

GIRLTALK



spring 2020 | issue 15 | with special edition **BOYTALK**

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LETTERS *from the* EDITORS

Dear Readers,

Welcome back! While the writers at GirlTalk took some time to enjoy the holidays, we by no means stopped writing. With a keen eye, we observed everything about the holidays that we think needs changing. Whether it be the facade that is holiday movies, the enormous pressures of Valentine's Day or feminist movements that deserve more attention, the GirlTalk fam researched and wrote about the things that matter to us. Shedding light on these pressing matters is what we do best, and this issue is especially unique, in that it's not only a review on seasonal pressures, but a tribute to the last decade. In welcoming the new decade, we wanted to give you insight into the issues we want to be taken down, and the movements we want rising up. The youth of GirlTalk want to explain which movements have hit us differently — left a greater impact than past protests. As you read our pieces and go forth in the new year, heed our advice: keep speaking out. Fight to keep pressing issues in the spotlight; don't let important movements trail off. In 2020, be kinder, braver and more compassionate. Keep doing what makes you happy, and keep changing the world for the better.

In light of recent events that have darkened the state of our world, we at GirlTalk feel that it is important to honor the month of April, specifically the 1st, with a special edition of GirlTalk. Introducing—BoyTalk! “Girl” may be in the name of our magazine, but GirlTalk is committed to gender-inclusive feminism year-round. In BoyTalk, we shed light on men's issues, experiences, and takes on feminist topics. Though we are introducing this segment in the spirit of April Fool's, we hope that BoyTalk serves as a (semi) serious reminder that true feminism is not one-sided.

Charlotte Kramon, Sierra Stern, and Sophie Friedberg



2020 CANDIDATE REFLECTIONS

BY EVA KAPLAN

As of March 6th, 2020, there are three Democrats still in the race and two Republicans. Twenty-seven candidates have dropped out, two of whom were Republicans and twenty-five of whom were running for the Democrat Party. Out of the overall thirty-two candidates from the Republican or Democrat Party who ran or are currently running for

President, six are female-identified. Currently, there are three front runners for the 2020 Presidency, Trump, Biden, and Bernie. There is no female representation, no representation of the LGBT+ Community, no representation of any ethnicity other than Caucasian. Our country is, yet again, being run by rich white men. What does this mean for the

United States? What does this mean for all the little girls who will be raised with no role models? Doesn't it say something about this country that we can not seem to elect a President who is female-identifying? It is 2020 and yet girls are still being catcalled and boys are still being told: "boys will be boys". America is so racist, sexist and homophobic.

America is living in the past. What is the difference between a woman and a man President? The thing in their pants? Because I know that women are not any less smart or any less capable of being President than men are. So why can't America seem to elect a female president? 15% of citizens say a man is better suited for office than a woman.

To put that number in perspective, 42,828,500 Americans as of 2019 believed a woman was not suited for the highest office of the land. Maybe it's the way parents raise their kids, maybe it's the beliefs parents force on their children, maybe it's that America is more critical of females than males, like how Warren was criticized for yelling too much when she didn't yell half as much as Bernie. Many people believe that a woman could not beat Trump, even though Hilary won the popular vote in the 2016 election. It's time to acknowledge that the first female president we elect will be the hardest to elect. In 2020 there were some extremely qualified women, who had better policies, more

plans, were stronger debaters and had more experience than some of the male candidates that got more support. Before Bloomberg dropped out he was ahead of Warren in the polls, even though Warren has way more experience in politics. It comes down to how people's minds are already set.

If someone does not believe a woman can beat Trump, then a woman won't be able to change their mind. Elizabeth Warren made pinky promises to little girls promising that a woman could be president. I hope I live long enough to see this promise come true. ✨

SPOTLIGHT: **Feminist Accomplishments of the Decade**

BY ILY GRINBERG | OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

As we enter a new decade, it is crucial that we look back on the decade that has passed. The 2010s marked the rise of fourth-wave feminism, targeting body positivity, sexual harassment, rape culture, and many other issues. While there is still much progress that needs to be made we must acknowledge how far we have come.

In 2010 the Affordable Care Act (ACA) was signed into law. Under the ACA, private insurance companies are required to cover contraceptives, such as birth control with no copays or deductibles. That same year, Kathryn Bigelow became the first woman to win the Oscar for best director for her film *The Hurt Locker*, and only the fourth woman to be nominated for best director in 82 years. Throughout the years, the Oscars have

become more inclusive of women, however, there is still progress to be made, not only for gender inclusion but also in race inclusion as the industry is dominated by white men.

In 2011, three women were awarded the Nobel peace prize, the first of which was the first female head of state of an African country, Liberia's Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, for her efforts to promote women's rights. Also presented with the award was Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee for leading the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace, which was instrumental in bringing an end to the Second Liberian Civil War. Additionally, Tawakkol Karman was also honored for her founding of the organization, Women Journalists Without Chains



(From left to right: Tawakkol Karman, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee)

Women in the 2012 Olympics shattered records and broke glass ceilings with every participating country sending women to the games. Women made up 45 percent of participants, the most ever seen before. Women broke 37 world records and dominated in previously male-centric sports. Also in sports, Shannon Eastin was the first woman to officiate a National Football League game. In politics during that same year, New Hampshire elected the first all-women congressional delegation in U.S. History.

Danica Patrick was the first woman to win a pole in the Daytona 500 and a NASCAR Monster Energy Cup Series race in 2013. Also in 2013, the UFC 157 featured the first women's fight in the UFC and also was the first UFC event headlined by two women, Ronda Rousey and Liz Carmouche. Mary Barra, became the first female CEO of a major automaker when she was named CEO of General Motors in 2013.

In 2014, Janet Yellen became the first woman Chair of the Federal Reserve and Michelle J. Howard began her assignment as the U.S. Navy's first female four-star admiral of color. Also in 2014, Malala Yousafzai was the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize for her strides toward equal education for all children and as a champion of women's rights not only in her



(Tess Holliday)

home country of Pakistan, but for girls around the world. She nearly lost her life for her activism.

Then, in 2015, beauty standards were questioned and torn apart. Tess Holliday, the founder of the hashtag #EffYourBeautyStandards, became the first woman of her weight and height signed to a major modeling agency. Many brands began to feature plus-size models. Many body positivity movements have followed.

2016 marked the year for representation of all women. Hillary Clinton became the first female presidential nominee. Beyoncé released her album *Lemonade* along with a short film targeting racial tensions and police brutality while championing and celebrating black women. Designer Anniesa Hasibuan became the first designer to present a collection fully outfitted with hijabs at New York Fashion Week. It was announced that the U.S. Treasury Department announced that Harriet Tubman would be replacing Andrew Jackson on the front of the twenty dollar bill, and thus would be the first women and women of color to be represented on U.S. currency. In 2016 feminists became more united than ever under the hashtags #NastyWoman and #NastyWomenUnite after Donald Trump referred to Hillary Clinton using the misogynistic phrase.

2017 was another remarkable year for feminism. Following the sexual assault allegations against Harvey Weinstein, the "Me Too" movement took off as a platform for sexual assault survivors to have a safe space to share their experiences and band together. Civil rights activist Tarana Burke started the "Me Too" movement in 2006 to raise awareness about sexual abuse,

however, this became widespread in 2017. This movement has made waves in many industries, especially the entertainment industry in which powerful men have a tendency to silence survivors. 2017 marked the first Women's March, where women around the country united to fight for women's rights. However, it's crucial to recognize that this progress is not nearly enough and is largely exclusive. The Women's March organization is still largely composed of white women and does not represent intersectional feminism. After a record-breaking number of women were elected to Congress, many of them attended Trump's first State of the Union wearing all white in order to represent and fight for equal rights for all women.

2018 was another inspiring year for feminists. After Trump nominated Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court Dr. Christine Blasey Ford testified against him, and Deborah Ramirez and Julie Swetnic accused him of sexual assault, inspiring women to share their experiences and fight for their justice. During the 2018 Golden Globes, more than 300 actresses pledged to the "Time's up Movement" and many wore all black in solidarity. Janet Mock wrote and directed an episode of "Pose" on FX, and was the first transgender woman of color to write and direct a television episode. Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey won the Pulitzer Prize for their work in exposing the sexual abuse accusations against Harvey Weinstein.

This past year of 2019 has been even more remarkable than years past with the release of "Surviving R. Kelly", a documentary revealing years of sexual assault by R. Kelly, inspiring survivors and giving them a safe platform. 2019 also marked the first all-female spacewalk. Young girls also became the figureheads of the climate change movement. Greta Thunberg has created a massive global impact by speaking publicly and shaming world leaders for not taking action. Helena Gualinga,

a 17-year-old from the Ecuadorian Amazon, called out world leaders at the UN Climate Change Conference, and Ridhima Pandey filed a lawsuit against the Indian government for failing to take action on climate change at only age nine.

Much progress has been made this past decade. Women are continuing to rise to positions of power and fight for social and political change. However, there is still more to be done. Intersectional feminism needs more attention, as well as many other inclusivity issues. Historically, while feminism has always promoted equality, it often excludes women of color and other marginalized groups. Thus, looking back on the progress that has been made, it is up to us to take what strong women have already accomplished and work harder towards equality for all women. *

THIS ARTICLE IS MARKETED TOWARDS



FEMINISTS

**BY SIERRA STERN
OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL**

The shift in media consumption towards streaming services and away from cable television has informed a surge in targeted ads, and companies make no effort to hide these changes from consumers. Every informed watcher knows that their history, searches, and demographic are being shuffled through an algorithm with every click as websites and services attempt to learn more about them—and whatever they're most likely to buy. But once the algorithms have determined your most effective ad experience, what are they showing you? Oftentimes, these ads blatantly pander to demographic stereotypes, perpetuating them in sickeningly obvious ways.

I'm relieved that Hulu hasn't managed to pinpoint my exact

demographic yet in terms of personalizing my ads, because if they had, I wouldn't have been privy to viewing two eHarmony commercials—one targeted towards men and the other towards women—back to back. These commercials are structurally identical. In them, three conventionally attractive yet strategically archetyped young adults (men in the women's commercial, and women in the men's) talk about what they're looking for in a relationship. The women want a man to take them on adventures, and the men love sports, but don't "play games" when it comes to love (*"and that's why I chose eHarmony"*). The coexistence of these ads is a thinly veiled contradiction. According to the commercials, the men on eHarmony want stability, but the women are looking for something unpredictable. Of course, these actors aren't meant to reflect what men and women are actually looking to get from a dating site. They're living up to the concept of each demographic's perceived fantasy.

Historically (mythically), men don't want to be tied down by routine and boring women, and women want lasting, consistent relationships. Obviously there isn't just one type of person on a dating website, but what are these ads telling us about what the opposite gender wants, expects, even, from a partner they meet online? Another obvious—dating sites are shamefully low hanging fruit if I'm looking to criticize harmful marketing. The blend of sexism,

racism, and heteronormativity present in these ads is almost artful. I'm not saying online dating is the devil or anything, but this is a feminist magazine, after all. What could be a bigger affront?

Gendered advertisement is so obvious that this article is practically redundant. If I told you toy ads were heavily gendered and force traditional gender roles on developing minds, you'd probably tell me you knew that already. The real shocker is that this isn't changing. Companies aren't converting camo print and pink glitter packaging to a gender-neutral yellow. We've settled into the reality that advertisements are corrupt, and when companies cast a gay couple as the parents in a macaroni commercial, we applaud them for not being as awful as the others. But isn't it all for money in the end? How can you infuse morals into something so inherently unethical? Do these companies have a heart, and would they still if progressive advertisement wasn't profitable right now?

Ad campaigns are peppered with genius subtleties. America's Next Top Model is an inherently problematic show (albeit amazing television), but the insight it's given me into the intricacies of fashion advertisement is pretty invaluable. It's kind of obvious when a lingerie ad is targeted at men versus women, and it's only getting more apparent as female-targeted ads are starting to lean more relatable. However, it's not all about raw sex appeal versus flowers

and feeling good in your own skin. If a woman in a lingerie campaign photo is in profile, looking away from the camera, it's a women's ad. If she's looking at the camera head-on, facing forward, it's for men. It's minute details like these that reveal how truly nefarious the world of ads can be. Every camera angle, every color choice, every casting call is motivated by extracting money from a very specific group of people, and we, the market, know this so well that we just don't care anymore.

Hopelessly prone to hyperbole, I feel like I'm constantly calling things dystopian, but the world of marketing truly takes the cake for this one. Marketing has no moral compass. It doesn't care if you grow up with body issues because all the Victoria's Secret angels are single-digit sizes. It isn't concerned with the sense of nonbelonging you feel when the toys that seem like the most fun don't get played with by kids your gender in the commercials. Advertisements are designed to move products at any cost. If your self-esteem and self-worth get caught in the crossfire, so be it.

So be conscious of when you're being manipulated. Sometimes it's hard to tell, and sometimes it's painfully easy. Ask yourself why you want certain products, and why you feel like you're not allowed to want others. In an age where our insecurities are being commandeered and commodified, awareness is the first step towards demanding more honest and progressive advertisement. *



RELIEF REVOLUTION

an interview with
Camilla Hansson

There's more to Camilla Hansson than her impressive "Miss Universe" title: Hansson is an entrepreneur dedicated to educating people about natural medicine and the creator of a revolutionary CBD-based period relief product.

INTERVIEW BY
CHARLOTTE KRAMON
OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

& SOPHIE FRIEDBERG
PALISADES HIGH SCHOOL

There's more to Camilla Hansson than her impressive "Miss Universe" title: Hansson is an entrepreneur dedicated to educating people about natural medicine and the creator of a revolutionary CBD-based period relief product.

1) You won Miss Sweden. When did you get into the pageant world and what was it like to compete with other girls? Describe the pressures and routines you faced when competing.

I competed in both Miss Earth 2012 and in Miss Universe 2014, representing my country, Sweden. You definitely need thick skin to do something like this! But I loved it. It enabled me to grow a lot as a person and it changed the direction of my entire life. The main pressure you feel, I would say, is that you need to look your best all the time. The routines we had whilst competing was a mixture of rehearsals, promotional events, photoshoots and interviews.

2) When/How did you become a nutritionist? How important is the role of a nutritionist in women's health?

I became incredibly passionate about natural medicine and wellness during my year as Miss Sweden. I was self-studying the topic during most of my free time until I decided to go to school to become a nutritionist and naturopath. I think nutrition is a hugely important aspect in anyone's health, although it is still only one piece of the pie. I look at health in a very holistic way and take other factors into consideration as well, such as stress, emotional wellbeing, etc.. All these factors play a role in how healthy someone is.

3) You are a supporter of "natural health." Can you briefly describe what that means and elaborate on the benefits of natural health?

Yes, I am a big supporter of natural health and holistic medicine. It has worked very well in my life - I almost never get sick. It is about understanding the healing principles of the body and looking at the root causes of things rather than just suppressing the symptoms. The body has an ability to heal itself when given the right tools. An example of that is when you get a cut in the skin, the wound heals itself.

4) What do you think are the biggest pressures facing women in society today?

That we need to have it all! We are expected to have a career, husband, kids as well as look our best and be able to manage everything perfectly. It is not very realistic to be able to handle all of this unless you have a lot of help around you. I also think everybody's path and timeline of things in life are different. You need to follow that voice and intuition inside of you to know what is right for you and not just do things because of what others expect of you, such as your parents or society. Only you know what the right path is for you; nobody else can tell you that.

5) How do you think conventional beauty standards have affected young women?

It seems like we constantly have the messages out there that we need to be fixed in some ways. But no cream or treatment is ever really going to *fix* us. That confidence and self-love needs to ultimately come

from the inside.

6) You have met controversial figures like Donald Trump. How does the image he portrays in the media compare to his real-life persona?

Yes, I met Donald Trump on a few occasions as he was the owner of Miss Universe at the time. He was always very polite to me but at the time he was known as a famous businessman and not as the president of the United States.

7) Tell us about your brand, Camilla Organics. What inspired you to create a pain alleviation product for periods? What made you want to incorporate CBD into your products?

I no longer work as a model in the traditional sense. For the past few years I have turned more to business and I am excited to be launching my new venture, Camilla Organics, providing CBD products specifically formulated for women. Our first product is called Women's Relief and is designed to be used while on your period to help with menstrual



cramps and PMS - something I've struggled with hugely in my life. I have struggled immensely with period pain for the past few years and there was nothing out there that could help me. I had to go to the emergency room on several occasions; I tried strong medications, acupuncture, herbs and everything else you could think of. The only thing that gave me relief was CBD oil. This oil was truly a miracle for me. I no longer had to fear those dreadful periods. I wanted to share the relief I felt from CBD with other women and set out to create a specific formulation with the best CBD in the right strength, together with a combination of herbs and terpenes that will help women on their periods. This combination makes it even more effective than CBD taken alone.

8) Why are there so few products to help alleviate the pain of periods?

I wish I could answer that! I honestly don't know. It seems like more and more women are suffering with this issue as well. All I can say is that there is relief to be found. Having a healthy lifestyle helps as well as taking things like magnesium, but for my extreme pain, I would say CBD was the only thing that truly gave me relief in that moment of suffering.

9) Have you encountered any opposition to your mission to bring period relief products to women?

Starting any sort of business is always challenging. But what really motivates me is when I hear feedback from women using our products saying of how much they have really helped them and that they don't feel pain any more from their periods. That's what really inspires me to keep going. ✱

Justice FOR THE Arts

BY
ARLENE CAMPA

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS



Art is a universal language. It can be used as a means of spreading ideas and facilitating cultural exchanges. I see it in my everyday life: the bright murals embellishing brick walls in the Arts District, spray-painted love letters in Boyle Heights, driving down the 110 Freeway through the heart of Downtown Los Angeles. Art serves as a gateway between imagination and reality; it is a way to interpret and process the world around me and produce something tangible. Art is also a way to release stressors, negative emotions, and work through challenges I face on a daily basis.

I got my start in arts education in elementary school. I was never a popular kid and was horribly bullied, especially in first grade. One day, as I was walking past a ceramics class, my bully stood up and hurled her freshly-glazed sculpture of a girl at my head, which gave me a concussion. It was there and then that I realized what art was: a weapon. I cried the whole way home, but as soon as I realized the power of creating, I immediately begged my

parents to sign me up for the next ceramics class. I walked into the class that day with the intent of creating a sculpture ten times larger and heavier than my bully's. However, I immediately fell in love with creating artwork and the thought of revenge slipped my mind. I grew very close to my elementary school art teacher, and he offered me scholarships and opportunities to further my arts education beyond the classes offered once a month at school.

From fifth to eighth grade, my affinity for art drew me towards another medium: music. I became a cellist and played in my school's orchestra for four years, having the opportunity to perform for my school, community, and even at Disneyland. The cello allowed me to express myself in a different way, as I could physically feel every note vibrating through my cello and into my chest. I was so enveloped in the melodies of Bach and Tchaikovsky that I felt oblivious, even naive to my surroundings. There was a gang that hung out at the gas station right next door to my middle school. In sixth grade, one of

my classmates tried to jump off the second floor ledge during passing period. In eighth grade, a student was the victim of a hit and run. Music nurtured my creativity and was my escape from a world littered with pitfalls. That same year, I found out about the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, one of the premier arts public schools in the nation, and I auditioned for their visual arts department. I am currently a junior in their program and I can't envision myself anywhere else.

My art offers a way for me to digest the world around me. In my work, I could redefine what it means to be a first-generation American, Latinx woman navigating my identity. I learned to love art and its power to turn my laments into lifeboats. I am able to articulate any political, social, or cultural idea I have experienced and transform it into a work of art that could impact others. Art also facilitated a change in how I viewed community, as it became a way for me to manifest the society I had dreamed of: a place where we could exist with empathy and equality while nurturing joy and justice. A world where we dissolve borders and barriers and celebrate every life. I use my imagination to heal, to ignite change, to illuminate resilience and reinstate hope; my art is the future. However, there are students in California who aren't as fortunate as I am and receive little to no arts training in their schools, despite California's Education Code.

California Education Code Section 51210(a) states, "Visual and Performing art (VAPA) shall be included in the school curriculum for all students grades 1-6." Section 51220(g) states, "VAPA shall be offered to all in grades 7-12. Arts is a "course of study." This means all public schools must provide arts

education in five areas: visual arts, dance, theater, music, and media arts. Section 51050 states, "The governing board of every school district shall enforce in its schools the courses of study." However, 88% of schools do not comply with these laws and there is no enforcement or accountability. Over 500 schools across California have students with zero access to arts education. Low-income students, students of color, English as a Second Language students, and special education students have the least amount of access to arts education. Even when students have access, it is not equitable to the access of their student counterparts in affluent areas. Art gaps are linked to education and achievement gaps. Multiple studies have concluded that curricular and extracurricular art studies and activities help keep students in school. According to studies done by the Michigan Art Education Association, students who study art are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement and three times more likely to be awarded for school attendance. There are undeniable benefits from arts education, but educators and policymakers refuse to enforce the laws we've passed.

This is why I encourage all students to get involved with the ACLU's Arts Justice Campaign. We believe art is a civil right, and hope to bridge these gaps to provide an accessible and equitable arts education to all students in California. Our main goal is to create art justice mobilization through educating the public, putting pressure on school officials and policy makers, and ensuring all students have access to an equitable education in the arts. I learned about this campaign through interning at the ACLU. I have always been interested in art equity and

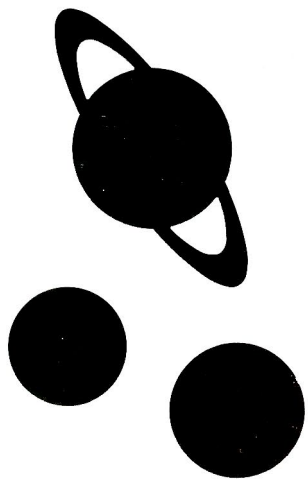
wanted low-income communities and communities of color to receive the same access to arts as I had at my high school. Through some miracle, I was able to connect into this campaign where I felt I could really utilize my voice to make a powerful impact.

Students can take action locally by making their peers aware of the issue and becoming an advocate in their own community. Start a petition, talk to your school board, write a letter to the governor-you have the power to make your voice heard. You can also see the zine I created with the Declaration of the Rights of All Students to Equity in Arts Education that you can print out and distribute in your own community!

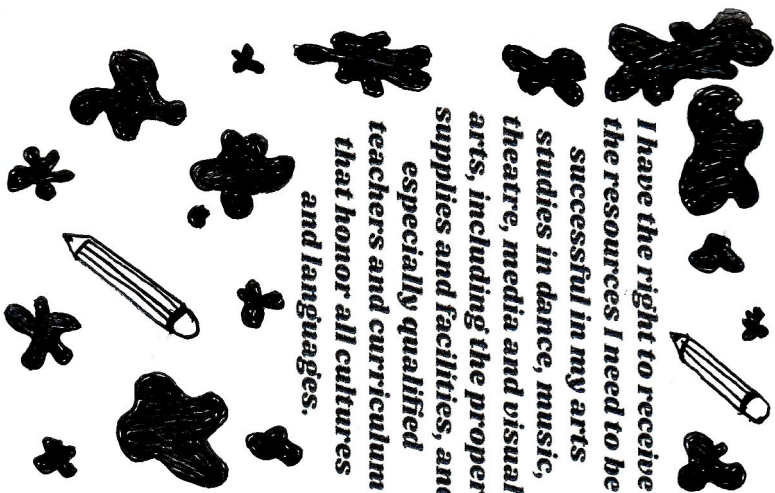
If I've taken away anything from my arts education, it's that art is a catalyst for change. If a picture is worth a 1,000 words, then through arts education, we are able to start conversations.

If I've taken away anything from my arts education, it's that art is a catalyst for change. If a picture is worth a 1,000 words, then through arts education, we are able to start conversations. Students can expand the minds of legislators and lawmakers with arts of any medium. We can reclaim our narratives, and tell our stories the way we want them to be told. We can reshape our societies into the culture we want to see and rewrite our own legacy. We are the risk takers and pacemakers for the rest of the world. We just need lawmakers and school officials to provide us with the tools we need to succeed. ✨

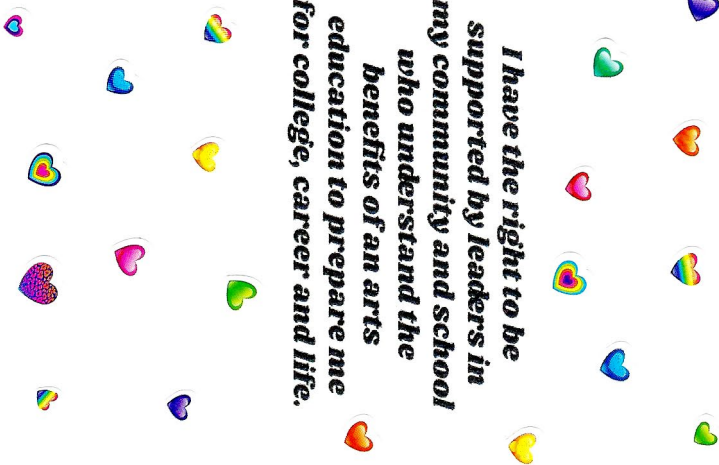
I have the right to engage in arts education that reflects, respects and builds on my culture, language and background.



I have the right to receive the resources I need to be successful in my arts studies in dance, music, theatre, media and visual arts, including the proper supplies and facilities, and especially qualified teachers and curriculum that honor all cultures and languages.



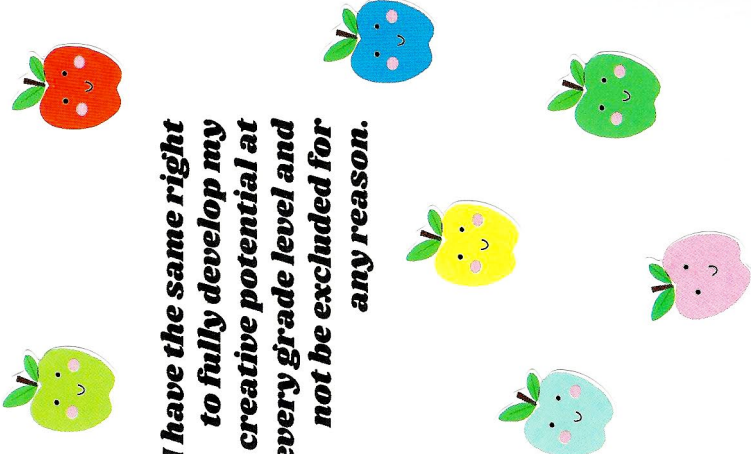
I have the right to be supported by leaders in my community and school who understand the benefits of an arts education to prepare me for college, career and life.



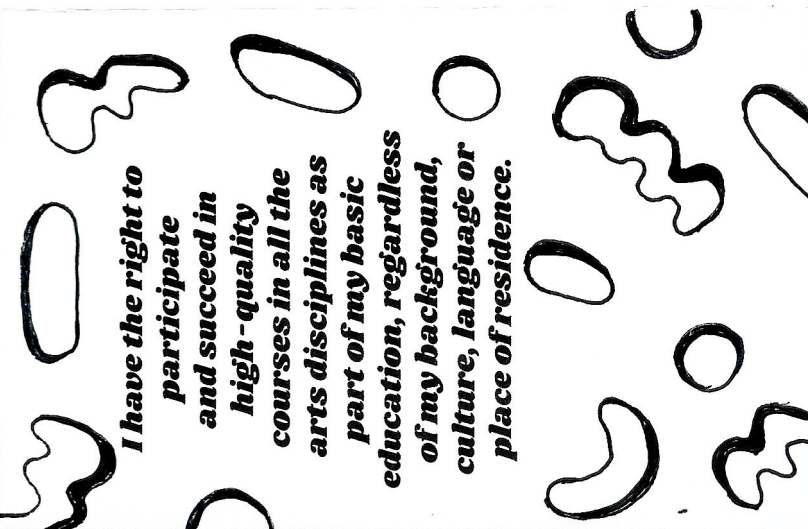
I have the right to learn and practice the arts in a positive environment where everyone understands and acts on the knowledge that I am engaging in valuable and important work.



I have the same right to fully develop my creative potential at every grade level and not be excluded for any reason.



I have the right to participate and succeed in high-quality arts disciplines as part of my basic education, regardless of my background, culture, language or place of residence.



Declaration of the Rights of All Students to Equity in Arts Education



ART IS A CIVIL RIGHT!

These are my rights to

accessible and equitable arts education as a public school student in California.





Politics and Reproductive Health

INTERVIEW BY OLIVIA WEINER
OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

With the 2020 election gearing up, the protection (and erosion) of reproductive rights continues to be a concern. On the news, and on the ground, both sides are aggressively making their cases, but how is this escalating firestorm affecting people on the front lines at places like Planned Parenthood? We asked Claire Kaplan, Director of Clinical Research and Program Director for Gender Affirming Hormonal Care at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England.

What does your every day at Planned Parenthood (PPSNE) look like?

Every day is different! Any day could have me in any one of our offices, traveling nationally, taking meetings, seeing patients, reading, writing, speaking, training. Research is a critical pillar of the PPSNE Mission – to improve reproductive healthcare and access to care for all people.

Planned Parenthood recently announced it is unveiling a new campaign push focused on the 2020 elections. What are your thoughts on how the current administration is attacking the basic right and access to reproductive healthcare for young and trans people?

It is, in my opinion, the politics of cruelty, tied closely to massive corruption and dismantling of democracy in ways we have never seen. While I intensely feel the rage and despair, I am also aware that the attacks on the basic right to healthcare hit people with less economic advantage much harder than they do me. Young people and trans people are especially vulnerable, as are low-income people, people of color, immigrants, refugees, and disabled people. I feel it is my responsibility to fight back politically in my personal life and to provide excellent quality health care in my professional life.

Has Planned Parenthood's decision to withdraw from Title X (public Government funding) affected your everyday interactions with patients, and if so, in what way?

I still provide healthcare the way I always have, but I am concerned about this administration's drive to restrict access to reproductive healthcare and to terrorize immigrant populations. Every day I read about all sorts of immigrant and refugee families who are afraid to answer their doors, afraid to send their children to school, afraid to seek health care.

What made you decide to pursue a career at Planned Parenthood?

Well, this is an interesting question. I don't know if you know this, but I was tossed out of High School for providing birth control information, via an "underground" (unauthorized and confiscated by authorities whenever copies were discovered) newspaper. This was in 1970. I also needed birth control myself, and I had to take three buses across town and I was so scared that I used a fake name to access birth control from Planned Parenthood. There was a time when it was very very hard for young unmarried women to access birth control. I was not just scared, but also furious that life was so hard for young women, and it is my great pleasure to now do the work that I do.

There is a wonderful book that I cannot recommend enough, "The Story of JANE: The Legendary Chicago Women's Abortion Service", by Laura Kaplan (no relation). I can't recommend it strongly enough.

Your focus is, at times on Transgender youth and Why do you think PPSNE provides such a valuable service to transgender youth?

We are here to meet the needs of all people. Everyone deserves quality healthcare provided with dignity and respect. Transgender youth are

at very high risk of violence and self-harming behavior. Many transgender youth do not have the support of their families. We make it clear that all people are welcomed in our Health Centers and in our youth education programs.

Do you have any suggestions for how young people today, in this very important election year can help in the fight for reproductive freedom?

Well, if you are too young to vote, you are never too young to talk to those who can vote and point out the differences between candidates and parties in terms of where they stand. People, for reasons I don't understand, vote against their own best interests at time. There is a saying that because the axe had a handle made of wood, the trees thought the axe was one of them, and so they kept voting for the axe as the forests kept being chopped down. It is essential that people become informed, get involved, share information and support each other.

Just one example of the trouble that I see is that I think there are dangers in social media being "hacked" with false information and I hope that the next generation of young people are going to be smart enough to lead us through some dangerous times and into civility, facts, and truth-telling. I think that kindness can be contagious and I look to be led into the future by young people.*

tance, visibility and open-mindedness in our world, people are figuring out their sexuality younger and younger. Only 66% of Generation Z identifies as straight, compared to the 88% of Baby Boomers who identify as straight. 10% of Generation Z believes LGBTQIA+ equality is the most important issue that needs to be addressed. 70% of Generation Z are comfortable with homosexual relationships compared to 43% of Baby Boomers. These statistics say a lot, but they don't explain why Baby Boomers and Generation Z have such different political views. The main reason is the media and the Internet. When Baby Boomers were growing up, there were no phones, no access to the Internet. Now that there is so much online access, kids are learning that it's normal to not just like the opposite gender or identify as the gender you were assigned at birth. Children are getting iPads before the age of five, and are able to have different opinions on LGBT+ rights because there are so many resources online for them to form their own opinions and not just repeat what their parents say. YouTubers like Jessie Paege, James Charles, Shane Dawson, Nikkie de Jager, and Tyler Oakley are making it so kids from small towns know that there are people from all over the world who don't identify as straight. Shows like Will and Grace, The L Word, Modern Family, Glee, and RuPaul's Drag Race give kids the exposure to the LGBTQIA+ movement that they need. Celebrities like Caitlyn Jenner, Ellen DeGeneres, and Laverne Cox inspire kids to be themselves and to understand everyone's sexuality and gender identity is valid. Singers like Lil Nas X, Miley Cyrus, Halsey, Hayley Kiyoko, and Demi Lovato, who show that sexuality is fluid and on a spectrum. The Internet can give exposure to a lot of horrible things, but one of the amazing things it creates is awareness. Generation Z is the most opinionated generation yet because they've been given so many ways to formulate their own beliefs. This new decade has begun, and so has the beginning of a generation I'm sure will change the world.*

the rise of **LGBTQ** *representation*

BY EVE KAPLAN

We're at the dawn of a new decade, and with a new decade comes a rising generation; Generation Z. In the past decade, LGBTQIA+ rights have come a long way. It was only in 2015 that gay marriage was legalized in the United States of America. Now that there is so much accep-



Whatever Happened to the Women's March?

BY CHARLOTTE KRAMON
OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

On January 20th, 2017, I added the finishing touches to my "Love Trump Hates" poster. I'd carry it through Downtown Los Angeles the next day while chanting my way through the first Women's March with about 400,000 others. This would be my first and last Women's March.

I was 15 years old walking alongside people who were 50, 30, even five or six, but all of us were united by our anger and belief in equity for women and minorities despite a president whose vocabulary included tales of grabbing women's "pussies". Almost a year later, though, *Tablet* published a [report](#) exposing the malicious anti-semitism that infiltrated the March's original administration, the financial uncertainties that divided the people who founded it, and the support of homophobic and anti-Semitic figures.

The report, written by Leah McSweeney and Jacob Siegal, went into extensive investigations and is a worthwhile read, but here's a brief summary: Vanessa Wruble, one of the Women's March founders as well as the founder of Okay Africa, an organization that provides a space for African culture, reached out to activist Michael Skolnik from The Gatherers of Justice Network about the lack of women of color in the feminist movement. Skolnik connected her to Carmen Perrez and Tamika Mallory. They later added

Linda Sarsour to the team.

During one of the initial planning meetings, Perez reportedly said, "Jewish people bore a special collective responsibility as exploiters of black and brown people," adding her support for the conspiracy theory that Jews led the African slave trade.

Mallory told Wruble, a Jew, that her "people" are responsible for inequality because they "hold all the wealth."

She also attended a Nation of Islam Saviour's day event, where Louis Farrakhan, the misogynistic, homophobic, and anti-Semitic leader of NIS, blamed Jews for "degenerate behavior in Hollywood, turning men into women and women into men."

On other occasions, Mallory, Perez, and Sarsour have watched him call Jews "satanic" and the generators of apartheid. Eventually, all the Jewish women on the board left.

Such behavior lent partial explanation to the Women's March "Unity Principles" failing to mention the prevalence anti-semitism. They claimed that Jews weren't directly targeted by Trump, which is false, and apologized for making their "Jewish sisters" feel excluded.

Since the report, the board has revamped itself by [adding three Jewish women](#) and a member of the LGBTQ community. Mallory, Bland, and Sarsour have left. The

March's Unity Principles now include fighting anti-semitism, and the Women's March apologized for its failure to address anti-Semitic behavior. Perez attended anti-Semitism training and published a series of apologetic op-eds, although in an [Atlantic interview](#) last month, she refused to condemn Farrakhan after a line of questioning that eventually led her to say, with hesitation, that zionists should feel welcomed to participate in the march.

Despite its drop-in attendees and multiple sponsors disassociating themselves from the organization, the 2020 Women's March still happened. This year there were no speakers, and the March's biggest points of focus were abortion, immigration, sexual assault, rape, gun restrictions, and gerrymandering. The issues varied based on region, as Women's March has never been as national as they like to believe. Local organizers are the primary enablers of the March, especially as the March has decentralized and lost attendees, and are driven by their passionate desire for long-term change in the way our institutions conceptualize social issues.

Speeches weren't the only missing component in this year's march, though. Yet another marginalized group was excluded

from the Women's March. Black Lives Matter wasn't invited to participate, and it wasn't because they didn't want to, as their requests for information were ignored. The March reasoned that they were focused on encouraging people to vote and told BLM that they hoped to highlight "new voices". Throughout the country, voting laws are designed to suppress voters of color. Racism is present in every institution, and deeming it irrelevant in a march intended to promote issues of social justice is shameful, just like excusing anti-Semitic behavior of its leaders and support of anti-Semitic, homophobic, and misogynistic men like Farrakhan.

The fall of the Women's March offers a valuable lesson: exclusion never works. Our globalized world connected by the internet is one of cultural dispersion where racial, misogynistic, ethnic, and religious oppression become intertwined. Things get out, and if people aren't conscious about what they say behind closed doors, they'll make accidental enemies out of people who could've been their strongest allies. ✱

Perhaps BLM and the Jewish community will unite as targets of the same group. By calling Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories a "genocide," many Zionists and Jews feel alienated by such a charged term originally created to describe the horrors of the Holocaust. Baltimore rabbi Daniel Burg [fears](#) that such anti-Israel rhetoric leads to "anti-Semitic tropes about Jewish power and the way Jewish power is leveraged in the world."

Identity and oppression aren't simple. BLM publically reduced the Israel-Palestine conflict to a simple oppressor-vs-victim scenario. Women's March made excuses for excluding BLM and has supported

people who demonize Jews. Parts of the Jewish community perpetuate ignorance, too; there's just as much racism within the Jewish community as there is anti-Semitism within the black community. If a movement strives to reach a broader range of issues outside their primary goal, they should respect the beliefs, backgrounds, and identities of every individual who shares those broader goals. Women's March did the opposite when it decentralized and expanded into issues of immigration and gun control.

If Zionists who have fought for democracy and social justice can't be feminists and racial justice advocates, and women of color have to put



BILLIE'S BAGGY CLOTHES

BY NADIA RIVERA

Everyone has different ways to stand against society's judgments and rebel against the cycle of what's pretty and what isn't. After all, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder". Even the icons that we look up to are helping to make a statement. One of those icons is someone among our generation.

In a Calvin Klein advertisement,

the alternative singer, Billie Eilish, said, "I never want the world to know everything about me. That's why I wear baggy clothes. Nobody can have an opinion because they haven't seen what's underneath. Nobody can be like, 'she's slim-thick,' 'she's not slim-thick,' 'she's got a flat a**,' 'she's got a fat a**.' No one can say any of that because they don't

know."

Billie shouldn't have to feel so judged that they dress to cover up any curves or lines of their own, nor should anyone else. Multiple fans on Twitter spoke



up about Billie, saying things such as “the fact that Billie Eilish feels the need to wear baggy clothes so people don't have a sexual opinion of her makes me sad af, im sorry its got to this point for women, it's not right” and “Billie is such an inspiration, y'all judged her cuz she wore baggy clothes yet she does it to protect herself from societies judgements and body shaming.” The sad thing is that Billie can still get hate for dressing like a “bum” or “looking like she's homeless”.

As soon as a tweet including a picture of Billie in a tank top alongside the comment, “Billie Eilish is THICK,” went viral, many people began to objectify her. This goes to support my point—society needs to stop objectifying and sexualizing women and men, though it's typically more common with one gender.

How can you help break the cycle? Self-love. In an environment where fear and self-hate are profited off of, loving yourself and being happy is rebellious. You can wear what you want because you like it, not because it's “trendy”. You can go out in public without makeup because everyone is beautiful in their own way. Even if you aren't the typical “pretty girl”, why does that matter? It's what's on the inside that counts. Your personality is what makes you truly beautiful inside and out. ✨

Pressure of Valentine's Day



BY JOANNA IM

HARVARD-WESTLAKE SCHOOL

As soon as Feb. 1 arrived, I could see the rows of chocolates, stuffed animals and roses-lined isles replace the previous Christmas and New Years' decorations.. With romance being a constantly increasing, billion-dollar industry, Valentine's Day has grown into a tradition of purchasing sweets and over-the-top gifts to prove one's love. And while this may seem romantic, the holiday is motivated by industry profit, and can uphold toxic heteronormative values within relationships.

According to CNN, sales of Valentine's Day related decorations and products reached \$18.6 billion in 2018, And with 4.4 billion of those dollars being spent on silver, gold and diamond jewelry, the price of a “satisfactory” Valentine's Day gift, regardless of one's salary or budget, is extremely costly and anything short of this expectation, even if it is a considerate gift, may disappoint a significant other. With a price tag defining a relationship, the Valentine's Day industry has set the precedent that one has to prove their love through material objects, and only serves to reinforce the consumer culture that defines all other holidays and events.

Additionally, the marketing of Valentine's day products often reinforce heteronormative standards of love, including gender norms, as well as general advertising strategies that have historically excluded LGBTQ+ relationships. For example, “His and Hers” gifts pervade the Valentine product selection, and an overwhelming amount of jewelry companies' omit any LGBTQ+ representation in their advertisements. The concept of buying gifts on Valentine's Day largely revolves around the idea that a “bread-winning man” proves his love for a female significant other through material goods.

Yet, Valentine's Day doesn't necessarily have to adhere to toxic relationship norms and consumer culture. Empowering, alternative versions of the holiday such as “Galentine's Day,” which celebrates single women and friends, a renaming of the holiday to “Valentine's Gay,” and promoting homemade Valentine's gifts are only some of the efforts that people have made in order to subvert and reclaim romantic holidays, while also breaking down heteronormativity, consumerism and sexism. ✨

The Hoax of Hallmark: Post-Holiday Season

**BY SOPHIE
FRIEDBERG**
PALISADES HIGH SCHOOL

We've all seen it happen: the leaves turn from green to brown, Thanksgiving ends, and society decides it's now Christmas time. Companies like Hallmark, who capitalize on the Christmas Craze, have made fortunes profiting off our obscene obsession with all things holiday. And, while we've all guiltlessly enjoyed drinking hot cocoa while watching "Home Alone" in our pajamas, you have to admit, these movies perpetuate impossible stereotypes.

'Cuffing Season' was created out of holiday romance movies. "It's a Wonderful Life," "Love Actually", and "Serendipity" are all examples of the killer formula used to capture our hearts — and warp our minds.

Girl meets boy, they hit it off, do a bit of ice skating and then something goes wrong. Girl cries by the fire, boy ponders in the snow, and then it all works out in the end. There's something quite romantic about cold weather, and it stems from classic holiday movies that suggest the best way to stay warm in the winter is by finding a man. Central heating isn't enough, you need your boyfriend's jacket, too.

It's this toxic idea that you need a boyfriend to bring to Christmas dinner, to kiss as the ball drops at midnight and to spend Valentine's day with. These ideas are plastered on billboards and on our TVs. People who don't meet a dashing stranger at Rockefeller Center feel defeated. The girls who once were content with themselves now feel less than whole. They think they *should've* met their person. It is winter, after all.

Cuffing Season is a made-up phenomenon designed to make women feel inferior. Men don't keep us



warm; that is a ridiculous and faulty notion. But, when we feel insecure about our relationship status, what do we turn to? Holiday rom-coms. Maybe they'll give us insight as to what we're doing wrong, what we can do to get the boy and live happily ever after.

The more we watch, the better we memorize the formula. ✱

2019 Feminist Wrap Up: *Where We've Been and Where We're Going*

**BY LILY
KRAMON**

OAKWOOD SCHOOL

2019 is coming to an end, and as activists and justice seekers, it is important to reflect on how we have made progress in the last year and what needs to be addressed in 2020.

There were many positive successes in gender empowerment in 2019. We have more women running in the 2020 election than ever before, thus showing a huge

increase in female involvement in politics and government. In July, the United States women's soccer team won its second consecutive championship and fourth place

GIRLTALK

PRESENTS

BOYTALK



The Best Soda with the Worst Commercials

BY OWEN GENCO-KAMIN

OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

Praised by many as the greatest ad campaign of all time, criticized by more as the most horrific piece of sexist propaganda to ever hit the airwaves, the Doctor Pepper 10 ad series shocked the world on its release.

If you don't know what exactly I'm referring to, do yourself a favor and look up "Doctor Pepper 10 commercial". If you can't spare the 15 seconds to watch, however, I'll regale you with the abridged version.

The commercial features a manly protagonist in the midst of an amazing chase scene.

He proceeds to say that the movie he's in and Doctor Pepper 10 are not intended for women. This is playing off of the stereotype that women don't enjoy action movies, but rather prefer "chick flicks". The commercial continues in a similar way until it reaches the slogan of Doctor Pepper 10, "Doctor Pepper 10; it's not for women".

Almost 10 years later, this ad is still managing to stir up controversy. There are so many unanswered questions, specifically: Is the ad ironic and meant to flip the narrative that low-calorie drinks are for women? Is the ad sexist? Where is the line between offensive and comedic? Would it be considered



sexist if the drink was "not for men"? Does it taste good? Now, I do have experience in some of these fields and I believe I'm qualified to make a statement.

Now I will do this cautiously, since I don't want to ruffle too many proverbial "feathers", but I would feel like a coward if I didn't give my honest input. If you are easily offended, I suggest now is the point where you stop reading.

Those of you who know me know that I am a seasoned soda drinker. I have even gone so far as to make a definitive tier list ranking all the most important sodas.

Some have agreed with me, many have not. I went out of my way to

find Doctor Pepper 10 and answer the most pressing question, and easily the most provocative of the ones I posed: Is Doctor Pepper 10 good?

Short answer: Eh, it's pretty much just Doctor Pepper but slightly worse. Longer answer: When you go in for an initial sip, the primary reaction is one of pure bliss. Rejoice as the carbonation tickles your tonsils, and the perfect flavors mingle with your taste buds. But suddenly, you have to do a double take (I personally gasped)— something is amiss.

You go in for another sip, and something is just slightly misplaced. I can't quite explain the phenomenon. It tastes like Doctor Pepper, but.....it is ever so slightly worse.

MENTAL HEALTH *in* TODAY'S TIMES

BY ANONYMOUS

Suffering from mental health sucks. It's different for everyone who suffers from it, but for me it feels like this weight in my chest and in my head that stops me from feeling the way I should. Some of what should have been the happiest moments in my life have been drowned out by dark thoughts and heavy emotions that I cannot seem to escape. I've suffered from depression for roughly four years now, but it's only been a month since I've opened up to people about it. I've spent so much time trying to tell myself that I don't have depression and doing my best to hide it from my friends and family, but recently I've discovered the importance of being open and talking about mental health and the struggles I face because of it.

I used to tell myself that I would just feel sad sometimes because it was hormones or because that's just human nature to feel upset for no reason sporadically. I didn't want to believe that my mental health was suffering, but what I realize now is that accepting it is the first step in being able to cope with it better. Trying to deny it and push it away only makes it harder to fight and understand.

Once I came to understand that it was more than just hormones and that I was actually suffering from de-

pression, I did absolutely everything in my power to make sure that nobody knew. When I was in seventh grade I had to help my best friend through a really horrible time in her life, and I was put in the position where I felt that I had to be the one to save her life or else her death would be on me, and I wasn't able to cope with that kind of pressure. The last thing I would want is to make anybody feel that way because I told them about my problems with mental health, so I didn't tell anybody in order to not be a burden.

I also didn't want to tell anybody because there has always been this taboo against men being able to express their emotions and be vulnerable, and I always felt pressured to just "man up" and deal with my problems on my own. I didn't want people to see me as one of "those guys" who cries about their mental health and blows it up just for attention. It took me a long time to realize that talking about it isn't the same as manipulating others for sympathy.

I am by no means an expert on how to cope with mental health,



and I most certainly have never claimed to be. That being said, my advice to anybody who is struggling is to be open about it. You are not a burden. You have people who truly care for you and want you to feel better, and not telling them and suffering in silence would hurt them more than you being open and discussing it with them. It is not healthy to keep these feelings bottled up inside; you're just letting it slowly eat at you from within. Nobody thinks you're an attention seeker if you open up about your struggle, the people around just want to see you happy and healthy. Most importantly, do not think you're alone. There are other people going through similar things to what you're going through, and there are people who want to help you. You do not have to suffer in silence. ✨

The Best Policy

BY ANONYMOUS

When I was trying to figure out a fitting topic for this article, I was faced with a dilemma. They say write what you know, so how was I, not being a girl, to write for *GirlTalk Magazine*?¹ Struck by an insurmountable loss of inspiration, I did what I do in all times of great crisis, I ran crying to my mother.

"Mother," I cried out, "What shall I do? I am but a boy, and do not wish to taint the special edition of *GirlTalk* with my uniformed and irrelevant opinions."

"Well, Son," my mother, in her infinite wisdom, said, "You could write about your relationships with girls², or even your romantic relationships.³ Most of all, though, you should write what you know."

I steeled my resolve and took my dear mother's advice in approaching this Herculean task. The result I came upon is indeed a topic with which I am both intimately familiar⁴ and is an integral part of my relationships with many girls.

1 Astute readers may cite that this is in fact *BoyTalk Magazine*. Well done, you're a smartass.

2 Yes, dear reader, they do exist.

3 In a profoundly unjust and shocking twist, these are few and short lived.

4 You could almost say I'm an expert⁵ in the field.

5 For any of my readers possessing a Libertarian persuasion, do not fret. I am not an expert. I have no idea what I'm talking about.

Romantic rejection is a common and natural part of any person's life, and can lead to increased anxiety on the part of both the male and female of the species⁶, but in my experience one consistent problem arises.

When a woman rejects a suitor⁸, she is inclined to offer an excuse as to why he was rebuffed. These excuses are usually expressed as something along the lines of, "It's not you. It's just that my dog died, and I am too paralyzed with grief to engage in a romantic relationship with you at this time." I actually think this is counterproductive and regressive behavior. To many women, excuses such as these can easily be seen as a "white lie"⁹, an act of pity meant to spare the wannabe lover's feelings. The reality, however, is that most men¹⁰ will be equally disappointed

6 My advice here is written with the framing of a heterosexual male courting a female (because this is my personal experience), but could still apply to any different combination of roles and sexual preferences⁷.

7 Not to mention the varied and endless spectrum that gender itself is.

8 Or, as is often my case, a random dude she barely knows.

9 Worry not, Dear Reader. Note that I am not denouncing the use of white lies in general, but rather in the specific situation of rejection.

10 Please be aware of the use of the word "most" here. I have known a number of men with egos as brittle as glass, and as easily snapped as the wishbone on a good Thanksgiving dinner. If a man such as this becomes distraught when rejected honestly, that is his own

because no relationship will occur either way. A direct "no" will clearly demonstrate the situation between both parties. On the other hand, a long winded excuse can actually lead to more problems down the line.

For example, I once asked out a girl, (let's call her Ms. Hertzfeldt¹¹) who told me that she couldn't go out with me because:

a) Her parents were strict about this sort of thing.

b) She would soon be going on a summer holiday through the South of France.¹²

c) She was feeling under the weather.

I'm not stupid, so I got the message; she was simply saying no. The reality was that she just wasn't that into me.¹³ Some of my male friends, however, were not as clear on this notion. After the summer passed, several of them said to me, "You should go see if Ms. Hertzfeldt will date you now; her vacation is over and she is no longer sick, so you've probably got good chances." Their feeble minds could not comprehend the notion that there was a hidden message beneath the surface of those words, but to be honest, their confusion wasn't completely without reason. I've been rejected

fault, not anyone else's.

11 If you don't understand this reference, (as I expect most of you cretins won't), you are a tasteless hack and no true lover of cinema.

12 She wasn't British, so I was as confused as you are.

13 As astonishing as that may be.

many times, and not once have I ever been given a straight, "I'm just not into you." Every single rejection has been accompanied by an excuse like, "I'm just not looking for that sort of thing right now," or the blaming of a myriad of other external factors. Since every single rejection

is accompanied by an excuse, much like the boy who cried wolf, any real, legitimate excuses lose their credibility. In addition, some men¹⁴ think of romance as a game of persistence. If these persistent men become confused as my friends were, they

14 And women.

may continue to pursue their crush post-rejection.¹⁵

15 I'm not trying to victim-blame here. This is undoubtedly the fault of the man, not the woman, but direct messaging would help alleviate the situation. ✱

THE SIMP

BY DIEGO RODRÍGUEZ

OAKWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL

I am obviously no expert in feminist theory but I hope I know enough to tackle an issue I think I know quite well: the social phenomenon known as the simp. Derived from the word simpleton, simp, like most colloquial terms, has many definitions and can be used quite loosely, but for the sake of this article let's call it a man who puts the needs of himself, and at times his friends and family, aside for the sake of a romantic relationship with a woman who does not have matching romantic feelings for him. This comes in many forms, from making large contributions to women on the internet to try to woo them, to allowing a female friend to consume one's social life. I believe that being a simp is mainly an affliction of the straight cis man, but this opinion may be a skewed view based on my own gender identity and sexuality. For the sake of simplicity, for the remainder of the article, when I refer to men I will be referring to straight cis men unless I specifically say otherwise. Some may find this heteronormative, and to those people, I say my intentions are good and this is just the most efficient way to write about the topic.

Before we begin we must answer a question that is as important the

definition itself: What is the opposite of the simp? Though some may think the antithesis of a simp is a chad, I think king is a much more fitting title. The chad is ignorant to feelings of love and has little respect for women while the king embraces these feelings but still retains his self respect. The simp is a man of no self-respect who defines his worth through the adoration of women, while the king, still seeking the affection of women, develops himself as an individual, and this in turn allows him to treat everyone with more respect, himself as well as women.

A distinction must be made between the simp and those in the friend-zone, though they can often overlap. Too often, simps grow sour while in the friend-zone in ways that are necessary and lead to the erosion of their friendship with the person they have feelings for. Similarly, the term "friend-zone" itself is used in a derogatory way that should be too avoided. If one actively tries to move on through setting boundaries but still remains in a friendly relationship with the women they are attracted to, this person is obviously not a simp, though they are still technically in the friend-zone. If anything, this person is a king' able to overcome rejection and continue with their

life in a way that is healthiest for all involved! On top of that, I believe, while women and gay men (as well as other gender identities outside of the binary) can be in the friend-zone, I don't believe they can be simps in the same way that many straight men are. The patriarchal expectations for these groups, though often not very liberating, do not instill the same transactional mindset involved in simpdom. This is why I say simpdom is a uniquely cis straight male affliction.

The king, in his respect for all, is a true feminist. The simp (when he decides to don such a moniker as feminist, which many men seldom do because of its association with femininity) is a feminist in name only. He has been indoctrinated into a belief system that many young boys are fed, that love is a transaction, a sacrifice he makes to support a woman. In exchange for this sacrifice, the woman gives her affection and body to the man which in turn gives his life meaning. This idea often comes from the idea of the prince who fights the dragon to save the princess or the family man who works his life away for his wife and kids. There is an inherent resentment and objectification in these individuals towards women because he perceives them

as commodities which increase his own value. This does not, of course, make the simp malicious in his intent. Men seem to feel lonelier than ever and naturally want to fill this hole with the validation of a woman. They feel an entitlement inherent to those who exist in societies that are built for them: men within the patriarchy, caucasions within western civilization, etc. He seeks only what he decides the world has promised him. He has no more control over the circumstances that make him a simp as anyone has over gender expectations placed upon them.

But of course, simpdom is not a constant illness. I find my previous invocations of the simp to be too

absolute. Much like most emotional mentalities, it ebbs and flows within someone. Most men have a mixture of simpish and kingly qualities that cycle naturally within them. The feminist can, at times, falter and become a simp, while the simp may at times awaken and feel a strong mutual, platonic respect for women as equals. Still, the truth remains that the mediation of simpdom is integral for a healthy life.

The most effective way to help a simp is to treat him with compassion and as a victim of this entitlement rather than someone worthy of scorn or ridicule. Though the term "male empowerment" seems like bizarre meninist terminology, I believe the

improvement of male self-esteem will help erode many symptoms of toxic masculinity. Simpdom is no exemption. In this way I consider the simp a victim of expectation, rather than a victim of oppression. Patriarchy still remains and provides great privilege to men, but that does not mean men do not suffer under it. Any hegemonic system provides strict restrictions to all, even those with privilege. This is a fact that is too often forgotten when looking for solutions to problems of social hierarchy. Too many men are turned off by the very ideas that will embolden them in the future to live their best lives while also uplifting everyone else around them. ✱

