



WRITE OR WONG?

Barbie: A Setback to Female Empowerment

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Every year, Sports Illustrated (SI) releases their annual Swimsuit Issue in recognition of the swimsuit industry. Featuring fashion models wearing swimsuits at beach locales, the edition is perhaps one of the most hyped up issues of the year. However, this year's edition brought even more commotion. 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of SI's swimsuit issue, yet the talk is all about SI having Barbie on its cover.

I have to admit, when I first heard about this, I thought, "For real?" Well, for real, if having a plastic doll posing in a swimsuit should even be considered "real." According to the Associated Press, the reason why Barbie, dressed in a swimsuit, is on the issue's promotional overwrap around the magazine is because the publication of this year's swimsuit issue coincided with the American International Toy Fair occurring in New York.

However, having Barbie on the cover brings up the question about whether it intends to convey the impact Barbie has had or only demeans women to an unrealistic female form. I understand how having Barbie on the cover fits in with this year's "SI Swim Legends" theme, but it is still a bit of a letdown for Barbie admirers like me who see more than a pretty face in her.

I do not have any problem with the magazine, and the models who appear in it are beautiful, but when the swimsuit issue rolls around, SI reminds me that women are still admired for what they look like, not for what they do. Adding Barbie to that mix does not boost the self-esteem of the millions of young girls who look up to her. At the end of the day, Barbie is a symbol of imagination and creativity, not an object of sex.

Disney Waves the Rainbow Flag at Boy Scouts

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"No freedom till we're equal," said not only Macklemore in his song "Same Love," supporting the LGBT community, but the Walt Disney Company as well when they pulled funding from the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) due to its policy of banning gay leaders.

According to the Washington Times, instead of providing direct funding to BSA, Walt Disney Co. occasionally donated money to local Scout troops through "EARS to You" — a program that recognized Disney's employees for their volunteerism through financial contributions to the eligible charities of their choice. On Feb. 26, Disney announced that they chose to discontinue this support because their views do not currently "align with the BSA" as they discriminate based on "race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, marital status, mental or physical ability or sexual orientation" according to Scouts for Equality.

The BSA is one of the nation's largest and most prominent values-based youth development organizations, according to its website. Founded in 1910, the BSA believes, and through over a century of experience, knows that helping youth is a key to building a more conscientious, responsible and productive society.

Nonetheless, homosexual kids were excluded from the "youth" and were not allowed to join the BSA throughout its century of experience. Although the BSA claimed that it was a "youth develop-

ment" organization which aimed to teach the scouts "lifelong values" through "educational activities," it failed to teach them that LGBT rights, which are common, basic human rights, and equal opportunities should be advocated and supported. A person's sexuality is just another normal characteristic, like gender or race, not a defect. Being gay does not reduce one's determination, ambition, competitiveness or physical ability at all. Therefore, all homosexual kids or adults deserve the same respect and opportunity that heterosexual people have always received.



After strongly opposing gay mem-

bers for a dozen years, the BSA finally dropped its ban last year under the pressure of public opinion. According to ABC, "open or avowed" homosexuals will be allowed to become scouts starting from January 2014. However, homosexual adults are still forbidden from any leadership positions, employments or even volunteerism in the Scouting program. Ironically, according to ABC, a Boy Scouts spokesman said in a statement in reaction to Disney's declaration that the organization is "disappointed" by Disney's decision, because they believe "every child deserves the opportunity to be a part of the Scouting experience" and the decreased funding "will impact our ability to serve kids." If "every child" deserves equal opportunity, are kids granted such opportunities only when they are minors, and lose these rights overnight when they become adults? Absolutely not.

Disney has always been an inspiration for children around the world. Their position on this issue delivers a positive message to youths by encouraging the LGBT body to "live on and be yourself," as Macklemore said. The BSA's policy may be legal, but it is not moral for discriminating against homosexual adults and it must be revised. Disney should be praised for being a role model, making the right decision by withholding their support and proudly waving the rainbow flag.



Should permission be required to appear in YouTube videos?

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In an age in which adolescents frequently access various types of media with relative ease, a growing concern that remains unchecked is whether individuals truly have privacy anymore.

While requesting permission from every person who appears in a video on YouTube may seem unnecessary, refraining from doing so causes a greater hassle in the end. According to YouTube's privacy policy, individuals who feel uncomfortable with identifying information or footage of them must contact the uploader to remove the content, and if that fails, they must then directly contact YouTube via privacy complaints. However, with the site's immense popularity, the video itself could be viewed by hundreds, thousands or millions of people before being taken down.

Moreover, online content may have far-reaching consequences for an individual's future. Individuals commit acts they later regret, and if these actions are caught on film and uploaded, those people could suffer from many various effects: suspension or expulsion from school, difficulty finding or maintaining jobs or even hardships in personal relationships. These possible outcomes should be kept in mind.

Perhaps YouTube has become so integrated in our lives that privacy isn't as big of a concern anymore, but considering that media release forms are required in schools for student activity to be photographed, videotaped or voice recorded, it's strange that the same concept doesn't apply to another large medium, one with far greater impact than many assume.

With online videos becoming increasingly accessible and invasive, the idea of privacy—and whether it even exists in this generation—is a highly debated one, with permission as the suggested remedy.

It seems trivial and unnecessarily troublesome to ask for permission from every person identified within a non-profit video, assuming that such persons are not the focus of the video's content nor is their private information explicitly identified for public eyes.

Moreover, if the video was shot in a public location, it is unreasonable for someone to expect privacy. Individuals who are afraid of negative repercussions because of any recordings should be aware of what they engage themselves in prior to the actual event.

Some may argue that this idea of signed consent is similar to school media parent-signed release forms, but those release forms are typically only necessary when students are clearly identified or are within special education programs. Videos that are shot of students anonymously engaging in normal school activities or during events available to the public are harmless and expected, respectively.

Privacy laws were designed to protect identified individuals from any possible abuse, which is logical and respectable. However, for unidentified individuals who are happenstance cameos, signed consent seems inessential and ultimately hinders creative expression from well-intentioned video creators. **MOOR** graphics by GEN THIPATIMA

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