembers one's exuberance
 Autumn passes and one remembers one's reverence
 Winter passes and one remembers one's perseverance."

—Yoko Ono, *Season of Glass*

Amazon Offers New Perspective

Traveling to the Peruvian Amazon is an opportunity few are privileged to undertake. In spring 2010, I took a Biological Topics course in which the students researched various Amazon subjects and then presented their findings to each other. We were then given the option to travel to Peru in August and see it all first hand. My mother insisted that I go even though it meant that she would have to care for my baby girl.

Life on the equator is far different from life in Tennessee. For starters, the sun rose promptly at 6 a.m. and set again promptly at 6 p.m. The temperature was fairly constant and surprisingly pleasant compared to the sweltering Tennessee summer we just had. We stayed at an ecotourism lodge accessible only after a two-hour boat ride down



river from Iquitos, Peru.

I loved being immersed in the Peruvian culture as well as the flora and fauna of the area. Marmosets (small monkeys) made the most adorable wailing yelp as they would jump down from branch to branch. I saw toucans, iguanas, Poison Arrow frogs, countless butterflies, spiders and other insects, boas, pink dolphin, sloth, and anaconda. I held a sloth and the anaconda.

There were cinnamon trees, strangler figs, numerous palms, and some of the thorniest trees I've ever laid eyes on. And, yes, I did get a Tarzan moment of swinging from a vine in the jungle. Another vine I learned to be a

water vine and was actually able to drink pure water from it. On a day trip to the Rio Nappo, I fished for piranha from a dugout canoe and then ate it for dinner.

I took jungle hikes and swam in the Amazon River. I met people who had escaped the city (primarily financial reasons), toured the operation of the local "firewater man" (their version of moonshine) and traded with the indigenous tribe of the Yagua. They're a beautiful people who danced and sang for us and showed us how they use blowguns to hunt and let us try it for ourselves. Trading with them was a strong reminder of how different monetary values are in less developed regions of the world. I was able to see, do, smell, taste, feel and just live so many things I have only dreamed of by traveling to the Amazon and feel I'm a more enriched person because of the experience.

Because of my mother's insistence, I took this trip and have recently begun to reflect on the difference in opportunities between our generations. Mom wasn't able to go to college and, if she had, I seriously doubt she would have majored in my field, Wildlife and Fisheries Science with a wildlife concentration. My curiosity required that I look at my own program and deduced from a (perhaps "less than scientific") random sample of 130 current WFS majors (although I was unable to determine wildlife, fisheries, or conservation concentrations) that only 25, or 19%, of this sample were female. I feel encouraged by the changes that are continually developing for women within my field and here at Tech itself. It seems we are offered far more experiences than our mothers before us and are breaking into nontraditional paths of study.

—Paige Adkisson

Rock 'n Roll Camp Strikes a Chord with TTU

Women's History Month last year was rocked by a visit from Those Darlins, a twangy, punk-influenced country garage band. The group formed in 2006 after meeting at the Southern Girls Rock 'n Roll Camp (SGRRC), the all-girl rock camp founded by band member Kelley Anderson, a.k.a. Kelley Darlin. During her trip to TTU, Kelley discussed how she started the camp as well as some of the programs that have evolved from it.

The idea for SGRRC came after Kelley volunteered at the Rock 'n Roll Camp for Girls in Portland, Oregon. Kelley, who taught guitar at the Portland camp, decided that she wanted to provide a similar place in the South where girls could foster collaboration and self-esteem through rock music.

So, in 2003, with the help of Middle Tennessee State University's June Anderson Women's Center, where Kelley was a student worker, the first SGRCC was born. Kelley was unsure of how Middle Tennessee would react to the camp, but her confidence was strengthened after 70 campers attended that first summer.

At the camp, girls aged 10 to 17 learn to play an instrument and form bands, and at the end of the week, play a live show for their family, friends, and fellow campers. All instructors are volunteers, and the equipment and instruments used by the campers are all acquired through donations. Women in the music industry also volunteer at the camp, performing and hosting workshops in a broad variety of topics, including songwriting, re-

recording, and screen printing.

Three years later, Kelley founded the nonprofit group Youth Empowerment through Arts and Humanities (YEAH), which works to create a safe, supportive environment for kids to nurture their creative energy. Based in Murfreesboro, Tenn, YEAH provides an after-school lounge, screen print shop, art studio, and YEAH U, self-described as "a program that offers classes in all areas of the arts, taught by experienced artists and teachers." YEAH also has a venue where members can perform, have band practice, and attend free live shows. Through YEAH, SGRRC now hosts 90 campers each year with the help of about 70 volunteers, and their end-of-camp performances draw hundreds of people.

Although Kelley's role in

YEAH and the SGRRC has diminished somewhat as she pursues her music career with Those Darlins, she hopes that girls will continue to be inspired by the camp and all of the programs that YEAH offers. Her main goal in starting the camp, she said, was to empower and educate girls so that someday, even if they don't become musicians, they will look back on their experience at SGRRC, think of the self confidence and empowerment they felt on stage, and be inspired to challenge themselves and remember what they are capable of.

For more information on the Southern Girls Rock 'n Roll Camp and YEAH, please visit <http://www.yeahintheboro.org>.

—Bailey Darrow
& Katey Perkins

A Not-So-Obvious Lump

Though breast tenderness is common during the menstrual cycle, mine hurt constantly. In May, I visited my family doctor with the complaint of never-ending pain and tenderness. A breast exam led him to diagnose me with Fibrocystic Breast Disease (FBD).

He told me that FBD is a benign condition. Simply put, it can be attributed to changes in breast tissue every month as a woman enters her monthly cycle. I would later learn that the word "disease" is being used less often in reference to fibrocystic breasts. More accepted terms include Chronic Mastitis (or inflammation), fibrocystic changes or fibrocystic breasts.

I still wanted to know more about my condition and why I didn't hurt just during my menstrual cycle. I found that I could best understand FBD according to Medline Plus. "The breasts are mostly made up of tissue that is affected by hormones produced

by the ovaries. Hormones change throughout a woman's menstrual cycle. They can cause the breasts to feel swollen, lumpy, and painful." Another site, www.acog.org suggested that birth control pills can change hormones enough to cause pain and tenderness. (this may explain my constant pain.)

I had read that women 30-50 are commonly diagnosed with FBD, but was unable to find anything about women under 30. The nurse practitioner at Tech's Health Services told me that women under 30 do suffer from FBD but suggested that those closer to 30 tend to be more "in tune" with their body so they have a higher chance of being diagnosed and that younger women tend to overlook it due to the smaller percentage of those who get breast exams.

At Health Services, I was encouraged to do self breast exams and was instructed on how to go about it. They told

me there is no greater chance of breast cancer in women with FBD, but women who have cysts or "lumps" in their breasts have a greater possibility of overlooking anything more serious believing that it is just another cyst. I went home and tried to do a self-exam as I was instructed, but I didn't really know what I was feeling for. I expected an obvious lump but that was not the case.

I ended up making an appointment with my OB-GYN. She did a breast exam and showed me where she felt my fibrocystic tissue and it wasn't as distinct as I thought it would be. She pointed out how it moved when she pressed it and that I need to be concerned if a lump does not move. She informed me that FBD is the leading cause of breast pain and tenderness and said that caffeine and a fatty diet will worsen symptoms. I was advised to take vitamin E daily to alleviate pain.

I knew from the beginning that my condition is benign,

but I wanted to fully understand what is going on with my body. I chose to do research and learned how to recognize if my nonthreatening condition could be masking a serious problem. I encourage all women to, as the nurse practitioner put it, get "in tune" with your body; to learn about your body and how to take care of it, and to check up on *anything* that you feel is out of the ordinary.

The Women's Center has women's health and self-exam materials available in Pennebaker 203. Additionally, J.J. Oakley Campus Health Services provides women's and men's health services including complete physical exams, STD tests, birth control methods, and education and counseling regarding these concerns. The clinic is located in the TTU Nursing School Building with the entrance on the side facing Mahler Avenue. For questions or to make an appointment, contact them at 931-372-3320.

— Jessica Smith



Love Your Body Day 2010



The Women's Center celebrated Love Your Body Day 2010 with Project Reality: An Alternative Fashion Show, which was designed to challenge unrealistic media expectations of beauty. If you want to participate in the planning committee for next year's event or model in the show, e-mail us at womenscenter@tntech.edu.

Back Again



I began my college crusade in the fall of 2000. I enrolled in General Curriculum courses here at Tech without a clue as to what I wanted to do with my life. At that time I was 23 years old, had never attended college before, and was a little leery about how I was going to fit in with the younger students. Luckily for me I was in classes with other “oldies” (as I thought) who were in their 30s even, so it wasn’t as bad as I had feared. In fact, I hadn’t forgotten too much about my high school subjects and was able to ease into my schedule becoming a math tutor and acing English essays.

It seemed like I had it together, but silently I was battling anxiety and depression. My husband and I split up that spring: I had a 1-year-old son to care for and not a dime to my name. Going to

school seemed like the right thing to do but emotionally and financially I wasn’t ready to embark on such an adventure – I just had too much on my plate. I only stayed for one semester.

It is now ten years later and everything has changed—the year, my age, technology and, most importantly, me. I still carry with me some of the same fears that I had before, like not knowing what I want to do and fitting in with much younger students, but because I have so much going on I hardly notice. I have a larger family, having remarried and birthed two more sons, as well as gaining a stepson. I work part time amidst a full-time school schedule, a zoo at home to care for (three young children as well as a farm full of animals), and homework up

the you-know-what, not to mention cooking and cleaning.

As far as technology goes, I am at a disadvantage. I have noticed that most people in my classes have laptops, fancy calculators and cell phones. Ten years ago, we had to walk barefoot through the snow to class— I’m kidding. However, when I first started Tech I didn’t have a cell phone and my computer was bulky and not so practical. All homework was done on a forest worth of paper, floppy disks were the popular media storage and, because I didn’t have a printer, I had to use the computer lab to print most of my essays, which took up a lot of my already restricted time. Nowadays everyone is going paperless, and the advancement of technology is more efficient and practical (and a little confusing), but it costs an arm and a leg! Luckily, I did receive some much needed grant money, and was able to purchase a modest laptop for

school use. I’m slowly getting more acquainted with the new way of doing class work using Web Assign and iLearn. Hopefully, by next term I will be in the full swing of things. And, in case you were wondering, I do have a cell phone. Now if only I could add just a couple more hours onto the day...

Today I feel I have a better grasp on all situations except for maybe the sleep deprivation, and the sense of being overwhelmed among students who are 15 years younger than me, and Chemistry (I said I had a better grasp not a strong hold). But thinking optimistically, I am up to speed on what is at hand today and doing homework on my new laptop and studying for my algebra test. What it all seems to come down to is that it doesn’t matter how old I am or how far behind I may be, I am still just a student adding to the diversity of the university.

— Sarah Hehnen

A Measure of Self-Sufficiency

I’m a city girl, born and raised. I’m used to city life with its fast pace, asphalt, traffic, and a million people packed into a small space. It wasn’t until I moved to Tennessee that I realized how much wider everything could be. City parks paled in comparison to Tennessee’s wild areas and my potted plants seemed insignificant next to its open agricultural tracts.

I had always gotten food from the supermarket—a true urban hunter and gatherer. In Tennessee, it became possible to actually grow my own. I set about tilling the soil, sowing seeds, watering, and nurturing small sprouts into maturity. If you’ve ever held a seed in your hand you know how amazing it is for such a small thing to grow into a massive watermelon vine or tomato bush. It’s empowering, to say the least, that one person and one seed can do so much. It may seem commonplace for some, but for me, it was magical.

I started out tilling a patch of soil roughly 10’ by 20’. It was early March and far too early to contemplate planting. Winter was just losing its hold and the outdoors was calling. The days were getting longer, the sun shone brighter, and though it was freezing, months of being trapped indoors made the prospect of digging seem inviting. In soil still hardened by frost, still wet from rain and snow melt, still miserable, muddy, and not quite ready, I worked at digging, turning, and enriching. I may have approached the task the hard way but mucking around like I did was the surest sign for me that spring was around the corner.

By May, I had planted the beginnings of cold weather vegetables (peas, lettuce, cabbage, broccoli, and greens) and had al-

ready tasted the fruits of my labor. The first hand-picked salad of the season was wonderful, if a bit gritty from hasty washing. I began to plant tomatoes, peppers, melons, zucchini, okra, and beans.

The sun and regular watering turned small frail seedlings into plants in their own right. June and July saw a veritable explosion of growth. My tomatoes grew into huge bushes nearly my height. Their branches intermingled and spread, flowered, and set heavy fruit. The watermelon that had started life as seeds smaller than dimes expanded like mutant tentacles reaching out of the ground to climb fences, stakes, and even the peppers they sat next to. There was green everywhere interspersed with flashes of color—bright red, orange, and yellow tomatoes, dark purple peppers, yellow wax beans, and the vibrant flowers of everything living and striving to pass their genes on to a new generation. My summer garden was full of life.

August was a frantic scramble to preserve what I had sown. Bubbling hot water bath canners sat on my stove keeping the windows perpetually fogged. Drying herbs hung in bunches from most cabinets, lightly scenting the air. Batches of vegetables were trimmed, blanched, and frozen. My life was active in a way that had nothing to do with my retail job, school, or entertainment. The tasks I worked on, in their own small ways, had to do with survival and self-sufficiency. While the supermarket was still there, I was now capable of providing for myself. I could live happily with what the Earth could offer up in cooperation with my labors. —Sarah Vogel

(Editor’s Note: The Summer 2010 *Ms. Magazine* has a great article on women in agriculture and is available for check-out at the Women’s Center.)

Child Pageants: What Can They Hurt?

In the world of child beauty pageants, 5-year-old girls wear fake teeth, hair extensions, and makeup and are encouraged to “flirt” onstage by batting their long, false eyelashes. Shows like TLC’s “Toddlers & Tiaras” have drawn attention to the flaws of pageants—the bossy moms, the crying girls, the countless hours of practice, and the large amounts of money spent on such items as gowns, flippers (removable teeth), coaching, and travel.

Hilary Levey, a Harvard sociologist who has studied pageants in depth, found that the main reasons cited by parents for their child’s participation were “learning confidence, learning to be comfortable on stage and in front of strangers, learning poise, learning how to present the self and dress appropriately, learning to practice, learning good sportsmanship, learning how to be more outgoing, and learning to listen. Of course, these are lessons and skills the moms want their children to learn but the children may not actually be learning them.”

Levey offers an example of a pageant mother saying, “My daughter looks like Barbie. I tell her to exploit it. This is your life; you take what you have and run with it.” Telling a little girl to exploit her looks? How is the daughter to interpret this?

Perhaps most disturbing is the effect that these pageants can have on a child’s emotional development. Layers of make-up, spray tans, provocative clothing and padded bikinis are all part of the child pageant scene. A 2007 report issued by American Psychological Association Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls suggests that young girls who are exposed to this emphasis on their appearance and sexuality at an early age are more prone to eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression later in life.

“Girls... learn the socially acceptable ways to engage in inti-

mate relationships by modeling what they see older girls and young women doing and by imitating the ways in which women are represented in the media” (American Psychological Association, p.4). The APA report goes on to say about child pageants in particular that “although relatively few girls actually participate in such pageants, they have become a topic of interest in the news, documentaries, and advertising, in particular regarding whether this precocious sexualization is problematic for these or other girls. In this way, the participation of a few may in fact contribute to the sexualization of many.” (p.16)

“The sexualization of girls and women may contribute to broader societal consequences, such as sexism, sex bias, and sexist attitudes,” say APA researchers. “We hypothesize that exposure to sexualized girls likely leads to sexist attitudes about girls and women.”(p.31) The images that pageants and media project of girls and women are affecting every person that sees them.

The APA suggests that parents get girls involved in school activities and sports, expose them to alternative forms of media, and that they become more actively involved in their child’s life (p.39). These activities can help establish the competitiveness, poise, and sportsmanship that many parents want their children to have without the negative effects that pageants can contribute to. Teach girls to embrace who they are and to love themselves no matter what they look like. —Hanna Miller



As my college career draws to a close, I am often asked the question, “What do you plan to do next?” The truth is that I do not know. I am but a pioneer on the frontier of my impending future, with Peace Corps being one of the many possible destinations. For three years now I have been attending information sessions and reading up on Peace Corps service.

Established in 1961 under the administration of President John F. Kennedy, the Peace Corps has been dispatching adventurous Samaritans to rural and underdeveloped parts of the globe for nearly 50 years. Currently active in 77 countries, Peace Corps volunteers (60% of whom are women) commit to at least 2 years of service abroad to aid with programs from environmental education to HIV/AIDS prevention.

I recently had a chance to meet with my own “Peace Corps pen pal,” Jesse Hunter. Jesse attended TTU for one year in 2001 before transferring to UTK. In July of 2008, she and her husband, Josh, began their service in Jamaica in the health and water sanitation work areas, respectively. In

Promoting Peace

addition to their assigned work areas they hosted weekly movie nights and desperately tried their best to improve the community in any way they could.

Amber B. Davis-Collins, an agriculture volunteer in Honduras from 2002 to 2004, wrote of her experience for a collection of Peace Corps testimonials entitled *A Life Inspired*. She recalls delivering vegetable seeds to a man in her village and subsequently giving his wife a few gardening tips. At the end of her service, the man thanked Amber for teaching him that “women can learn things, too.” While this may seem obvious to us, it was a major breakthrough for an uneducated rural farmer in a machismo nation. These internal developments which cannot be quantified may illustrate the true importance of the Peace Corps.

Throughout *A Life Inspired*, the Peace Corps is often referred to as “the toughest job you’ll ever love.” It certainly is a daunting task to implement infrastructure in a

third-world nation, but this slogan implies that the reward of personal growth can far exceed the challenges faced by a volunteer. Most volunteers join Peace Corps with the hope that they will, in some capacity, change the world.

Unfortunately, the results of service are all too often not blatantly obvious. Projects can fail and sometimes volunteers become disheartened by the idea that they have accomplished nothing. Jesse said that only three of the eight married couples, serving at the same time as she and Josh, completed their service and preserved their marriage. Challenging as it all seems, I suspect that the cultural exchange between Corps volunteers and the people they serve is where the real progress occurs.

Knowing all this, I, and more so my family, have a great deal of trepidation about the possibility of my spending two years abroad and alone. Yet, I keep thinking that if I could simply tap into the selflessness that these women, and thousands of others, possess, I can contribute to this legacy of promoting peace and friendship worldwide. —Kassi Thomas

***Attune* Spring 2011 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: February 11, 2011

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 for 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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Many thanks to all who contributed to this issue.

Visit our website:
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