

Sadie Hawkins: Is it still important?

By ADE ILESANMI

At some point in the past Sadie Hawkins must have been a pretty taboo concept. The idea of women in a dominant role to men has yet to gain complete popularity, but back in the thirties when Sadie Hawkins Day was first mentioned in the hillbilly comic strip *L'il Abner*, there must have been some real commotion going on.

Nowadays, the whole girls-asking-guys phenomenon is less of a phenomenon and more of a yawn.

"I don't think it's as big of a deal as it was when the idea first came about. I think that the concept of it only being socially acceptable for guys to ask girls is a way for [girls] to appease themselves when they don't have the guts to do what they want," says junior Anna Hall.

So does the concept of Sadie Hawkins remove the sense of security given when guys are always expected to ask girls to a dance? Does it make girls more vulnerable, or does it do just the opposite and make them feel more in control, reversing the gender roles defined by society? Both the girls and boys of our school have mixed feelings about the answer to these questions.

Generally, people tend to perceive Sadie as an opportunity for girls to escape the status quo of how the "asking out" should occur.

"I think Sadie Hawkins dance is fun. It's the time when girls do not have to wait for a guy to ask her to the dance. The girl gets to do the sweet 'asking out' thing. And it's when the girl can almost casually hit on a guy of her interest," says senior Ami Sueki.

Indeed, Sadie does allow the girls to enjoy the more appealing aspects of courting.

"I enjoy planning and thinking about how I am going to ask that one guy to the dance. It allows the girls to 'be in the guy's shoes' for every time he has to ask a girl to a

dance," states senior Shawna Schafle.

While Sadie allows girls to enjoy the liberties of asking the guys out, it leaves boys in the reversed role, in which they are left apprehensive and waiting.

One anonymous male student put it this way, "One

many guys beg to differ.

"For the young men involved, our 'swagger' shouldn't be damaged by something so little as being asked to a dance by a girl. If it is, swagger is nothing more than excessive pride and egotism. The world is no longer ruled

'empowering' girls anymore, but rather as a tradition that we continue. I'm perfectly fine with a Sadie Hawkins dance" says senior Tylor Mansur, a male with a similar view.

Though some students feel that Sadie does not affect girls' gender roles, others believe

"I think there should be a dance where the girls get to ask the guys out because otherwise we look stupid if we want to do just that. Even though a lot of social progress has been made in the past century concerning this topic, it is still customary for the guy to be the one to ask, which does not help us if the guys are too shy to ask," retorts junior Michelle Barton.

As an anonymous student states in agreement, "[i]f [the concept of Sadie Hawkins] as big a deal as when the dance was conceived? No. Does there need to be a specific dance for it? Yes, many girls still hold the idea that guys should ask them unless otherwise stated."

So what can be taken from all these viewpoints about Sadie Hawkins? Well, there does not seem to be any real problem with the concept of girls asking guys, but I do personally agree with the notion that there shouldn't be a specific dance for girls to ask guys. I think that eventually there will not be a need for Sadie Hawkins, or rather, it will become irrelevant because the idea of girls asking guys will become the norm. It already has, as I have heard stories of girls asking guys to semi and to prom.

Most girls do not have a problem with asking guys out, and most guys do not care if a girl asks them out, so what exactly is the barrier that perpetuates the need for a dance like Sadie Hawkins? Is it those few people that are not okay with the idea? Until that question can be answered, I think that we as confused, hormonal individuals can do no more than continue our tradition of Sadie Hawkins with the notion that it is not right in its entirety, but that there is nothing wholly wrong about it either.

Anna Hall quoted the Relient K song *Sadie Hawkins Dance*: "Sadie Hawkins dance/ In my khaki pants/ There's nothing better/ The girls ask the guys/ It's always a surprise/ There's nothing better/ Do you like my sweater?"

"It does the opposite of empowering girls, because usually we have the power of rejection."

Michelle Ye

shortcoming of Sadie is that... girls still don't seem to like asking guys. Sure, you don't see as many guys moping around about not getting asked like girls do come prom time; it's still nice to have someone to go with...I guess it's not totally unacceptable for the male to ask the female to Sadie, but it carries the same weight of awkwardness as it would for a girl asking a guy to Semi....[G]irls don't seem to want to ask guys...[and] I have no idea [why]. I'm not a chick. But don't think that we don't have the same apprehensions/ ideas when we pick dates for semi/prom. We are just as afraid of rejection as [girls] are. Unlike girls, society does not offer us the convenient option of going as a group of male friends (because that would just be weird and everyone knows it)...Regardless of the excuse, girls don't really have an excuse to not ask a boy now and then expect to be asked (probably in some really cute and prohibitively expensive fashion) to prom two months later. This is not my opinion alone....Many...men feel this way. It is not a huge deal to us but it is kind of annoying."

Even when girls have the "permission," there is still apprehension about asking the guys because of the emphasis placed upon guys asking girls. There is a certain perception that girls asking guys takes away from the "macho-ness" of the guy being asked; though,

by physical strength alone, and women are no longer inferior to men," said senior Stephen Wise.

Junior Neil Macintosh agrees that insisting on guys asking girls "is only perpetuating a system based on the assumed inferiority of women."

It is this "assumed inferiority" which makes it difficult for the idea of women courting men to be accepted even outside the realm of high school dances.

"Men usually ask girls on dates, they usually pop the engagement question, and they usually ask girls to dances. Not only is the asking itself intimidating, crossing this unfortunate boundary can be the added weight that deters us girls from asking that special someone to a dance," explains senior Eileen Smith.

As one of the few current avenues in which girls in a dominant role to guys is socially accepted, the question arises of whether Sadie really does make girls feel all that dominant and "empowered" in the long run.

"I don't think that the concept of girls asking guys is anything new, or even that uncommon today. Granted, it is still more socially acceptable for the guy to ask the girl but it is commonly accepted either way. Maybe some girls feel empowered by it, but it doesn't make a difference to me," states senior Jeanette Juran.

"I personally don't see it as

that it has a negative effect on it.

"I think it does the opposite of empowering girls because usually we have the power of rejection, but I don't mind. It's not like girls can't ask anyone to a regular dance. This is just taking off the pressure on those poor shy boys," says junior Michelle Ye.

With her point being made, there grows yet another question of whether a dance should even be necessary for girls asking guys to be socially acceptable. Shouldn't girls asking guys be welcomed for any dance or other social affair? Some, but not all, would answer "yes."

"In order for girls to be empowered, it should be socially acceptable for them to ask guys to ANY dance. Also, guys shouldn't always be expected to do the asking. I think most guys would love to have that pressure taken off of them. Sometimes both genders are just a little shy and afraid of rejection," says senior Chelsae Dumbauld.

Wise concedes with Dumbauld on this view, stating, "there shouldn't be a specific dance that allows young women to ask out young men, but rather a change in tradition and social acceptance that lets either party take the lead."

Others feel that a specific dance for girls asking guys is necessary, at least in our current society.



Sadie Hawkins Day was originally a plot device in the hillbilly comic strip *L'il Abner*. It is now a tradition at many high schools and colleges.

• Picture from Wikipedia