



The F Word



Volume 9 Issue 1

Hello readers, and welcome to the new and improved version of the Lehigh University's Women's Center newsletter! Some of you might know us from past years as *The Women's Word* but this year, we've decided to add a little edge to the newsletter in hopes of catching the attention of some new readers. Instead of the old format we've used in the past of simply recapping events around campus, with *The F Word*, we hope to broaden our horizons and speak out about more global issues regarding women. The topics written about inside have been entirely chosen by the authors – I simply edited and compiled them. The articles, therefore, are heartfelt commentaries on issues the writers are passionate about and wish to spark more discussion about on campus.



Although *The F Word* is a publication of the Women's Center and deals primarily with women's issues, the articles inside cover a diverse range of topics and are written by both men and women alike.

Similarly, although our main readership is most likely female students, we hope to reach faculty and staff members, and maybe even an adventurous man or two!

While I am still very new to this whole "newsletter editing" thing, I envision *The F Word* to eventually include regular columns written by our staff members or other interested contributors on topics they are most interested in and passionate about. I would *love* to see articles on controversial topics and

hear them being discussed around campus as I walk to class. There is so much going on in the world that no one ever talks about and I feel that the Women's Center newsletter is an incredible medium for bringing up these contentious issues.

We hope that these topics will be of interest to you – perhaps even enough so to persuade you to consider contributing an article towards our next issue, on the subject matter of your choice. Submissions from different contingencies on campus would provide a variety of diverse viewpoints and perspectives which would allow for a much more interesting read.

Depending on how busy things get here in the Center, we were hoping to come out with a new issue about once or twice each semester. You can access this newsletter through the Women's Center website, <http://www.lehigh.edu/~inwnc> and by following the link to *The Women's Word*.

We hope you enjoy the articles inside and find *The F Word* a refreshing change from other university publications. Also, please feel free to send us feedback at inwnc@lehigh.edu. Thanks and enjoy! ~ Dianna Hank

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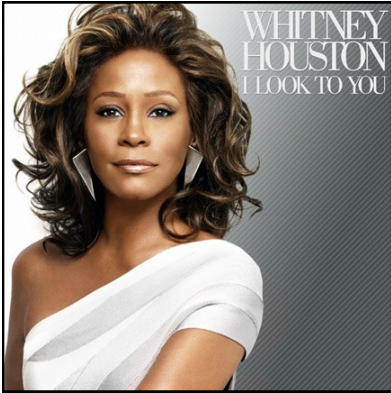
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FRESH

By: Eddie Brack

Whitney Houston has recently returned to the pop music scene to claim a few well-deserved positions at the top of the U.S. Billboard Charts, with her fourth number-one album and her debut single entitled "I Look to You". According to the Nielson SoundScan, which is an information system that tracks sales of music in the U.S., her new release was capable of generating 304,801 consumer purchases in the first week of album sales, something rare in an industry where unlawful downloading and file sharing and distribution are prevalent. With this comeback album of hers, Whitney Houston has overcome the odds and been successful in more ways than one.



The cover of Houston's new album, *I Look to You*

This 2009 Arista Records Recording is her first since the numerous obstacles that manifested in her life during the past few years, including drug addiction and abuse and a few unhealthy relationships (particularly the one with Bobby Brown.) Thus far, the album has received an array of different reviews. "By far the best thing that Whitney has recorded since *The Preacher's Wife* soundtrack. The voice has lost some of its smoothness and power, but it's still unmistakably Whitney", one listener said.

Another listener declared, "*I Look to You* is neither perfect nor athletically impressive. Like her now slightly rough voice, it is a raw and exquisitely flawed exercise in theatrical vulnerability, a mea culpa with a fab dance beat. Sometimes it falls on its face; elsewhere, it breaks your heart in deliciously dramatic ways." The vast majority of her listeners love her new music, and admire her comeback story.

In a recent interview with *Ebony* magazine chronicling her reemergence into the music industry, Whitney stated, "I shed a lot of stuff, a lot of unnecessary weight in the last three or four years. I left a lot of old luggage behind, and when I did, the blessings just started pouring on me, and the light in my spirit started to lift again. I'm really humbled, and I thank God that people love me, but I [really] thank God that God loves me. I thank Him for chastening my heart, for never letting go. What I did sometimes ... I went off and did my thing, but He never let me go."

For her poise and grace in her rise from the darkness and melancholy of her past, and for her new and incredible album, Whitney Houston is this month's *Fresh*.

Reclaiming the Kitchen: Breaking Stereotypes with Soufflés

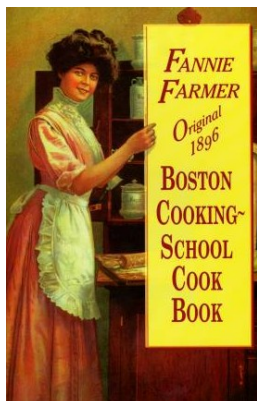
By: Martina E. Russial

What do most people think of when they see the image of woman in the kitchen, wearing an apron and *slaving* over a hot stove? The idea that this woman must *clearly* be a subservient housewife, complete with a ribbon in her hair, perfect red lipstick on her lips, and a huge pot roast dinner and martini especially prepared for her husband to devour once he gets home from work, is the stereotype most people would turn to.



However, in recent years, the influences of women like Fannie Farmer and Julia Child have changed this previously viewed role of tacit compliance to one of untamable power. At the turn of the century, Fannie Farmer became the first woman in America to attack cuisine in a public forum. As a result of her courageous undertakings, she was able to bring the idea of cooking as an occupation, rather than just a household chore, to women all throughout the country. She created a cooking school in order to teach women of lower stations the tools they would need to get work as cooks.

Farmer also developed courses for women who were stuck in their homes. This way, she could help them get out and do something different with their lives in order to better their homes and their stations. She began to standardize modern cooking methods by making easy to follow directions and recipes.



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THE WOMEN OF WEEN: TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE

By: Nezy Smith

WEEN is the Women in Entertainment Empowerment Network. WEEN started approximately three years ago with a group of three friends. These friends were successful African-American women working for companies such as BET and MTV, who wanted to share their success stories with other women and young girls across the nation. To do this, they decided to make WEEN an interactive mentorship for women that want to work in the entertainment industry. The group wants to empower young women and enlighten young females about the obstacles they faced before they became successful. To do this, WEEN tours cities such as Atlanta, Georgia, New York, Houston, Texas, and more. During these tours, there are four main panels discussing health, careers, relationships, and financial literacy.

For the health care panel, four professional health care advisors such as dentists, doctors, HIV activists, and more, informed young women on how to care for themselves. One of the main topics discussed was women needing health coverage. Women need health coverage because they are busy taking care of others, especially family members, and often forget to give care to themselves. Many of these women also have no health insurance and cannot visit a doctor to get a check-up if something is wrong. If this woman has an illness such as an STD, she cannot be cured because she has no health insurance, which unfortunately can result in her death.

On the career panel, the overall topic was how to work. First, you must find your passion. Second, you need to expose yourself to work you want to do and work you do not want to do, in order to develop skills that may be useful in the future. No matter what the work is, it's important to try to be good at it and be humble throughout the experience. After you develop skills and begin to work, make sure you work hard and allow your work to speak for you. Even if you are starting at the bottom, work harder and show your employer that you can move up the ladder.

"Unfortunately, finding a good man to do these things cannot be possible if a woman does not truly know and love herself."

During the finance panel, advisors gave women simple financial advice. For instance, for unemployed women going on a job interview, it is convenient to do research on the position so you are better prepared. Gain intellect and use resources to get yourself ahead of the game. The advice given to women who are currently working was to invest, save, and do research. When trying to take out a loan or apply for a credit card, it's important to read the fine print. Research your credit score and what type of credit you have. Do not take out a loan if you don't have the money to pay for the loan, the interest, and any taxes. However, if you have a career and want to make more money, it is advised that you invest in mom and pop shops. Why spend more money to make money, then make money off a small company that is making money.

Last but not least, there was a relationship panel. It was noted that women are quick to want a man to give them everything, yet often do not think about what they can bring to the table in a relationship. The advice given to all women was to first love yourself. Women expect men to compliment them and boost their self-esteem because there are few or no positive male figures in their lives. Unfortunately, finding a good man to do these things cannot be possible if a woman does not truly know and love herself. Women need to stop living in denial and be true to themselves. It is imperative to know your core values, stand your ground, and delay gratification in order to have a successful relationship.

"Women need health coverage because they are busy taking care of others, especially family members, and often forget to give care to themselves"



One million strong...
Executives in Entertainment Taking Back Responsibility
Women in Entertainment Empowerment Network

SECOND CHANCES:

Compassion in the Social Justice System

By: Jacquelin Scully

Thanks to a community service requirement in a class I took last year, I was given the amazing opportunity to visit SCI-Muncy, a Pennsylvania women's prison. I toured the prison with the assistant warden, Ed, who was objective enough to point out difficulties in our country's punitive system. The one problem that this prison had that surprised me the most was the lack of motivation and support many of the incarcerated women had, causing them to end up in prison over and over again. This came as such a shock to me mostly because the assistant warden, Ed, was convinced that it could be easily amended.



Many of the inmates I saw at SCI-Muncy were fairly young women who were serving three to five years for drug charges. Most of these women grew up in rough parts of cities with little to no familial support. Because of this, they lacked the resources to acquire educations or reliable jobs. With no one to turn to, many devoted themselves to boyfriends or friends who were major drug dealers. Obviously, these women eventually got caught with the drugs they were transporting for these "friends," and went to prison. Once in prison, these "friends" would be the women's only visitors. Therefore, as soon as the inmates finished their terms, they would go right back to where they started – transporting illegal substances for the "loyal friends" that had actually abandoned them not that long ago. Most of the women in these situations would end up back at SCI-Muncy over and over again with more and more time to serve, all due to the same root problem.



What bothered Ed (and later me) most about the situation was that he believed that many of the women *would* turn their lives around if only they had resources to show them the way. Most were not bad people; they just needed ways to support themselves, and had only been exposed to quick, easy, illegal ways. Because of this, Ed thought change was very possible. Even if it couldn't come through friends or family, Ed believed that all it took was some motivation or someone to talk to in order to begin to lead a better life. SCI-Muncy attempted to start programs to positively impact the women, such as job training, GED courses, college classes, and even programs to raise Seeing Eye dogs. Programs like these gave the women the foundations they needed to learn about previously unknown opportunities, and the confidence to pursue them.



As successful as these programs often are, Ed explained that the biggest obstacles are money and public opinion. Honest citizens don't want prison to be fun, and it does seem that allowing inmates to grow gardens and train puppies makes their jail time less of a punishment and more entertaining. However, while it may seem this way, the programs provide a lot more than just entertainment. They give young women who have never believed in themselves other options for their lives instead of just criminal behavior. An entire lifetime shouldn't be thrown away because a young woman got involved with the wrong crowd and participated in a non-violent drug crime. Awareness needs to be raised about the myths surrounding these programs, in order to help the women who so desperately need them. If allowing these programs to exist helps the women to become better, more honest citizens, everyone will benefit. Even if only a few lives are changed, the world will become a better place, thanks to compassion and the desire to give underprivileged people the opportunity to get a second chance at life.

SHE'S GOT GAME:

FEMALE ATHLETE DISCUSSION SERIES

By: Hailey Coonrad

On the surface, female athletes may appear to emit high levels of self-confidence and satisfaction with their own bodies. And some of the time, this is true. *We can* be empowered by our strong bodies and what we are capable of accomplishing physically. *We are* able to be a part of the cultural institution of sport in a passionate and dedicated way that not all people get to experience. Yet, underneath it all, there is a sea of uncertainty and discontent with how we feel in the scope of it all.

“Female athletes live and breathe a paradox every day.”



Female athletes live and breathe a paradox every day. The institution of sport has been controlled by male figures and ideas of masculinity ever since its inception. Therefore, breaking this mold has proven to be a very challenging task. The advancement of women in sports has most definitely seen a positive shift but there is still so much more room to grow. I believe that in order for this change to occur, the athletes fighting for the cause need to feel empowered, confident, optimistic, and uninhibited. I believe there is no better way to get to this point than to unite as one, sort through some of these looming concerns, and tackle the problem together at full force.

The *She's Got Game* female athlete discussion series is a new initiative at Lehigh that is designed to give female athletes a forum to share the experiences they have had as athletes and as females on this campus. As we saw from the first discussion last month, these experiences range across a broad spectrum touching on issues of body image, femininity, body types, clothing, media representations, muscularity, and self confidence. I believe that it is extremely important for these discussions to take place, and this forum has created an open space to facilitate sharing and talking about some of these unchartered and even taboo topics. We hope that these discussions will be the spark for many ongoing conversations in the years to come.



Discussion Topics:

- November 4th : Sisterhood in Sport
- December 2nd : The Loss of Women in College Athletics Programs
- February 3rd : Is Feminism Like a Jersey?
- March 3rd : What's Empowerment Got to Do with It?
- April 7th : Final Discussion Wrap Up

Global Beauty: A Worldwide Question

By Andrea D. Espinoza

If there is one thing in the world that I am sure many women at Lehigh have heard throughout their lives, it is this: “True beauty is on the *inside*.” When we have bad hair days, acne, or other physical calamities, we go running to our parental figures who soothe us with messages of hope that mankind will see past the huge pimples on our foreheads and the frizz that keeps our hair from looking like Gisele Bundchen’s. If, however, we are supposed to regard these messages as truths, why is it, then, that most women around the world still spend such significant amounts of money on making themselves “look beautiful”?

In the episode of *The Oprah Winfrey Show* entitled, “Beauty around the World,” Oprah sent journalist Mara Schiavocampo on a global trek to find out not only what women of all ages in different countries considered to be beautiful about themselves, but also how they maintained it. The results were quite shocking. Schiavocampo discovered that in Japan, women believe that having beautiful skin is the most crucial aspect of achieving true beauty. They believe that “You are what you eat.” Therefore, women in Japan eat foods with key anti-aging ingredients, such as collagen, which is what helps to repair skin damage. Many restaurants in Japan have collagen rich menus, and women often eat meats rich in the substance, or they drink it mixed into water or tea. Another practice they use to maintain their youthful looks is mixing a powder made from nightingale droppings in with their facial washes.

As I continued to watch this episode, I became more and more paranoid about my own methods of beauty retention. Had I turned into this desperate witch who was on a search for essentially, the perfect fountain of youth? I mean, I have come a long way from my freshman year, when I spent most paychecks on Clinique products in order to bring some sense of equilibrium to my acne ridden skin. In the spring of my sophomore year, I started to cut back on the number of products I used and instead, created a basic routine that would go the distance. As a result of my reformation, I thought that I was safe in saying that I didn’t really care about beauty that much. That show was a big reality check.

I then started to reflect on my classmates, specifically women, and their routines of maintaining their beauty. In my house, I am the person with the most complicated routine, and I only use four products in total. Most girls use one or two, and they are fine. Most of them say, “I don’t have time for that” or “That is way too complicated for me.” They ask me why I spend so much time on my skin and I give them this answer: “My skin has always troubled me, so I have to be careful.” It is the truth. Puberty hit me in sixth grade, and acne was the first indicator. My mom has spent crazy amounts of money trying to make it go away for the past ten years. Because of what I went through with acne, I’m very careful about what I put on my skin.

I still have one question that *The Oprah Show* didn’t answer: Is beauty something that depends on what you eat and what cosmetic products you buy at Bigelow’s or Sephora, or is it an attitude about being self confident in what you choose to do in your life? Can beauty be found in the power of the dollar, or is it as Sasha Fierce says, “all about swagger?” I’m still finding out the answer to that question.



Reclaiming the Kitchen continued from pg. 2

The term “a heaping teaspoon” would never be found in any of her recipes. Instead of the flowery and esoteric approach to cooking many female cookbook authors took, Farmer, who loved food herself, made recipes succinct and easily understandable. Julia Child, as many people saw in the new movie, *Julie & Julia*, was a verifiable hot-house of female empowerment in the kitchen. She went to France after World War II and began her culinary education with force. She was cooking among men and competing with men in the kitchen in a way that had never occurred before. She, Simone Beck, and Louisette Bertholle began teaching cooking to American women in the informal setting of Child’s home in Paris.

When Child returned to the United States, she quickly became a pop culture icon. Even today, you can still catch reruns of Julia Child mixing a little too much wine in with everything and showing her incredible affinity to butter. She followed Farmer who made cooking accessible and went on to become an icon in a predominately male field by making cooking fun and easy.

These women made cooking a field rather than a hobby or a chore. They burst the bubble of the male chef icon and brought a new livelihood to women of their time. Ultimately, they were the ones who made the kitchen a creative sphere rather than a prison.



Upcoming Events!

What: Brown Bag Discussion: “Rape Fantasy”

When: Thursday, October 29th 12 - 1 PM

Where: The M Room, UC C204

What: Female Athlete Discussion Series:
Sisterhood in Sport

When: Wednesday, November 4th
12:10 - 1 PM

Where: Women’s Center, UC C207

What: Speaker - Hallie Bond:
“Women & Quilting: A History”

When: Monday, November 9th 4:10-5:40 PM

Where: TBA

What: Brown Bag Discussion: Halloween
Costumes & Body Image

When: Friday, October 30th 12 - 1 PM

Where: Women’s Center, UC C207

Hosted by the Body Empowerment Alliance

What: “Dia de los Muertos” - Luminarias

When: Thursday, November 5th
5:00 - 7:30 PM

Where: UC Front Lawn

What: Women’s Leadership Workshop

When: Wednesday, November 18th 4-6 PM

Where: Maginness Hall

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