THE CURRENT OF THE WORLD HAS ITS BOUNDARIES, OTHERWISE IT COULD HAVE NO EXISTENCE,
But its purpose is not shown in the boundaries which restrain it,

BUT IN ITS

MOVEMENT,

which is toward PERFECTION.

—Rabindranath Tagore
Acknowledgements
The New College Review would like to thank Laura Lineberry and David Jones for their time and expert advice, Dr. Jerry Rosenberg and the New College Radio Lab for the broadcast opportunity and all of the New College faculty and staff for their continued support for this publication.
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"The mentally active scholar will acknowledge, I think, that his mind roams far and wide. All is grist that comes to his mill, and he does not limit his supply of grain to any one fenced-off field."

—John Dewey

On the one hand, New College students and faculty are a highly skeptical group when it comes to "boundaries." We’re inclined to hop, skip and jump our way across barriers—whether they be markers of identity, disciplinary boxes, or hierarchies of privilege and status. And yet, on the other hand, our urgent knowledge quest makes us highly aware of the reality of boundaries. Most any New College student can tell stories of being told "stay clear" and can further speak of the costs of ignoring such warnings. All boundaries speak of and to the human need to compartmentalize although that urge can serve things as conceptually different as private property and the classification of knowledge.

We remain a diverse and complex community of learners. Some of us look to cross boundaries while some prefer to sit on one edge or another and soak up the view from the margin. Others reject spiritual boundaries but insist on the necessity of private experience, of real, tangible personal boundaries. Some folks will complete their education within the real grounds of the University of Alabama and relish the safety and manageability of the "campus." For others, the "university" must always be boundless and has little to do with any specific physical space.

Do we share any common experience of boundaries and borders? It's highly unlikely. What I have seen and continue to see, however, is a seeking spirit amongst New College students and their allies that urgently evaluates each and every border with attention to its potential (or lack thereof) to serve justice and learning.

Congratulations to the New College Review editors and writers on another superb issue. Welcome aboard to Advisor Lisa Eno for her rookie trip with our messy, motley and loving crew.

Jim Hall
Director
The journey begins...
My father and I have a very complex relationship. Sometimes I feel he is very dark and disapproving. I always know that he loves me. I know when I come home battered and bloody, he will pick me up, clean my wounds and send me back into the world. We have very different viewpoints—him, a 50-year-old religious conservative, me, a young socialist with multiple facial piercings. This leads to many heated debates, which I greatly enjoy. This letter is in that vein.

Dear Dad,

I have a bone to pick with you. I know you think I am behaving erratically and ruining my life. Really, though, I don't have the power to do that. I don't have free will.

Every action each of us makes is dictated by other actions that paved the way. Nothing can happen that hasn't been occurring since the beginning of time. Events and behaviors just unfold around us. We can pretend we are making choices, but what we would choose has actually already been determined. Chemical processes are rolling through our brains to complete something before we ever consciously decide to do it.

Let's talk genetics. I believe that everything about us is genetically determined. I suspect you are inclined to disagree, but hear me out. I have done a lot of research concerning twins and the results are pretty conclusive. Even when raised apart, identical twins are creepily similar.

The twin studies I reference were conducted with identical twins raised separately since birth. In one particular case, the brothers were raised in separate
countries by one of their parents. They didn't meet until they were 30 years old, but when they saw each other they were wearing the same outfit. They both played tennis, collected rubber bands around their wrists, just like their father, even though only one of them had ever met him. They hated each other; they were highly disturbed that there was someone else exactly like them and decided never to see each other again.

In another case, twin brothers, again raised separately, were found each of whom retired from a power company after sustaining significant shock while working on high wires. Separated twins often hold the same jobs, marry people with the same names, wear identical rings on their fingers, and have the same odd personal habits, all without ever meeting each other. This is a powerful testament to the hold that genes have over our lives.

Perhaps you are familiar with the Human Genome Project, which was begun in 1990 to identify all of the genes in human DNA. The scientists working on the project have found genes for all sorts of things—everything from the blue of my eyes to the shape of my nails to the chemical makeup of my brain. There is a gene for schizophrenia.

Look at Punnet Squares. These little charts explain how a gene will be mathematically distributed within a generation. In a simple example where the parents each carry one dominant and one recessive gene for a trait, 75 percent of their offspring will display the trait and 25 percent will not. It becomes more
complicated. The more genes that are involved, the more complicated the calculation. Some genes have codominance. For instance, when a gene for brown eyes and a gene for blue eyes are combined the result is green eyes.

You can look at our family and see the ingredients that create our genetic cocktails. Our dispositions, talents, and even our quirky habits can all be traced back to our genes—and to our parents and grandparents. You could say that I tend to be a pack rat because I've seen Mom do it, except that the behavior ceases when I am on certain medications. There is a chemically induced need to collect things. It's all inside the brain.

The brain is a marvel. Chemicals shoot between neurons in response to stimulus to create thought and action. In one study, a doctor connected electrodes to the brains of patients who had brain surgery. He discovered that if he stimulated a certain area of a patient's brain he could always make that patient raise his or her arm. He did not tell the patients what he was doing and every time, the patient would apologize for raising his or her arm and explain he or she had done it to bat away a fly or to scratch an itch. The patients always believed they had raised their arms of their own accord. This is an example of how the brain creates conscious intent for chemical firings that are not consciously controllable.

The brain is made up of nerve cells called neurons. These cells have long
"There is nothing that anyone can do to give himself or herself schizophrenia."

cable-like axons that end in tiny nerve endings that connect to other cells. There are a variety of different electrochemical transmitters that are sent along these pathways, the best known of which is serotonin, the chemical responsible for feelings of happiness.

My brain structure is different from that of the general population. My schizophrenia genes have caused my brain to not develop normally. It is similar to the brain of a child, underdeveloped in parts.

One of the problems characteristic of schizophrenia is that it induces chemical storms inside the brain. This flood of chemical activity causes a breakdown in the ability to perceive reality. Every time one of these storms occurs, it damages the brain, permanently blunting its ability to function.

One theory holds that schizophrenia is caused by lack of circulation of dopamine, another neurochemical. This produces feelings of paranoia, social inhibition and poor working memory. During a psychotic episode, schizophrenics often hear or see frightening and bizarre things that are not really there.

There is nothing that anyone can do to give himself or herself schizophrenia. No amount of dancing or staying out late can cause the brain structure to change. Although many symptoms do not manifest until early adulthood, the disorder has been there, though dormant, during the patient's entire life.

Though incurable, schizophrenia is manageable. Not so long ago, sufferers were institutionalized, subjected to shock therapy and lobotomies. Today, however, there is good medication that can prevent the barrage of chemicals that causes
It is heartbreaking to know that your father believes the breakdown of your brain’s functioning to be your fault.

psychosis. However, no one is sure how exactly psychopharmaceuticals work.

It is sobering to realize that the functioning of your life depends on a pill taken twice a day. It is heartbreaking to know that your father believes the breakdown of your brain’s functioning to be your fault.

Here is a line from one of my favorite songs: I know that it’s not my fault! I know that it’s not yours either. You can’t help what your genes are any more than I can. Your parents couldn’t change their genes, nor could your grandparents or your great-grandparents. Do you see what I mean about there being no free will? Who I am is determined by the genetic makeup of countless generations of people leading up to me. I could think of myself as the pinnacle of genetic determination, which started at the beginning of time. I don’t, though. I am not the end of the line, but just another link in the chain. I just happen to be a schizophrenic link. I might rather be the genius supermodel link, but I didn’t get to choose to be who I am. I have to take what I have and be proud of it, to learn to appreciate the good I inherited and accept the not-so-good. You should, too. NCR

With Love,

Samantha
It's the tightness in my chest when I feel like I can't breathe. It's the butterflies in my stomach that make me feel like I'm going to throw up. It's the sweat on my palms that I can't wring out. It is 10:30 on a Sunday night; I have six class projects due this week, I have to work in the morning, I don't know what I am going to wear; my cell phone bill is overdue again, and I am out of Xanax.

More and more often over the last four years, I have felt my body being taken over by this force. Sometimes it is just a mental battle, but more often than not I am unexpectedly debilitated by physical symptoms. I am often consumed by worry. I can worry about anything and usually do. The prospect of being hit so hard by an unforeseen power lingers over me, threatening me daily. It's anxiety.

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental disorders. According to www.panic-anxiety.com, 20 million people in the United States suffer from some kind of anxiety disorder. I wish I could say that just knowing other people struggle with such an unpredictable evil makes me feel better, but it doesn't. In fact, it makes me mad. Why do we have to suffer like this?

The anxiety those 20 million Americans suffer from is different from the "stress" we all so often describe. There is also a difference between good stress and bad stress. Yes, stress can be good for you. Stress is the wear and tear our bodies experience as we adjust to our continually changing environments. It has physical and emotional effects, and it can create positive or negative feelings. Good stressors, or “eustress,” are situations or events that we think of as positive, but which still...
trigger the human stress response—fight or flight.

The fight or flight response is a complex physiological and biochemical reaction that takes place in the human body during situations of threat or stress (see Figure 1). The response is an alarm reaction on which primitive man relied for survival. In prehistoric times, a threatening wild animal would have triggered this response; today the same reaction can be caused by pressure at work or school. Fight or flight is the cause for butterflies in your stomach, the lump in your throat that makes it hard to swallow and the feeling that you have to tinkle even though you just went.

It is good to feel this way from time to time. A certain amount of eustress is motivating, energizing and even lifesaving. In fact, depression occurs when a person doesn't experience any stress. When people don't have enough down time after the stress response their bodies get worn down and their attitude toward the stressors changes, turning good stress into bad stress. If stressors are continually thrust at a person who is not dealing with stress in a positive manner, physical reactions such as irritability, tenseness and anxiety result. When anxiety begins seeping into everyday life, it becomes a problem. When feelings of doom eat at you all the time without a specific cause, stress becomes destructive.

Why, exactly, are so many Americans so incapacitated by bad stress? It would seem that we could eliminate what seems like such a treatable disease. Many Americans have good access to health care; we have decent access to mental health information, whether in the form of therapy or self-

“When anxiety begins seeping into everyday life, it becomes a problem.”
Symptom | Physical Reaction
--- | ---
Headaches, Dizziness | The brain sends a biochemical message to the pituitary gland, which releases the hormone ACTH which then triggers adrenal gland
Blurred Vision | Mouth goes dry
Difficulty Swallowing | Pupils dilate
Aching Neck, Backache | Neck and shoulder muscles tense—Large skeletal muscles contract for ready action
Over Breathing—Chest Pains, Tingling, Palpitations, Asthma | Breathing becomes faster and shallower supplying more oxygen to muscles
High Blood Pressure | Heart pumps faster and blood pressure rises
Excess Sugar in Blood, Indigestion | Liver releases stored sugar to provide fuel for quick energy
Nausea, Indigestion, Ulcers | Adrenalin and nonadrenalin are released
Excess Sweating, Blushing | Digestion slows down or ceases as blood is diverted away from the stomach
Frequent Urination, Diarrhea | The body cools itself by perspiring: blood vessels and capillaries move close to skin surface
Muscles at opening of anus and bladder are relaxed

Fight or Flight: The body's arousal response
help advice. Yet stress and anxiety eat at us regardless.

According to the 1999 Surgeon General Mental Health Report, the excessive worries associated with generalized anxiety disorder pertain to many areas—work, relationships, finances, the well being of one’s family, potential misfortune and impending deadlines. What else is there?

Many of my stressors center around mainstays of college life: deadlines, scheduling conflicts and money—too little of it. Several college students I interviewed cited similar worries. Chief among them: juggling the various demands imposed on them. They are stressed by their class workloads. They are stressed because they want to graduate from college sooner than later. They are stressed about making enough money to support the lifestyle they want to lead, and as a result they have to have jobs which cause stress as well. These causes—and the many others they cited—have something in common: Each of the issues is driven by societal expectations and none of the resulting stress is considered to be positive.

A licensed professional counselor (LPC) interviewed about these subjects concurred that people today are indeed pressured by societal expectations. College students in particular, she noted, have more pressure placed on them today due to the sluggish economy of the last few years. She said that parents pound in the idea of succeeding; they want their children to do well and, in turn, get good jobs.

Excessive debt adds an additional burden to today’s young adults. Between increasing tuition and the rising cost of living, students are taking out large loans and opening up credit cards. These factors raise the minimum salary a student needs after graduation. On top of that, jobs are not readily available. Although the economy is said to be steadily improving, the job market still struggles. Recent graduates are not guaranteed jobs. In fact, lucky is the graduate who lands an entry-
level position in his or her degree field.

Coming out of college, graduates don't get a break. Since high-paying jobs are hard to come by and many parents expect their adult children to be self-supporting, a new wave of stress strikes. Within six months, recent graduates have to start payment on their college loans, moving costs accumulate and the increased cost of living becomes a factor. New material expectations set in. Graduates feel pressure to live at a higher standard of living. They feel like they have to buy a house with new furniture, a new car, new business attire, etc... The stress can easily compound and become such a negative force.

Ideally, we could live our lives at a slower speed, unlike our current feverish pace. Companies in other countries, like Mexico and Italy, close for two hours during lunch. Italians and Mexicans don't have to speed to a fast food restaurant for lunch, then eat their non-nutritional meals out of paper wrappers while standing in lines to pay their water bills. There isn't the same sense of urgency—the same pressure—that lingers over Americans' heads.

It seems we don't value down time. Americans have some of the shortest vacation times in the world. If we're lucky, our employers might allow us two weeks off during the entire year. Europeans, on the other hand, are allotted about one month off from work. They have an opportunity to relax and to put life into perspective without worrying about what needs to be done before work on Monday morning. Work shouldn't dictate life, and other countries seem to understand that.

"Ideally, we could live our lives at a slower speed, unlike our current feverish pace."

10
It's not necessarily practical to move to Italy. Eliminating stress completely isn't desirable either; some stress, after all, is healthy. The key is learning how to manage stress (Figure 2).

The first step toward tackling stress is to identify that it is a problem. This seemingly obvious advice is important. Although many of us recognize that we are stressed out, we don't realize that it is a problem. This is perhaps one of the biggest reasons so many Americans struggle so much with stress and anxiety. They simply don't recognize the problem.

The next step is to observe what exactly causes the stress. Recognize how it affects you, understand how to deal with it, and learn how to protect yourself from potentially harmful stress.

The most important thing to do while approaching stress is to be proactive, not reactive. A bulletin board at the Russell Student Health Center passes along good advice: It states that people who view stressful situations as chances for growth usually avoid stress-related symptoms. If people who struggle with overwhelming stress can reposition their thoughts, it follows that they can beat stress and anxiety.

People should also ask themselves how much personal control they actually
have over a situation. Many times we cannot rationally prevent a negative event from occurring. When this is the case, we need to acknowledge that and tell ourselves that we do have control over our reactions. Instead of internalizing the anxiety caused by the event, seek out a method for turning it into a positive experience.

My major is multimedia visual communication. I work with computers quite a bit, and I have learned that they are not the most reliable machines. Recently, a Mac randomly sabotaged my ZIP disk with an entire semester’s worth of graphic design projects on it. My only means of recovering the work was rebuilding it based on rough drafts safely tucked away in a notebook.

With finals only two weeks away, I went to the computer lab to re-create my projects. Next thing I knew, the notebook containing four months worth of research, sketches and assignments had disappeared. Soon after, every lost and found on campus had my name, number, a description of my notebook—everything short of a DNA sample. Every bit of work accumulated for my final was gone for good. Nausea began creeping up my throat; I had to regroup. I realized that at that moment, I had no control over the loss of the disk or the notebook. By remembering the mantra my therapist had taught me—be proactive not reactive—I sobered up.

I kicked into super-creative mode and re-created my work. Not only did I learn a valuable lesson backing up my work, but I also produced better-quality projects than those I lost.

Before my visits with my therapist, I would have been debilitated by the loss of those files, I would have crumbled. My anxiety would have kept me in bed for days, beating myself up for stupidity and afraid of the
consequences. Instead I repeated my mantra and came out of the situation having learned valuable life lessons.

Relaxation techniques help ease my physical symptoms. Deep breathing is instantly calming. I first exhale all the air in my lungs, and then inhale through my nose until my lungs and gut feel like they might pop. Then I slowly release the air through my mouth and repeat. By doing this, I am able to send oxygen to my brain and regain focus.

Healthy eating, moderate exercise and adequate sleep are, I have learned, essential. Alcohol consumption should be limited, smoking avoided. A body bombarded relentlessly by stressors needs to be healthy and well nourished for battle. It's a poor excuse, but I know that the unhealthy lifestyle I led as a college student has led to my struggle with anxiety. Pizza, beer and all-night cram sessions wear a body out.

Sometimes more help is needed to manage the angst. A general rule to follow when dealing with anxiety: Seek therapy if overwhelming stress has continued for two or more weeks. Specific anxiety treatment includes talk therapy and developing relaxation techniques such as the deep-breathing exercise above. By meeting with a professional, the barriers to overcoming anxiety start to crumble.

Although simply visiting a therapist works for some people, I needed a little more help. I chose medication as an addition to my anxiety-fighting regime. The most common drugs prescribed to anxiety-ridden college students are Xanax and Klonopin. The drugs fight the physical symptoms of anxiety that often times

“Seek therapy if overwhelming stress has continued for two or more weeks.”
incapacitate a person. The medicine is an aid for dealing with stress, but it doesn’t solve much when used alone. For example, when people try to lose weight by only dieting, it simply doesn’t work. They must exercise in addition to other means.

With that in mind, I choose not to rely on my medication as a sole means for ridding my body of anxiety. Deep breathing works wonders, as does thought repositioning. I don’t view stress so negatively anymore. I know that there is a difference between good stress and bad stress. The minimal amount of good stress is what pushes me to do more than I would without it. I can now appreciate that tinge of nervousness. Those butterflies in my stomach encourage me to get things done. Without the stress of deadlines I would have never written this essay. Reaffirming, in writing, what I’ve learned has been another form of therapy. Seeing in print my own thoughts about conquering anxiety and managing stress fills me with confidence. My battles with anxiety can be won. It would be a lot easier, however, with month-long holidays and lunchtime siestas.

Reference Notes:
*Stress Management*. Urbana-Champaign: The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, 1984.

www.surgeongeneral.gov
## Life Stress Scale

Check off events that have happened in your life within the last 12-24 months. Add up the total #.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIFE EVENT</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death of partner</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital separation</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail term</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of close family member</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal injury or illness</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fired from work</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in health of family member</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex difficulties</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain a new family member</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business readjustment</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in financial state</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of a close friend</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in # of arguments with partner</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIFE EVENT</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major mortgage</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son or daughter leaving home</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble with in-laws</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding personal achievement</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner begins or stops working</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin or end school</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revision of personal habits</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in living conditions</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble with boss</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of schools</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in recreation activities</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in social activities</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in # of family get-togethers</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in eating habits</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor violation of the law</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I scored a 367 on the Life Stress Scale (Figure 3). The events listed should not necessarily be considered negative ones. They are common events that occur in a person's life. Change, however, can create stress and, in my case, anxiety. By realizing that life changes can naturally create stress, a proactive mind set is vital. By actively managing stress levels, a healthy life is possible. —J. Vaughn
It begins when students leave home for the first time to begin their college careers. Away from parents and rules, they somehow think they are invincible. This crucial time is when the breaking of boundaries begins.

Many freshmen arrive and are soon drawn into the party life of drugs, and most commonly, alcohol. Having friends who drink or use drugs often makes it easier to justify a change in one's lifestyle, and in the no-rules environment of a college campus, such friends are easy to find. Alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, pain killers and anti-anxiety drugs are among the most commonly abused, and most are prevalent at the University of Alabama.

A local licensed practicing counselor (LPC) who works with substance abuse among young adults agreed that in a college environment, alcohol and drugs are more acceptable and their abuse is common. Since the 1990s, there has been a steady rise in college students seeking treatment for substance abuse. The problem is larger, and so is the need for treatment. Conversely, getting help is also more accepted and encouraged now because substance abuse is more common.

The counselor's advice to correct the problem is that one must "change playmates and playgrounds." Ultimately, she said, the lifestyle one leads is crucial to a good recovery.

On the pages that follow are statistics concerning drug and alcohol abuse among college students, as well as firsthand accounts of abuse and addiction.
College students spend $5.5 billion on alcohol annually, which is more than they spend on soft drinks, milk, juice, tea, coffee, and books combined.
Underage drinkers, including college students age 18-20, are responsible for almost 20% of all alcohol consumed in the United States.
“I smoke pot each and every day, and I do blow at least once a week if not more.”

“I would be considered a regular drug user. I smoke pot each and every day, and I do blow [term for snorting cocaine] at least once a week if not more. It took crossing my boundaries in order to learn where they were. Now that I know where my boundaries are, it is very rare that I pass them.

It is important to know your limits when you are a regular drug user. Not everyone is lucky enough to know their boundaries. Even when people think they know, they are unaware of how far they can push themselves before they ever just ‘do it.’

When I first came to college, I was uncomfortable around most drugs, even pot. After being around drugs and drug users enough, I became comfortable with them, and it was easier to get involved with them. The reason I have not tried heroin, crack and other similar drugs is probably... that I haven't been around them very often, if ever. Therefore, I am still uncomfortable with them.”

—Melody, 21
"Boundaries with drugs and alcohol need to be considered with the amount that you do at one time as well as how often you do them. The most difficult part about knowing your boundaries is finding out what they are. This is usually done by pressing them and having a bad experience, or doing something really stupid and regretting it in the morning.

The hardest part about not crossing boundaries is passing up the opportunity to do a drug or to drink when you have the mind set that doing it one more time will not affect you any differently than the last. Another thing that makes it hard is whenever you get into a group of friends that does drugs a lot, it is harder to make a conscious effort by yourself that you’re not going to do these things. If it is OK with your friends and everyone is having fun, then it doesn’t seem as big of a deal. You don’t feel like it is a problem, you feel like it is OK and there will not be any negative consequences.”

—Patty, 21
## Consequences of Alcohol and Drug Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequence</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Had a hangover</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performed poorly on a test</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got into a fight or argument</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Got nauseated or vomited</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driven while under the influence</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a memory loss</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Done something I later regretted</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have been taken advantage of sexually</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have taken advantage of another sexually</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been hurt or injured</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These statistics were drawn from a sample of 54,444 undergraduate students from 131 colleges across the United States. These colleges conducted the Core Survey in 2001.

- 159,000 of today's freshmen will drop out of college next year due to alcohol and drug-related causes.
"Since I am a senior, I rarely drink throughout the week. When I do drink, I remind myself of what time I have to be in class and with what homework. I would be crazy to go out and get toasted when I have a speech in COM 123 the next morning! The weekends are a different story. I usually set my limit at 'Stop when you feel hot or nauseous.' That means I'm pretty much drunk and need to sit down before I further embarrass myself. That's been my strategy since my freshman year, but now, I do that less often. It's not fun to wake up with a hangover anymore."
—Mike, 21

Sorority and fraternity members are four times more likely to binge drink.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphetamines</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedatives</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallucinogens</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table gives the percentage of students who reported using each drug listed at least once within the year prior to completing the Core Survey.

- Each additional drink consumed by college students per occasion increases the probability of missing a class by eight percent and getting behind in school by five percent.
• 44% of college students engage in binge drinking, which is defined as at least five drinks in a row for men and four for women.

Reference Notes:
Many thanks to Bradford Health Services for their assistance.
www.tuscaloosanews.com
www.streetdrugs.org
*All photos portraying drugs or drug usage were simulated using legal substitutes.
I Hate Pam Grier:
and other realizations made while on the road to maturity.

by Bonita Weaver

John Donne said it best:
"no man is an island, entire of itself."
This is the account of the persons, events & words that help to define a writer's perception of life, love and herself.
**I am like my mother... and that's not a bad thing**

Bold, brash, class dames. Sassy, fiery, broom-wielding women. The kind who loved a man with all their might Sunday from mid-day Friday, but forgot his name by five o'clock that evening. Pressed white slips beneath white linen dresses, black patent-leather pumps wearing women. Sunday morning, third-pew-paper-fan-waving, hallelujah-shouting women. The kind who rolled dice in the back room with the men. Women who liked a shot of gin every once and a while. The ones fathers warned their sons to avoid. The ones men found completely irresistible. Women, not ladies and damned proud of it. These are great-grandmothers, sisters, aunts, and daughters. Lovers, sinners, dreamers, saints. Cathouse women. Brick house women. Not 36-24-36. Thick. Like the slices of bacon that sizzled in cast iron pans. Strong like the coffee they poured into their husbands’ cups each morning. Chocolate, caramel, honey complexioned. Some with good hair. Others with hair that needed the occasional touch from a hot comb. Their lives bittersweet like Bessie's blues. Their spirits sound and uplifting like Mahalia’s Precious Lord. These great-grandmothers, sisters, aunts, lover, sinners and saints comprise the women in my family. Past and present.

By numbers alone, the women on my mother’s side of the family dominate the men. They are not Amazons, bare-breasted and keeping their men in cages until mating season arrives. They blend the philosophies of FDR and Tammy Wynette. The Boyd women opt to stand by their men, speak softly at times and always carry a very large stick. There is strength in numbers and they use that strength and there have been times they’ve used the big stick, too. I also hail from a family of storytellers.
The majority of my relatives did not attend college. I once had the naïve impression that in order to master language, one had to possess a college degree. My mother's experiences proved me wrong. My mother proved me wrong.

It's some kind of quirky biological essential. It seems as if it is the duty of women to continue the family both in the literal sense of reproduction and through the preservation of traditions and oral history. Women give birth to daughters and sons, the ones they will force-feed stories about the grand old days.

"When I was your age, I had to walk 30 miles to school. Barefoot and through snow. Be grateful, Bonita."

I would listen to my mom and instantly feel bad about whining over having to wake at 6 a.m. in order to catch the bus to school. I bought Mom's story. Hey! I was 6 years old. Four years later, after a science lesson in weather, I learned that my mom, a life-long resident of Alabama, stretched the truth. Nevertheless, I got the gist. My mom had it hard growing up. Perhaps the greatest lesson I learned through the thousands of stories my mother told me as I grew up happened one Sunday morning three years ago.

As my mother and I drove home from church, she asked me to slow down as we approached a yellow and brick-colored home. We passed this house numerous times before during our daily trips to supermarkets and about town. Yet, for some reason that Sunday morning, my mother pointed to the house and said in a quiet voice, "My great-grandmother lived in that house."

I stared at my mom as I watched the memories dance across her face. She gave me a wistful smile and encouraged me to speed up; she had to get home to start picking the collard greens for dinner and more importantly get out of an irritatingly scratchy pair of panty hose. All that day, I thought of my mom and that house...
and the events that unfolded within its walls. Two days later, I invited my mother to lunch with a twofold goal: spend some quality time with her and pick her brain concerning her childhood.

As we munched on chicken salad, she spoke of the rowdy conversation she overheard as a child. She told me how my great-great grandmother took to heart the adage, “cleanliness is next to godliness,” going so far as to scrub down everything and anyone who entered her home. My mother regarded this woman’s home as her refuge. I’d heard stories before about the woman named Luvenia, but as I sat listening to my mother, I wished I’d had the chance to know her. She died long before I was born.

“She was the woman who did everything right. She was perfect. She was my protector.”

The conversation shifted somehow to my grandparents. As my mother explained, my Poppa and Zeni were not always grandparents. Being a writer and a sucker for a good story, I pressed for more dirt, which my mother happily supplied. According to family legend, my grandmother was quite the vixen in her day. She had several extramarital affairs, which produced several children. My grandmother wore her scarlet letter with pride. My grandfather was a drunken sot who liked to pinch women’s asses and chase my grandmother around their house, all the while accusing her of trying to kill him in his sleep. Mom said she tried to once.

I also learned how my grandmother saved a young woman’s life. After a freak mishap with a match, the young woman’s dress caught fire. In a panic, the woman began to run toward her home several feet away. This was before Smokey the Bear
taught us to stop, drop and roll. My grandmother leaped the fence of her own yard, tackled the girl, smothering the flames before more damage was done to her legs and arms.

That was a cool story. Saving lives is a good thing. However I chose to focus on the fact that my grandmother exhibited slut-like tendencies as a young wife. (She married my grandfather at a very young age. 16—I believe.) After learning about my grandmother’s affairs, I was in a state of panic. I invited my mother to shatter every illusion I had about my grandmother. My grandfather, a veteran of the Korean War and World War II, told me some wild stories about his youth and travels in the military. I could easily envision my grandfather out of control and raunchy, but I couldn’t be so forgiving and understanding of my grandmother.

Never before had I stopped to think about my grandmother as a woman. Yeah, I knew she had all the body parts. Yet I elevated her to superhuman status. She was the woman who did everything right. She was perfect. She was my protector. She was the skirt I hid behind when I was in trouble and trying to avoid my father and his belt. I never pictured her young, without the salt and pepper hair. It’s as if I figured she fell from the sky in all her grandmotherliness, smelling of freshly baked corn bread, Folgers coffee and used Crisco. Until that lunch with my mother, I never saw the similarities between the grandmother, daughter and granddaughter. We led different lives, but the reality is that we shared the same experiences. I wasn’t born in 1917 or 1951, but I laughed, cried, fell, bled just the same as they. Just as my grandmother taught my mother to tend house, press hair, iron clothes and beat a grown man’s ass with a broom stick, my mother taught me how to make my bed with hospital corners, iron my school clothes and beat a boy’s ass with a plastic lunch tray.
On March 7, 2001, my grandmother passed away. I received the phone call from my older sister. I fell to my knees and prayed. I asked God to tell Inez that I loved her. I wiped my eyes and drove to my final class of the day. I didn’t say a word. In my head, I saw my grandmother chasing my grandfather around the kitchen with a broom. Just like Mom said in her story. I remembered how my grandmother pulled out a seemingly endless supply of rolled one-dollar bills out of “bank,” which was her bra. I tried to count all the times I ran across the street from her house to the corner store to buy her a 16-ounce Pepsi and some Goody Headache Powders — the two pack, not the five pack because she swore up and down the ones in the five pack didn’t work as well.

I tried to envision her face, but couldn’t. All I could see was experiences. All I could feel was gratitude. How grateful was I to have known such a perfectly imperfect woman. She was flawed. Later, I became aware of my grandmother’s history of mental and emotional instability, but none of that mattered to me as I sat in class ignoring the lecture about John Donne. What mattered was that my grandmother introduced me to The Young and the Restless and that 20 years later I will break major traffic laws to make it home in time to watch my “stories.” I thanked God for having held her hand as we walked the aisles of the Piggly Wiggly, eating grapes right from the produce section, tossing the vine somewhere among the canned goods as we shopped. She was the first person to notice I used the Big People’s potty for the first time that Easter Sunday. I appreciated how she gave me everything I wanted no matter how fattening or expensive. I thanked God for her giving me my sense of fearlessness; for being so hard on my mother, who in turn was so hard on me. This woman was more than my relative. She was my mentor. She is my childhood.
Two weeks before my grandmother passed away, I interviewed for a job. The manager looked at my resume, then asked what I thought was the dumbest question ever asked: “Who is Bonita Weaver?”

I spoke eloquently of my computer skills and my sterling reputation as a multitasker. My reply was clever and sharp. I won the position, but given a chance to change my answer I would.

I am Inez’s granddaughter. I am Josephine’s second oldest.
I am a collection and direct reflection of every woman before me.
I may have my father’s last name, but I have my mother’s compassion.
I may have my father’s nose, but I possess my grandmother’s spirit of defiance.
I am stubborn, strong-willed, opinionated and far too ballsy for my own good.
Just like every other woman in my family.
I am a bad mamma jamma. Just like my grandmother.
Just like my grandmother’s mother. That is who I am.
That is who I always will be.

I don’t think I would have been hired if I said that. But that isn’t the point.
I am waiting for lightning to strike

It's a recurring dream of mine. I'm eating lunch in an elegant Italian restaurant with a man who bears an amazing resemblance to a young Paul Newman. He's Brick and I'm Maggie the Cat, glistening and gorgeous in a white lace slipdress. He reaches for my fork and with a deft twist of his wrist he offers me a delectable bite of fettuccine. I lean forward and graciously accept the food. He butters my roll, and then asks how he can satisfy me sexually, emotionally and spiritually. He takes my hand, kissing the six-carat Tiffany diamond gleaming on my third finger. He lowers my hand to his lap. My fingertips graze the cool gold buckle of his Dolce and Gabbana belt. Over to the right, down a few inches. At last I reach my holy land. My Mecca. The red tablecloth hides the activities of my devious little hand. I begin to unzip his pants and —

At this point, I can no longer put off the need to make a quick trip to Mr. Potty. I hop out of bed and say a curse and hope. I hope I can pick up the dream as if I pressed pause on the VCR of my brain. In my dream, I am dripping with emeralds and draped in mink. I am happy beyond my wildest expectations and I have a man to thank for it. I have sex. The really dirty kind. Sex with no cuddling afterwards. He knows how it was for me and he doesn't have to ask. I roll over and pick up a magazine. He collects his clothes and leaves. If I feel generous, I leave him money on the nightstand for the long taxi ride back to his place. How wonderful it is in my little make-believe world. Thanks to an unusually precise internal alarm, I wake every morning at 6:36 a.m. Gone are my sleep and my dreams and with them my sense of sense. I awake to a world in which I feel guilty about having such dreams.

I am a woman whose mother used Billie Holiday's blues as a feminist tool.
God bless the child that has her own. Funny how in my mother’s translation, the pronouns shifted. It became her. In that iambic line lay my mother’s blueprint for The House of Self-Determination. Never depend on a man to provide anything for you. My mother taught me to earn my own money and to never let a man dictate my happiness. Not only should I bring home the bacon and fry it up in a pan, but it was up to me to go out and find myself the fattest, choicest hog in the entire county.

After watching countless hours of Dynasty, I surmised a basic constitution to the politics of love. Alexis made it look so easy. Her equation seemed simple: money + designer clothes complete with five-inch-thick shoulder pads + dozens of handsome man whores = The Life. I adjusted the formula to fit my own lifestyle at the time. Alexis Colby had diamonds and Rolls Royces. I had Tinkerbell Cosmetics and my Big Wheel. Boys, much like my Malibu Barbie, became a possession to me — one through which I could demonstrate my worth. At age 8, I became the coolest chick on my block after receiving the toy for my birthday. Ten years later, I paraded my boyfriends to my family and friends in the same manner I did my beloved doll.

Look at what I have! This is the Great Catch Ken Doll. He comes with a college education, a job, a car, a place of his own, a certificate of authenticity and a plastic stand. Isn’t he the grooviest?

I would play with him until his painted hair chipped or two months later Mattel unveiled The Even Greater Catch Ken, whichever came first. He’d served his purpose.
My guilt is a mixture of hypocrisy and disappointment. I am in college and look forward to penning a best-seller and Pulitzer Prize-winning novel. I don't dream of book tours and hobnobbing with intellectuals at cocktail parties where I amaze them with my fancy vocabulary. My mother's and Billie's advice leaves my brain when I fall asleep. I dream of a man with a killer smile and an equally lethal bank account. Sometimes, he has Denzel Washington's face with Tyson Beckford's body. One dream, we're in France. We could be on a balcony in Belize. The person and the location change. The only constant is my guilt.

I read Erica Jong at the age of 13. I was learning about "zipless fucks" when all of my friends were discovering what a cool place Sweet Valley High was. In high school, I was voted "Most Likely to be a Dominatrix." Where did I misplace my corset and riding crop? Why did I substitute my "I Am Woman" attitude with dreams of romantic bliss? She who preached the Good News of Womanism is now fantasizing about men she will never meet.

Am I a hypocrite?

Are my dreams a reflection of what I truly feel? If so, I've shot to Hell my long time Rendezvous-Then-I'm-Through-With-You method of dating. In my old age, am I discarding my mother's lessons? Am I growing soft? Is my sleep-muddled mind over-riding years of reading, teaching and listening to my girlfriends whine about what assholes men can be? Do I really want a romantic, lovey-dovey, Danielle Steele-inspired relationship? Do I want to get married, have 2.5 children and live in a faux-Tudor-style home with a stone lion on the porch and Dodge Caravan in the garage? Was I programmed all wrong? Was my mother wrong? Did I turn off my curling iron before leaving my apartment? Is pork really the other white meat? All these questions penetrate my once-sound wall of resolve.
For someone who prided herself on knowing all the answers, my dreams forced me to realize how truly clueless I was concerning the affairs of the heart. My first step in regaining a solid understanding of who I was and what I wanted involved a trip to the bookstore. With the help of a very nice clerk, I found three books I felt could help me make heads or tails of my identity crisis. I spent two weeks poring over every chapter, searching for the remedies to my emotional ailments. After forking over $47 and taking numerous quizzes, I came to a rather simple conclusion: I am a blissfully stubborn woman who has commitment issues. See, I was right all along.

I am stubborn in my belief that marriage is essentially socially accepted prostitution. I refuse to see it in any other light. I don't see it as the meshing of two souls. As far as I'm concerned, the only people who had a clue about what marriage really is were the ancient Greeks. The Greeks understood that at the heart of love and marriage beats the drum of property. When did the picture lose focus? Who tossed the element of romance and love into the fray and screwed everything up? What I didn't learn from John “Men are From Mars, Women are from Venus” Gray, I gathered by zeroing in on what matters to me. I appreciate my need to live like a woman and love like a man. I dare to defy female convention and I refuse to buy into the fairy tale notion of love. I don't believe love means “never having to say you're sorry.” Most importantly, I don't need a man to become “whole.”

I give this patriarchal society the middle finger and happily go about my day.

“...In high school, I was voted ‘Most Likely to be a Dominatrix.’ Where did I misplace my corset and riding crop?”
— that is until I fall asleep. That's when being bombarded and overwhelmed with Celine Dion songs and Meg Ryan flicks takes its toll. I live like a woman, love like a man and dream like a 16-year-old girl who sits two desks down from her crush.

The Greeks were right in a lot of ways. There is a Greek myth that tries to explain marriage and love: In the beginning, mortals consisted of two halves, one male, the other female. A bolt of lightening from Zeus separated and scattered the halves across the earth. This myth holds that the two halves spend their entire lives trying to find each other. I like to think I still retain full custody of my male self. Perhaps I was indoors watching the TV when the bolt of lightening struck. My dreams force me to reconcile with my two selves: the tough as overcooked lamb chops Me and the Me who allows herself to shed the protective armor and fall victim to an overly sentimental, syrupy society that only wants to give the world a Coke and keep it company. I have only to balance my girly dreams with my anti-girly sentiments. All I have to do is never again watch my copy of City of Angels, never listen to VH-1 and quit sleeping. That's the ticket.
I Hate Pam Grier

Wal-Mart was out of my favorite air freshener and I knew why. As I exited the double doors, sans Glade Tangerine and Ginger, I looked at my receipt and noticed I'd been overcharged for my Pantene Volumizing shampoo. I could have sworn the neon yellow sticker thingamabob on the shelf read $3.29, not $3.49. I knew who was behind the theft of my 20 cents.

Just yesterday, I received a B on a paper that was an A for sure. I smiled at my professor and accepted the academic slap in the face. I'm an English major, damn it! I don't make B's on papers. Yet, I knew in the face of such tribulation, I could find comfort in knowing why I received such a low grade. I didn't receive that mark because I failed to "support my thesis throughout." I know who to blame: the same person who took my 20 cents. It is the same person who caused global warming and the destruction of the Roman and Mayan empires. This person institutionalized slavery and kept women in the kitchen, subservient to their husbands. This person sank the Titanic and blew up the Hindenburg. I am speaking of none other than Pam Crier.

Pamela Suzette Grier is the root of every evil in the world, especially in my little nook of it. She is why my hair won't curl unless the weather is perfect. When my car won't start, I know she went under the hood and removed some pipe or cable. I am certain that Pam Grier is the anti-Christ. How can I be so sure? I'll admit I came to this understanding in a most unlikely manner.

*To protect the inconsiderate assholes who spawned this story, all names have been slightly changed to thinly disguise the deliberate malice, bitterness and scorching contempt I feel towards both of them.*
Somewhere in Queens lives a woman named "Kim Scott." I've never met or so much as seen a photo of her. My knowledge of her comes from my dear friend, sometime antagonist and unrequited love, "David."

David and Kim were colleagues at Rutgers University. David was earning his Ed.D. in educational policy and something 'nother. I have no clue what Kim was studying. I suppose it's whatever tramps are taking these days — but I'm getting ahead of myself.

David, 5'8", 29 years old at the time, Scorpio and native of Lakewood, NJ, was instantly smitten by the six-foot, 28-year-old Libra, a native of Queens.

I know all of this because David told me. He told me lots of anecdotes about Ms. Kim. I was forced into knowing her. He crammed her down my throat like some mother armed with a tablespoon of Robitussin DM. I sat and listened. That's what good friends do. Allow me to consolidate three months of nightly two-hour long conversations into four sentences: Kim is tall and he's short. She speaks French and even lived in France for a brief period. Kim's really smart. A trail of men follows Kim everywhere she goes. Of all the things David spoke about Ms. Scott, one thing sticks out. The statement caused a cataclysmic, life-altering reaction.

Let me set the mood. It was a Friday evening. Be it that I have no life, I'd planned to stay at home, cook dinner and spend the rest of the night reading Harlequin romance novels. I was busy in my kitchen dicing chicken. A little music was playing on my Emerson boom box, which sat on my kitchen window sill. I was
doing my "I'm jamming in my kitchen, frying some chicken and listening to New Edition's Greatest Hits" dance. You know how it goes: It's the classic two-step, with a dash of the Snake every two beats. In the distance, the phone rang. Wiping my hands on a nearby towel, I grabbed the waterless hand sanitizer and made a pseudo-sprint for the phone.

It was David. Of course, it had to be him. Or my mother. Those are the only phone calls I would receive at the time. We immersed ourselves in polite chitchat. I knew asking him about his day meant I had to endure another Kim story. I took the chance and asked anyway. Yada yada yada, files missing, blah blah blah, research for dissertation is going slowly, so on and so forth. I timed him. It took all of 48.7 seconds for him to get to the topic of his adoration of Kim. Luckily, I was in the living room and nowhere near my kitchen filled with sharp and deadly objects because in the next moment, David would utter a sentence that filled me with near-murderous rage.

"Kim has to be the most beautiful woman I've ever met. She reminds me of a young Pam Grier..."

What the fuck? I couldn't believe he said that. Who was I? Rosey Grier? Didn't I matter? What about me? Why couldn't and why hasn't he said the same about me? Maybe I heard him wrong? As if he read my thoughts, David said it again. If I hadn't paid 95 bucks for my phone, I would have hurled it across the room. Of all the insensitive words to speak to a woman, your good buddy, the person you know has had a mad crush on you for three years. I could feel a knot forming in my brain. I closed my eyes and reached for the TV remote. I heard his voice in my ear, but refused to concentrate on the distinct sounds that make words. What I heard in lieu of a Kim story was how I'd never be with him unless I was
atheistically pleasing and spoke a crappy language like French. I kept hearing how I would never be good enough to be anything more than a friend to him.

I needed some kind of distraction, anything to keep me from giving birth to the thoughts forming in my skull. I rocked back and forth on my sofa as if I had to pee and couldn’t find a restroom.

"Are you listening to me?" I heard David ask.

He wanted me to listen? I’d been doing that for the past three years! I'd perfected the art of listening to him whine about his love life and all the while wanting to smack him stupid for putting me through another conversation in which I was painfully reminded that I was only his “friend.” I was the person he called when he needed to talk, or wanted to know what a girl wants or what tie to wear or if he should bring roses or lilies. I was Eleanor Rigby picking up the rice of his botched and half-hearted attempts at romance and passion, placing them in a jar. I felt a pop in my head and like some Alanis Morisette song (the early, damn-I’m-pissed- and-men-suck stuff not the later, introspective, boring songs) gone terribly wrong, I exploded in a fit of righteous anger. I sprang to my feet like an attorney objecting to the leading of her witness. I paced the floor, yelling into the receiver.

At the end of my explosion, I walked over to the coffee table and without so much as a “good-bye” or “kiss my ass,” slammed the phone onto its base. I instantly regretted my decision, thinking I’d chipped the corner of my phone.

I didn’t talk to David for three weeks. I wanted to make him suffer. He would call me, leave a message. Something about him being sorry. Hell, I knew he was sorry. He was a sorry excuse for a friend. He didn’t have to tell me that. I never responded. I simply pressed the number two and removed his voice from my voicemail and tried to do the same for the sound of his voice in my head. In the
days following, I had time to think about the pathetic and sad state of my love life. I had time on my hands now that I wasn't dispensing words of advice to the crack of dawn.

During our hiatus, I came to a conclusion that changed my life. I came to understand that at the heart of my problems lay something far greater than myself. I would never win David's heart because of Pam Grier. Somewhere in his comparison and my hanging up the phone, I permanently intertwined and connected every thing, person, and event in my life that disappointed me or from which I didn't get what I wanted. Although I'd never met Kim Scott or Pam Grier, each became the spokeswoman for every obstacle I faced and was too much of a scaredy cat to change. The two women became one.

Every painful moment in my life that had previously gone unexplained now had a resolution. Now, I had someone to blame. I lost my third-grade spelling bee because of Pam Grier, not because the mic stopped working and the judges didn't hear me correctly spell "restaurant." If I had a bad day at work, it was because of Pam Grier, not because I showed up an hour late and was written up. I'm not a control freak with issues of authority and a fear of commitment and intimacy. I'm held to an absurd standard of perfection and I always fall short. I'm not Pam Grier and I'm being punished for it.

I'm thinking about starting a self-help group. Hating Pam Grier has really

"I was Eleanor Rigby picking up the rice of his botched and half-hearted attempts at romance and passion, placing them in a jar."
changed my life. It's amazing how great you feel when you wake up and realize that nothing you ever did wrong was your fault. If life has been unkind, it's because of some six-foot tall, French-speaking, beautiful woman in Queens, NY, not because of anything you've done. Life is peaceful when there is no blame. I've already picked out the name: The Official I Hate Pam Grier Society. We will meet every week. Over coffee or maybe ice cream, we will talk about how unfair life is and how much of a bitch Pam Grier and every woman who looks like her, is named Pam or Kim or has the last name of Grier is. We will be a sisterhood of spinsters, fed up and tired of never living up to what men want us to be. We won't be bitter, but enlightened. We will be the only ones with the key to peace and contentment. We will have the answers to all the burning questions. War, death and famine exist because of Pam Grier. Ol' Yeller caught rabies from the wild boar, thus having to be taken out behind the shed and shot in the head, because of Pam Grier. Damn her! It's okay, boy. It's not your fault.

Photo Credits:
page 33: Photo of doll taken from the Barbie Collectible Catalog Spring 2004
page 37: Photo of Pam Grier taken from www.blackimages.com
I am in debt.
I am insane.

Do you really know me?

Why must I do this?

Why am I here?

Release me...
Restrain

CONFINE

Restrict

DISGUISE

Camouflage

Veil
WHO ARE YOU?
We enter this world free of limitations and labels.

We are born a bare canvas and through experiences and interaction, we are burdened and dirtied by categories and titles of this world.
WE SHOULD STRIVE TO COME CLEAN.
The 20th and 21st centuries have introduced our world to an excess of innovative advancements. Enhanced technologies have contributed to the way we think, act and live our lives. One of the tell-tale signs of how far we have evolved is displayed in popular media culture. Whether we know it or not, media has the ability to influence what we believe to be good or bad, just or unjust, fictitious or realistic. While media culture has the potential to be a positive example for us, it has the reputation of perpetuating hurtful and negative stereotypes of black women. Media does not always fairly represent minorities. It is a shame that in 2004 we are still conforming to what we are fed on television, magazines, the Internet and even music. For so long, certain media texts have misrepresented minorities in a way that places them in a no-win situation. A large part of this problem is that we allow such occurrences to continue. There are far too many people who just sit back and say nothing. Media texts tell us that we have to look and act a certain way to be accepted in American culture. For a great amount of black women, that is impossible.

[Mis]representations of black women in the media feed us the "white is right" theory. First of all, understand that no matter who we are, there is beauty in all of our cultures and ethnic backgrounds. However, is it necessary that we constantly see images of the blonde-haired, blue-eyed women as the standard of beauty? That is an unrealistic goal for young black women (and many other women for that matter). Even when black women are given a chance to be shown in the media, they are wearing long hair extensions and/or are light-skinned like Beyoncé. The fact of the matter is that black women come in a variety of complexions some of which are not accepted by the general public. Darker complexioned women are under represented in media texts although their talent is just as great as anyone else’s. Aside from
BET and UPN, there are few other television networks that praise the diversity among black women. For example, ABC's *My Wife and Kids* features a black family in which the females have light complexions. Although the show has enabled ABC to diversify the viewing, the females on the show are the epitome of contemporary media. They all have long flowing hair and light skin. It seems as though media texts are purposely looking for black women who look as white as possible.

These are also the circumstances under which we see photo images of black women versus white women. A picture may be 'worth a thousand words', but for black women those words are cut in half. Take a second to think about Jennifer Aniston, star of NBC's *Friends*, and Queen Latifah. How are they similar? How are they different? Undoubtedly Queen is full–figured, has thick facial features and she is a black woman. Jennifer Aniston is not as full–figured, has thinner facial features, and is white. Both are equally gorgeous. However, the majority of the photos of Queen Latifah are taken from the waist up. Some images only show her face. As is the case with several black female entertainers, there are very few pictures (in magazines, Internet, etc.) that show Queen Latifah's whole body. Ms. Aniston, however, has full photos of her almost everywhere you see her. It is nothing to pick up a magazine or watch an awards show where the camera is at her heels in order to get full length shots of her. Queen Latifah or singer Jill Scott, just to name two, are black, curvaceous, female entertainers whose opportunities for full–length photos are few and far between, as opposed the constant images of Pamela Anderson or Paris Hilton, who are shown in their entirety. We live in a society in which the media dictates what the ideal woman should look like. While viewing a Cover Girl advertisement, I noticed that Queen Latifah was chosen as its spokesperson. She is the star of the commercial, yet there are only three half–second, full–length shots.
of her in the entire commercial. Cover Girl is undoubtedly capitalizing on a black woman who they will hardly photograph in full view. I may be wrong, but should not the star of a commercial be the center of attention, next to the advertised product? Paying even closer attention to the commercial, you will see how much the make-up product lightens her face compared to other pictures of her. Cover Girl isn't so "easy" and "breezy" for black women after all.

Media continues to present our culture with stereotypes of black women in the music industry. Time and again, critics have come down on male hip-hop and rap artists for their depiction of women in song lyrics and videos. It is time that black women take a little self-inventory. How many times have rap lyrics served as money makers at the expense of women? Albeit true, I am not going to speak of the many male rappers, instead I feel the need to address my sisters who not only feed into the typecasting of black women, but they also rap it. There is absolutely nothing wrong with black women on the microphone. However there is something incredibly disturbing about rap artist Trina using her talent on songs like "Baddest Bitch." I don't speak for all black women, but I am insulted to see Trina or Lil' Kim parade around in music videos referring to women, including themselves, as bitches. Although they do not represent every black woman, there are some people who will see them and assume that they are the standard of black women. Lil' Kim dubs herself "Queen B"('B' for bitch), implying that she is the queen of all the bitches. For so long, black women have been trying to get beyond
being labeled offensive names, only to have talented rap icons adopt it and use it against themselves. I cannot forget rap icon Missy Elliot who makes millions for songs like “Pussycat.” The idea of black women being sexually promiscuous is only emphasized in this song. The hook of the song goes, “pussy don’t fail me now, I gotta turn this nigga out so he don’t want nobody else but me.” Throughout this entire song she implies that her sex is the best thing about her and that without it she has nothing else to offer. The song goes on to say that sex is what keeps her man at home. I would hope that the prize between a woman’s legs is not the only thing keeping her man around. Of course, Missy attempts to provide justification for the song by using the argument that male rappers use these type of lyrics regularly. However, it is essential to enable people to hold on to the stereotype of black women as sexual objects? These female rappers have the power to break many media boundaries, but they choose to stay within those boundaries by imposing negative portrayals of black women.

Interpretations of black family life is also shown in various media texts. An era of black nuclear families were brought back to life in the late 1980s and early 1990s. NBC's *The Cosby Show*, *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* and ABC's *Family Matters* leaped onto the scene of primetime television. These programs were huge contributors to network ratings, yet at the center of scrutiny for most of their run. These shows cast black nuclear families in which the mothers had it all (jobs, families, husbands, and physical beauty). Viewers and critics alike picked the matriarchs of the comedies apart. Claire Huxtable (played by Phylicia Rashad) was

“Cover Girl isn’t so ‘easy’ and ‘breezy’ for black women after all.”
said to be unrealistic because she was a nearly perfect mother. I disagree. She and other black sitcom moms lived the "American Dream." She had a well-paying job, a good marriage, and managed to raise children on the show. But isn't that true for many black mothers in the real world? Because media texts tend to show black mothers who are residing in low-income housing, living check to check and having no opportunities for economic advancement, it does not have bearing on reality. The fact is that like Claire, black mothers are pioneering in the workplace, the home and in society. Critics unfairly come down hard on black sitcom mothers, calling them unrealistic. Yet, mothers on television programs like ABC's Life with Bonnie, Roseanne or NBC's Family Ties (which cast all-white nuclear families) are more widely accepted. Media critics do not blatantly say it, but instead imply that black women cannot live “normal” lives. It suggests that black women cannot be multifaceted in every aspect of society. Truly, every black woman does not live like Claire Huxtable. However, to say that it is impossible is a slap in the face because black women work just as hard as anybody else.

Fair representation in the media is pertinent to American society. We are a diverse country. We are a country in which everyone should be able to see positive references to their gender, race and ethnicity. Media is a dominant part of our lives. Everyday, it shapes who we are. It is important to understand that black women
have a place in the world and should be seen justly on screen, stage, television
and in advertisements. The black woman is complex. She is a being that cannot
fit into the societal constructs of Cover Girl because she is an edifice of her own.
When she is shown performing on stage, her assertiveness is not to be confused
with aggressiveness. While shown on screen her complexion should not be the
manifestation of inner beauty. Until we realize that black women encompass a
plethora of wonderful qualities and that they need to be displayed, we cannot have
a positive representation of black women in the media. NCR

Ms. Odoms is the winner of the African-American Heritage Month Essay Contest sponsored by
New College; Marr’s Field Journal, the undergraduate literary and art journal; and the Women’s
Resource Center of the University of Alabama.

Kendria Monique Odoms is a senior English major and communications studies minor from
Huntsville, AL. She loves to read, write, travel and listen to
old-school music. After graduation she plans to take a break from
academia to work and pay off her credit cards. Kendria’s passion
is helping those who suffer from various forms of illiteracy and
she plans to continue to share her love of reading and writing
with others.

New College Review is dedicated to promoting diversity, cooperation and understanding across all
lines that divide us. The staff of NCR fully recognizes education is the key weapon in fighting
ignorance and racism, in all forms.
My room is hazy with the smoke that billowed from the kitchen as I cooked my deer burger. I haven't had deer in a while, but it still reminds me of my childhood. My father killed everything from rabbits to pheasants so I grew up eating everything. I sometimes wonder just what was on my plate as a kid.

I grew up poor, poorer than a lot of my friends who try to relate. By poor I mean my mom would leave me at my aunt's for days at a time so they could feed me, because my mom herself was eating maybe once a week and when she did it was bologna or something a coworker bought her. My friends say they grew up poor, but all they mean is that they didn't have TVs in their rooms or the latest video games. I was skinny because I was malnourished, not because I ran around the neighborhood like a maniac.

Without my stepmother, my father would still be in that state, a place where he would only eat when he could, which created for him a complex about eating what he viewed as "too much." He transferred that complex to my family. I never had a dog because my father would kill them and make me watch. He said they were dangerous, but that's such a different story, a different level of where my mind is. How I sit here at my computer almost 14 years later and am not a complete mess is beyond me.

I was raised by my extended family. Relatives most people only see for holidays were the ones who tucked me in each night and made my breakfast each morning. I was happy living with my aunt, because I naively thought if I wasn't at home then the stuff I saw when I was there wasn't happening. At home, I would watch my dad beat my mother—for reasons I still don't know. I may never
know his "reasons," but they weren't then and never will be justifiable. I remember as a small child seeing my dad hit my mom. As I watched her body hit the floor, I would forget everything going on around me and become blind to everything but my mother. I wouldn't see my dad, I didn't want to. I would see my mother, her face stained with blood and her breathing getting heavier as I could tell she didn't know what was going to happen next. Her brain was telling her to move while her body screamed, "stay down Louise, just give up and it will be over soon enough."

I would cry out in agony with all I could, to make him stop. I knew he loved me and would do anything for me. I was his weakness. I was my father's worst enemy because I made him show emotion. I would run away, as fast as my 5-year-old legs would take me. My dad would always give chase and, as he swooped me up in his arms, I would punch him like I saw him punch my mom. I was mad at him and that's the only way I knew how to handle my anger. He would laugh it off and promise not to do it again, only to carry me to my room and hit my mother again for making me such a pansy. He would lock me in my room so I could hear my mother scream but couldn't get out to "help" her again. He blamed her, saying she told me to run away so he would quit. My mother and I never created such plans. They were mine alone.

I don't remember the shot as well as one might think. My mother lay motionless in her sleep, resting for what could have only been a few hours between two of her four jobs. My father drunkenly pulled out his revolver and pulled the trigger only to
miss by less than an inch. My father, the ex-Green Beret with expert qualifications in every field from small arms to grenades, missed. My father, the police officer, missed. He was always drunk. While ordinarily that would be a bad thing, at that moment, it was my saving grace. Startled, my mother awoke and moved from the bed as my father passed out, completely unaware of what he had just done. I don't remember the shot, only the reaction: driving far and fast from the house in a car that started only upon a whim.

I remember my parents' fight. It was sunny outside. The front door was open, like it was every "nice" day in New Mexico. My mom had been seeing this guy for some time and my father was pissed. I don't remember how it started, but I remember the fight. I stood there, 6 almost 7 wishing I were older, bigger, stronger, so I could pull things weren't going to be like this anymore and promised me peace.”

“This big man who saved me looked like God as he held my tiny body and wiped my tears away with his shirt. He assured me things weren't going to be like this anymore and promised me peace.”
had done this three or four times before but this time he knew he had messed up. A third-degree black belt, my father knew that blood spewing out of the mouth meant death when related to a broken nose. Most likely he had shoved her cartilage into her brain causing the blood to project out of her throat.

Thank God. If he hadn't hurt her so bad he would have noticed me on the phone begging for this bigger, stronger, older man who was going to save us to get there. My mother came into consciousness sometime later with a face so swollen she couldn't see what she looked like—probably a good thing, because it's the most vivid image in my mind to this day. The mystery man came and got us both, with no resistance from my father. He knew he had fucked up. Tears rolled from his eyes as we walked out the door—well as two of us walked out the door. My mother was carried. I remember sitting in a hospital room, my mom next door. This big man who saved me looked like God as he held my tiny body and wiped my tears away with his shirt. He assured me things weren't going to be like this anymore and promised me peace. His words were deep and strong. Nobody had ever promised me anything. He told me everything was going to change and I'd never see my mother like this again. I couldn't help but believe him. When my mom walked out of the room next door with eight stitches in her nose and numerous bandages covering other wounds, she apologized to me as though it was all her fault.
The next memory of my childhood is the conversation where my parents sat me down and told me everything was about to change. They told me I had to decide whom I would live with. I chose my mother. I remember my mother crying as I told my father my decision. I didn't understand why she would cry, why leaving my father was sad. She spent eight years with him. For eight years she took his beatings and accusations. She wasn't going to miss what they had, she couldn't, so why was she crying? It must be a sad situation to have to sit down and realize that what you once thought could be perfect wasn't. My mother married my father when she was 17, to get away from a mother who beat her mercilessly. Ironically, eight years later she would be running away again, this time returning to a now-sympathetic mother. My grandmother was a changed woman; she would not repeat the same actions she performed just 8 years prior.

Life works in ways I don't think humanity is intended to understand. The big man who was my superhero soon became my new dad. My mother tried to explain to me the difference between a father and a dad. I understood, but didn't care. My dad was more of a father to me than my biological one ever could be.

I have often thought I would rather have not been born than have my mother go through what she did while married to my father. If given the power to go back in time, I'd create a better life for my mother. It would be a life without him. If my non-existence were a better option, I would offer it to my mother. I evaluate myself
and believe there's no way I will ever be worth what she had to endure.

I wouldn't want to miss what my mother has become. She grew out of the dirt to become the most wonderful woman I know. She endured the hardest childhood only to endure a harder first marriage. She is now the proud mother of two beautiful children to whom she will give anything so they don't have to feel what she did. Seeing my mother smile brings me an overwhelming sense of joy. She is beautiful, without doubt, and she knows it. She knows she has triumphed over so much in life.

It's April 2003, the last time that I went home. As we gather around to watch the latest movies on our big-screen TV and satellite we all look around. My mom, my dad and I stop, for a moment, noticing again what has become of us all. Our eyes dart around, almost imperceptibly. My brother sits naively on the couch, not fully knowing the blessings of what he has and without knowledge of ever having to lack for anything. My brother will never know. I will have to be the one to tell him. He doesn't know what it's like not to eat and he's been lucky enough to never have seen our mother lie motionless in a puddle of blood. My father's being a violent alcoholic led to my parent's divorce, therefore, leading to the marriage to my dad and the creation of my brother, whom I couldn't imagine life without. Life really does work in ways that are better left unknown.
Senior Editor's Note

NCR would like to take this opportunity to inform our readers of several opportunities to research and learn more about domestic violence and other forms of relationship violence and their impact.

NCR would also like to thank Elle Shaaban from the Women's Resource Center of The University of Alabama for her research and insight.

For more information on domestic violence, contact the following organizations:

Turning Point
24 hour Crisis Line: 205-758-0808 or 1-800-650-6522
P.O. Box 1165
Tuscaloosa, AL 35403
email: tpoint@dbtech.net
website: www.dbtech.net/turningpoint

The Women's Resource Center
The University of Alabama
3rd Floor, Russell Student Health Center
P.O. Box 870360
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0360
205-348-5040

Websites:
Domestic Violence in the Military
- www.militarywoman.org/domestic.htm

Effects of Domestic Violence on Children
- http://www.nccpr.org
- http://www.domesticviolencecenter.org
Lisa Eno (advisor)

For the past 8 months I have been dispensing golden-brown morsels of editorial wisdom for NCR. My life has been glittering like a big ol’ disco ball because of it. Now it’s finally, and with lovely results, finished. I hope you devour it.

Editor/writer/NCR advisor Lisa Eno believes in free speech, free writing and free publications.

Christina Kempnaner
aka: Crusty

For the past 8 months I have been messing with all kinds of junk for NCR. My life has been super stressful because of it. Now it’s amazingly, with a lot of dedication, finished. I hope you enjoy it in its entirety and appreciate all the hard work that was put into it.

I want to thank my family and friends who have been there for me and helped me through my ups and downs the last four years.

Samantha Murray
aka: Sam

For the past 8 months I have been skipping for NCR. My life has been tasty because of it. Now it’s brightly finished. I hope you lick it.

Sam is not only a writer and photographer, she is also a webtrix. See her website www.trashytrashywhores.com. It’s not pornographic. Sorry.
Autry Pruitt
AKA: Autry

For the past 8 months I have been working for NCR. My life has not changed because of it. Now it’s finally finished. I hope you enjoy it.

I hope you share this with friends, family and all those who take a dump over at your place.

Jennifer Vaughn
AKA: Jen

For the past 8 months I have been digging into the depths of my soul for NCR. My life has bettered because of it. Now it’s unbelievably finished. I hope you learn from it.

After countless hours of aesthetic debate, this piece of art is complete. I hope it stretches your awareness beyond the boundaries of everyday life, and pushes you to question your own bounding forces.

Bonita Weaver
AKA: Momichula

For the past 8 months I have been teetering on the brink of brilliance and insanity for NCR. My life has been enriched because of it. Now it’s finally finished. I hope you cherish it and grow as a person because of it.

Aside from the brief period she wanted to be Wonder Woman, Momichula has always wanted to be a writer. When she graduates, she plans to move to New Orleans, wait tables, write prolific and deeply moving prose, channel the ghost of Tennessee Williams and practice voodoo.
New College Review is seeking editors, writers, graphic designers, artists and photographers for the 2004-2005 issue.

All University of Alabama students may participate on the editorial staff through enrollment in NEW 338 (fall semester) & NEW 339 (spring semester), independent study or as a volunteer.

For more information about how you can become an editor and contribute to New College Review, contact the New College office at (205) 348-4600.