

"The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any." -Alice Walker, author of *The Color Purple*

Volume XVII, Issue 2

Spring 2011

What's In A (Married) Name?

It's a choice that everyone, though usually women, must make as they marry: to adopt a new last name, or not to?

A name distinguishes an individual from all of the other "hey you's" out there. Our parents give it to us, so even before our personality and physical traits have developed fully, we have an identity. As I am fairly comfortable with my personal identity, changing my name isn't something I ever thought I'd do.

As a writer, my name is even more significant. I have an entire portfolio of published works, all of which say "By Bailey Darrow." So, when I married last September, I thought long and hard about the last name question. I read countless online forums and articles and found that there is a full spectrum of views on the subject.

Some say, to take a husband's last name is old-fashioned and completely anti-feminist—it's historically been used as a way for a masculine-driven society to allow a male to assert his ownership and dominance over "his" new wife.

A 2009 study done by Indiana University and the University of Utah found that about 70 percent of Americans believe that it's beneficial for a woman to take her husband's last name. Nearly half of those who participated said that the government should mandate that women take their husband's name upon marriage.

Most who were in favor of name changing cited establishing a family identity as being highly important to them. Those who said that a woman should keep her maiden name cited building a professional career as being important.

I have never felt bound by tradition, and because of my profession, I was determined that I would keep my last name. My husband was okay

with that. He wanted me to do whatever it took to meet my personal and professional goals.

Meanwhile, everyone wanted to know how to pronounce what they assumed would be my new last name. Phonsnasinh is not the kind of name you see or hear every day. They would snarl their noses and roll their eyes as they attempted to pronounce it correctly.

As I thought about this reaction, I began to change my mind. Our world is blending and changing every day. That's what made it possible for me to grow from a small town Tennessee girl where everyone pretty much looks and sounds alike, to a woman married to a man whose family was struggling to survive in Laos, where war and despair inched over the borders of surrounding countries in Southeast Asia, less than 30 years ago. If I could challenge people's ideas of culture, if I could help them relate to people who come from different backgrounds



than their own, then perhaps ideas about traditional family building could be affected too. Maybe I can show those with snarling noses and rolling eyes that having a different kind of name doesn't always make you a different kind of person. This, I decided, was more important than hanging on to a name—to have the opportunity to make a difference in the way that people treat others.

Today, I'm still Bailey Darrow. I write under my maiden name and maintain a professional identity that helps my resume and portfolio stay cohesive. But in my personal life, I am Bailey Phonsnasinh, and when someone says to me, "Oh, honey. Where'd you get a name like that?" I remind them, in a voice they can relate to, that the world would be a much less interesting place if we were all the same.

—Bailey Darrow

From the editor

Although the articles in this issue of *Attune* are diverse, the interconnectedness of each story relays a spirit of growth and maturity, and in many of the articles, the need for change.

What's In A (Married) Name and *Surviving Divorce* deal with the personal choices or struggles that we must face when making important and sometimes life-altering decisions. While the situations these authors face are at opposite ends of a spectrum, both authors found self-realization, and thus individual growth, through their choices.

Redefining Rape reminds us that even though we as a society have progressed concerning women's issues, we still have plenty of room to struggle, understand, and continue to mature, while *UN Women* and *A Campaign To "Save The Girl Child"* convey this message on a global scale.

The other articles share this same spirit of development through a desire to better the environment, to broaden the horizons for women in the male-dominated field of technology, and to expand the work of TTU's Women's Center.

My hope is that this issue of *Attune* will be an eye-opener to some of the areas in which we, as women and as a global community, still need to find maturity. I also hope this will serve as a source of encouragement and inspiration along our own individual paths of personal growth.

—Jessica Smith

The New Material Girl: Eco-Friendly Consumerism

REDUCE: “Eco-friendly consumerism” is an incredible oxymoron, the notable issue being that in order to truly be kind to the environment, one must reduce consumption — not consume more. As Leslie Garrett, author of *The Virtuous Consumer*, so succinctly phrases it, “The greenest products are the ones you don’t buy.” With that said, in our consumer-driven economy, no one expects you to simply stop shopping. You’ll need groceries, clothes, and you may “need” some new lip gloss one day, but the difference is that you should strive to make your purchases consciously. Always take into consideration whether you really need the item or not. And although upgrading to newer, flashier items has become very popular, especially with electronics, choosing to repair an existing item helps to divert landfill waste and toxic e-waste.

REUSE: Shopping at

Goodwill or other thrift and consignment shops for quality, gently-used goods is always a more environmentally conscious option than buying new. Diverting landfill waste can also be achieved through internet-services like Freecycle or Craigslist, in which communities run their own list of items they need to get rid of, and people who can utilize those items come pick them up. The market for durable items like reusable shopping bags and water bottles has become so popular that they have become more readily available and much more visibly attractive.

RECYCLE: Purchase items that have been constructed from post-consumer materials. Usually there’s a nice little label informing you exactly how much of your product was derived from something else. You can find anything from stationary made from old socks, to new socks made from plastic

bottles! Of course, there are less unusual items, like paper made from recycled paper, but when in need of a quirky shopping fix, spring for the recycled items. They’ll make for a good story afterwards.

RESEARCH: It’s important to know what you’re buying and from whom you’re buying it. Many companies are marketing new, expensive products with flashy labels that claim to be “all natural” and “organic,” but a product with a USDA label that states “made with organic ingredients” is required to contain only 70 percent organic components, so a little more label-reading may be necessary to find the best product. Furthermore, in many cases a little bit of investigation can pay off. For example, low-cost items like baking soda and vinegar are far more earth friendly than harsh household cleaning chemicals. It’s also a good idea to support retailers that you know are doing

their part to reduce their impact on the environment. A brief Google search of the company can give you answers.

RETHINK: The biggest challenge of environmentalism is changing one’s outlook. Rethinking is really the basis behind all of the above mentioned steps. While purchasing recycled products and reusing items are good steps in the right direction, going green really is a lifestyle. Consider how far your product had to travel to reach you, and how much carbon was emitted in that process. Scrutinize how much packaging and processing the item requires, and if those factors increase the impact on the environment. It’s easy to just passively engage in “shopping against climate change” efforts, but one must make a truly conscious effort to really do what is best for the environment.

—Kassi Thomas

After switching my major to Management Information Systems, I noticed a trend. In most of my technology-oriented classes, I was one of few female students. On a campus where women outnumber men almost 1.5 to 1 (TBR website, Fall 2009), how was this possible? Unfortunately, this trend goes far beyond TTU’s campus. According to the National Center for Women & Information Technology, women hold more than half of all professional occupations in the U.S. but only 25 percent of all computing-related occupations. This can be discouraging as a graduate entering the IT field. Fortunately, there are a number of successful women in the male-dominated world of technology. Marissa Mayer, Caterina Fake, Mena Trott, and Kim Polese are a few who have

Successful Women In IT

inspired me to stay in the field.

Google’s Vice President of Search Products and User Experience Marissa Mayer began her college career as a Biology and Chemistry major. Before her 12-year run at Google, she worked as a researcher in Switzerland as well as California. These were strange beginnings for one of the minds behind such innovations as Gmail and iGoogle. In an article about influential women in technology in *Fast Company* magazine, Mayer said of her position, “Google really invested in me and I’m really at home there. Fundamentally I’m a geek, and everyone around me is a geek so I fit right in.”

Caterina Fake also had a non-IT college major. A graduate of Vassar, Fake studied English before snagging a position

as lead web designer for the agency Organic Online. After some financial problems, what began as an idea for a web-based multi-player game soon morphed into the photo-sharing website Flickr. Fake, along with her husband Stewart Butterfield, launched the site in 2004. Yahoo bought the site from Fake and Butterfield for a reported \$35 million.

Without Mena Trott, the blogging revolution might have never taken off. Trott, along with husband Ben, co-founded Six Apart, the IT company responsible for such innovations in the world of blogging as LiveJournal and Vox. Six Apart, named after the fact that the couple had been born six days apart, was created in 2001. The company, which helped bring blogging to the mainstream, has

now expanded its offices from the U.S. into Europe and Asia.

Named one of *Time* magazine’s Top 25 Most Influential People in America, Kim Polese is the President, CEO, and co-founder of Marimba, one of the leading providers of Internet infrastructure management solutions. Polese, who holds a B.A. in Biophysics from UC Berkeley, spent more than seven years of her career at Sun Microsystems, where she was the original product manager for Java. In an interview with Silicon Valley Radio, Polese was asked what advice she would give to start-up companies in the software industry. She responded, “Focus on a problem that needs to be solved, and try to focus as much as possible. That is the challenge... Be flexible. Be able to move quickly. Be able to change course if you need to.” —Katey Perkins

Redefining Rape

In January 2011, federal representatives introduced H.R.3: No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act. The primary purpose of this act is to limit government funding for abortions. Section 309 of the legislation, which designates under what circumstances government funds may be used for abortion costs, has drawn much attention—and criticism. Women with life-threatening physical conditions are exempt from the limitations of this act, as are minors and victims of incest; however, when explaining which victims of rape may be allowed to have abortions, Section 309 stipulates that only if a woman is “the subject of an act of forcible rape” will she be allowed to use health care funds for an abortion.

The phrase “forcible rape” has drawn the interest of news groups, women’s rights organizations, and political followers, as it suggests that not all rape is forcible and worthy of the same level of government attention. This phrase drew so much criticism that it was dropped from the legislation on Feb. 1. However, the initial inclusion of the term “forcible

rape” into federal legislation makes it clear how misunderstood and often marginalized sexual assault and rape victims are.

Rape is not a term that may be used lightly, nor is it easily defined and cannot be limited as H.R.3 initially intended. The Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN) provides a widely accepted definition based on descriptions used by the Department of Justice: “Rape is forced sexual intercourse, including vaginal, anal, or oral penetration. Penetration may be by a body part or an object.” If a woman does not give consent, she has been raped. This may occur because the woman is physically overpowered, but rape can also take more subtle—yet equally devastating—forms. If a woman is intoxicated or drugged, she can’t give consent. If she’s under the age of consent in her area, she may be raped by an adult even if she does not explicitly refuse sexual contact. If a woman is mentally handicapped, she can’t give consent in many situations. All of these women have been raped. However,

according to the original version of H.R.3, these situations do not characterize “forcible rape.” Because date rape and statutory rape differ from the prototypical rape scenario, society often perceives these women as less victimized and less in need of post-attack support.

While any instance of rape not being taken seriously is appalling, the labeling of some rapes as “non-forcible” is nothing short of mind-boggling. Rape, by definition, is forced. To consider any form of rape anything but forcible is to underestimate the effects of sex crimes and undermine the atrocities committed against women by suggesting that there’s only one type of legitimate rape. Furthermore, women raped in one of the “non-forcible” rape scenarios who became pregnant as a result did not choose to have the biological process of fertilization occur any more than a woman who was “forcibly” raped did. We must question, then, why these women would be deemed by legislators as somehow less worthy of the same medical procedure that could give them an open future, a lack of prolonged physical trauma, and an opportunity to move on from their horrific experiences as quickly as possible.

Many women—as well as

society at large—tend to view rape as embarrassing or somehow the woman’s fault. While the fallacious nature of this idea is hopefully obvious, shame and embarrassment are still felt by victims. Because of these feelings and the notion that the rape victim will not be able to prove her claims in a he-said/she-said court case, rape frequently goes unreported. In fact, according to the *U.S. Department of Justice 2005 National Crime Victimization Study*, 60% of sexual assaults are not reported to police. Therefore, over half of women who suffer through a sexual assault do so privately with no sense of justice having been served and little support. While it’s easy to wonder why a woman wouldn’t report a crime committed against her, the mere fact that legislators and members of the public are willing to define rape as being “non-forcible” in any occasion should provide some insight into the marginalization sexual assault survivors experience. Likewise, that broad media attention and harsh feminist criticism had to be leveled at H.R.3 for legislators to realize that “forcible rape” is a ludicrous concept is a testament to the amount of progress needed in understanding women’s rights and the horrors of sexual assault.

—Riley Brewer



Peterson Toscano

Performance activist in residence

Coming
to TTU
Fall 2011

Through comedy, Toscano explores contemporary issues such as sexism, racism, homophobia, foreign policy, and the environment. He will spend a week on campus and perform his latest play *I Can See Sarah Palin from my Window! Lessons Before the Second Coming*.

“I hope my play provokes people, gets them to look at their lives and practices and ask, ‘How might I be part of the problem?’ Anyone can bash a public figure and thus feel a little better about themselves. Looking inward takes more work.”

— Peterson Toscano

Volunteer Boom

Last semester I worked for the Women's Center in rotation with four other students. Two of us were interns and three were work-study students. Three volunteers were sporadically in and out of the center, but weren't "regulars." We eight worked well together to accomplish what needed to be done; however, the workload could get hectic, as on a typical day, only two or three students would be in the center at once, each working on a separate project. Often, only one of us could be scheduled to work alongside the center's only full-time employee.

Being part of the Women's Center opened me up to an understanding of so many issues women face. Previously, I didn't know about the atrocities of genital mutilation or sex trafficking, and hadn't given much thought to the inequality women still face in the work force, receiving 78 cents to every male dollar. I felt I had no reason to worry



about issues I couldn't do anything about. But having the opportunity to research and actively participate in spreading such information has given me an awareness and a desire to get involved. Also, through working with other women in a Women's Center, it gradually becomes apparent that we all face similar issues and situations and it's interesting to learn how each woman handles them; it builds bonds. Personally, I count these among the many intangible rewards from working for the center.

Due to schedule needs, I'm not interning this semester, but decided to use my spare time to volunteer. I was taken aback when I walked into the Women's

Center the first time this semester and it was overcrowded with students. In one semester, the number of student workers has risen from eight to fourteen. Two are interns, one does work-study and the other eleven (some are international students and two are men) are volunteers. It's amazing to see the number of workers nearly double and the team become much more diverse in the short time I've been affiliated with the center. In my mind, this has to mean that students are starting to notice the Women's Center and beginning to recognize the importance of speaking out on issues from body image to questioning gender roles.

Students keep the Women's Center a reality and are basically who run it—we help organize events, compose *Attune*, lead the book club, and even have a hand in advising and deciding what projects and events to do. Therefore, it's imperative that students are willing to help, whether through interning, work-study, or volunteering. Being part of the process builds confidence and leadership skills,

as well as other skills that will be carried beyond the Women's Center walls. In the 2010 National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) survey, employers listed communication skills (verbal and written); strong work ethic; teamwork skills; analytical skills; initiative; problem-solving skills; interpersonal skills; computer skills; and flexibility and adaptability as the top skills and qualities looked for in potential hires. I've found that working in the center has helped me to develop every one of these attributes and will benefit me in the job market.

We at the Women's Center recognize that each worker has talents and that everyone can find an area they are comfortable working with, though projects do tend to overlap. We use our diversity and separate talents, but work in an inclusive way—we work as a team.

For more information on how you can volunteer, intern, or do work-study in the Women's Center, stop by Penebaker 203 or send an e-mail to womenscenter@tntech.edu.

—Jessica Smith

Surviving Divorce

A little more than two years ago, my life began heading on a downward spiral in a turn I never thought it would take. I'd been married for ten years and had two beautiful children, but that was all about to change; not the beautiful children part, but the being married part. For reasons that feel private, I felt it was best that I untie myself from a knot I'd been wound in for most of my life and try to venture out into the strange and dark unknown.

At first, it seemed like the grass was always greener on the other side for single people who could live and do as they pleased, but as is often the case, freedom turned out to be nothing more than a mouthful of dry, dead hay that looked so much prettier from the other side of the fence. I was suddenly forced into this world of doing things for myself—learning how to hook up a dryer and a stove and change out the wax ring under a commode on my own. Take it from me, commodes are a lot heavier than they look, they're very difficult to get seated back down straight, and when you change out the ring three times, and it still leaks, you probably have a cracked bowl. Those are just a few of the things I found out from the first few months on my own because I was too afraid and embarrassed to ask anyone for help, even though my parents wanted so much to

help me. But when my water heater, refrigerator, air conditioning, and cell phone all went out within a week, I thought God was punishing me for making a bad decision.

I was slowly realizing the effect it was having on my children, too. The first sign came when my youngest daughter brought home her day-care craft and her teachers told me that she had made two of the same thing: one for my house and one for her daddy's. It broke my heart. She didn't understand why we couldn't all live together again. My oldest daughter was having a hard time as well. I began to realize that she was struggling, but she was actually handling everything much better than I could've at her age.

Insecurities and jealousy began to arise within me when I left my children with their dad and they seemed less than concerned when I left. I wanted to cry when I saw these children to whom I had clung their whole lives suddenly seem disinterested when they knew I wasn't going to be with them. That was probably the hardest part for me. I'd made the decision that I thought was best, but it had turned out to be extremely challenging on so many levels.

However, I'm beginning to see that there is a bright side to it all. I've found that I'm slowly growing stronger, which is what challenges do—they make us stronger. I'm finding I have a much deeper dependence on God, other people like my parents who have helped me so much, and myself. I am growing as a person and in my faith, and it has taken the most difficult time of my life for me to truly see it.

—Amy Knox

A Campaign To *Save The Girl Child*

In countries where sons are preferred because of their ability to carry on the family name and generate an income, an epidemic is underway. Families are choosing and women are being forced to abort female fetuses because of the financial burden a daughter can bring. These sex-selective abortions are becoming more frequent since ultrasound was introduced in India in an effort to promote healthy pregnancies. Those who are unable to utilize ultrasound technology wait until the birth of the child. If the child is a girl, she will most likely be murdered by drowning, poisoning, or starvation and then forgotten.

Gendercide is a centuries old practice in which India, as well as China and other third world countries, traditionally participate. Gendercide.org insists that "specifically female infanticide reflects the low status accorded to women in most parts of the world; it is arguably the most brutal and destructive manifestation of the anti-female bias that pervades "patriarchal" societies." In India alone, 50 million girls have been killed within the past one hundred years.

Within the last two decades, female infanticide and sex selective abortions have led to an unnatural gender ratio. Economist.com states that in India alone 100 girls are born for every 120 boys. In fact, in some regions the female-to-male ratio is as

Gendercide: The deliberate extermination of a specific gender.

low as 59 to 100. That is a significant plunge from the international average of 95 girls to 100 boys. Though sex-selective abortions were outlawed in India in 1996, it has become increasingly problematic. A campaign to "Save the Girl Child" was implemented in 2007 by India's president. Billboards were erected within New Delhi pleading with the public to give baby girls the chance to live and encouraging families to consider adoption as opposed to the other alternative. Several advocacy groups including many non-governmental organizations, the United Nations Population Fund, and the Indian Medical Association have joined the fight to end female infanticide by promoting fundraisers and awareness gatherings. The Indian government is even offering cash incentives to those who are willing to raise their daughters.

American filmmaker Nyna Pais-Caputi, born in India, was unaware of just how prodigious the gendercide epidemic had become until she returned to her birth country to inquire about adopting a child. There was a significantly lower number of girls than boys up for adoption. Last year she organized the International Walk for India's Missing Girls in San Francisco and continued the walk this year on March 6. The protest marches are expected to take place in India, Australia, Kuwait, and Canada as well. She is also filming a documentary called *Petals in the Dust* to raise international awareness. Pais-Caputi states, "The U.N. has warned that these acts, if left unabated, would lead to an increase in trafficking, sexual abuse and violence towards women."

—Sarah Hehnen

UN Women

A historical public introduction in 2011 brings about a new agency specifically dealing with the rights of women; the United Nations General Assembly created *UN Women*, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Created in July 2010, the agency is designed to advocate and boost women's rights. *UN Women* will include framework on several equality advocacy templates. The top priorities of the agency include focusing on gender equality issues, the reduction of violence towards women, and empowering women through the use of educational opportunities. *UN Women* is a combination of several previous organizations under the UN which were: the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues; the Division for the Advancement of Women; the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW); and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

Michelle Bachelet is the first assigned executive director of *UN Women*. Bachelet

has a global political history and is a former president of Chile serving from March 2006 until March 2010. She is considered a moderate socialist politician and has previously served as Health and Defense Minister under Chilean President Ricardo Lagos. Bachelet says about the agency, "Women's strength, women's industry, women's wisdom are humankind's greatest untapped resource...The challenge then for *UN Women* is to show our diverse constituencies how this resource can be effectively tapped in ways that benefit us all."

The five root missions the agency will primarily be focused on are, according to the *UN Women* webpage, "acting as a 'global broker' of knowledge and experience; backing intergovernmental processes to strengthen the global framework on gender equality; enhancing implementation of international accords by national partners; promoting coherence with the UN on the issue; and, of course, advocating gender equality and women's empowerment." Above all, the fundamental doctrine of the

UN Women agency is to educate and empower women in their home countries by focusing on gender equality.

UN Women is implemented to set and monitor human rights standards for gender equality. A major focus of the agency will be creating and/or improving safe haven centers for women, promoting educational efforts to women on issues like financial stability, determent and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV and AIDS, and protection against violence. The effects of the agency will begin to take place in the spring of 2011.



—Becky Culver

Attune Fall 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.

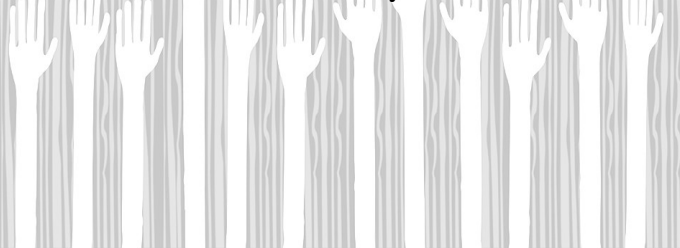
Submission Deadline: September 30, 2011

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

ATTUNE is published twice a year by the Women's Center and the Commission on the Status of Women and is a collaborative effort of the Women's Center staff and contributors, edited by Jessica Smith.

Women's Center Staff

Dr. Gretta Stanger, Director of the Women's Center
Diana Lalani, Secretary and Creative Consultant
Jessica Smith, Editor
Becky Culver
Bethany Patch
Brooke McCarter
Cassandra Wilkerson
Emily Johns
Hiromi Kawamura
Kassi Thomas
Sarah Hehnen
Tammy Baswell

Contributors for Spring 2011

Bailey Darrow
Kassi Thomas
Katey Perkins
Riley Brewer
Becky Culver
Sarah Hehnen
Amy Knox
Jessica Smith

Many thanks to all who contributed to this issue.

Visit our website:
<http://www.tntech.edu/women>

TTU Women's Center
Pennebaker Hall, Room 203
TTU P.O. Box 5216
Cookeville, TN 38505-0001

Phone: 931-372-3850
Office Hours: M-F 8:00 a.m.-noon and 1 p.m.- 4:30 p.m.

