

# NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL

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The Meredith Herald is published by the College throughout the academic year. The paper is funded by the College and through independent advertising. All advertisements should be sent to herald@meredith.edu.

The opinions expressed in the Meredith Herald do not necessarily reflect those of the College administration, faculty, or student body.

The policy of this paper requires that submissions be made by Thursday at 5:00 pm the week prior to publication allowing time for consultation between staff and contributors; that articles not exceed 700 words; that letters to the editor not exceed 200 words; and that contributors sign all submissions and provide necessary contact information. The editor and staff welcome submissions meeting the above guidelines.

Published by Hinton Press

## BE SAFE IN YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Amy Hruby  
Staff Writer

One hundred and forty five registered sex offenders live within a five mile radius of the Meredith College campus according to <http://sexoffender.ncdoj.gov>. The closest sex offender lives a mere eight-tenths of a mile from the entrance to Meredith College, and thirteen others live within a mile of campus. In addition to being within walking distance of registered sex offenders, Meredith students could be exposed to abusive partners, sexual discriminators, and even the ever present but often-ignored leering college boys each time they step off campus. As young women Meredith students should feel in no way limited by this situation, but they should be sure to prepare and protect themselves from the sexual predators that exist in their community.

Lt. Chip Slade, a member of the Meredith security force and a self-defense teacher, suggests that the best way for young women to stay safe is to "be their own bodyguard" (a phrase he says is used by many rape prevention officers). To protect themselves from sexual predators young women should not exhibit any behaviors that they would not accept from a bodyguard. For example: listening to headphones while walking through town or texting while going through the parking lot at night. These are daily activities that most college students do without thinking, but they actually leave young women unaware of their environments and vulnerable to unseen attackers.

Additional activities that can help prevent sexual assault are traveling in groups rather than alone, especially when attending parties, being aware of and limiting alcohol consumption (66% of sexual assaults involve alcohol), and taking self defense classes to learn defensive maneuvers and gain confidence. But many sexual assaults do not come from random attackers; they develop much closer to home in the form of abusive relationships.

Beth Meier, the director of the Meredith Counseling Center, says that the key indicators of an abusive or potentially abusive relationship include intense possessiveness, reoccurring jealousy, a refusal to listen to the partner's needs, occasional or constant belittling, attempts to isolate the partner from other people, and overdependency. In addition to emotional and psychological abuse, physical abuse is an obvious indicator of an unhealthy relationship. Meier strongly argued that a relationship should be physically abusive under no circumstances, noting that "alcohol or drug use is never an excuse."

Relationships should make both parties feel better about themselves. They should boost morale and confidence. Abusive relationships tend to have the opposite effects. They make people feel worse about themselves and leave the abused person feeling drained and insecure. A person in an abusive relationship often reverts to survival mode, trying to get from one day to the next without any plans for the future. Frequently, he or she wears blinders and either does not see or is unwilling to acknowledge the abuse, but there are many resources available to abused women if they take the first step in asking for help.

Meier notes that Counseling Center staff members have been trained to help victims of sexual and emotional abuse. Additionally, she says that the Wake County Interact organization is a great resource for women seeking help with an abusive relationship. Located on Oberlin Road near Cameron Village, they offer 24-hour crisis counseling, support groups and shelters for women in need.

Often, however, women trapped in abusive relationships feel unable or are unwilling to ask for help. In these situations, friends and families often want to help, but are unsure how. Meier suggests that loved ones approach their friend or family member with concerns, pointing out specific behaviors that have worried them and encouraging counseling or additional help. While the victim may respond defensively at first, continual support over time is incredibly helpful and can eventually urge the victim to get help or end the relationship.

## LIBYA CELEBRATES GADDAFI'S 40TH YEAR IN POWER

Mariamawit Tadesse  
Assistant Editor

On September 1, 2009, Libya commenced a big celebration honoring Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's coup d'état that brought the leader to power in 1969. This year marks Gaddafi's 40th year in power. The guest list include twenty-seven African leaders who came to attend the African Union summit WHAT IS THIS?, opened on Monday; along with Venezuela's president, Hugo Chavez; head of the Palestinian Authority, Mahamoud Abbas; and Maltese President George Abela. The celebration, held at the capital city of Tripoli, is scheduled to last six days.

Muammar Gaddafi was born in the desert near Sirte in 1942. In his teen years, Gaddafi took part in an anti-Israel protest during the Suez crisis in 1956 because of his admiration for Abdel Nasser, Egyptian leader and Arab nationalist. In his adult years, Gaddafi became one unique leader. Whenever he goes on foreign trips, he is accompanied by his armed female bodyguards because male bodyguards are eas-

ily distracted. He is famous for his luxurious Bedouin tent which is set wherever he travels because it is Libyan culture to accept guests in Bedouin tents, a tradition that reminds him of the desert. Libya currently chairs the 53-members of the African Union bloc. WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH HIS TRAVELS?

France 24 reported that the streets of Tripoli were flooded with crowds watching fireworks, dancing, military parades, and lavish celebrations of Gaddafi's 40th anniversary as a leader. Colonel Gaddafi and his guests were enjoying the show from behind bullet-proof glass. BBC's David Willey in Tripoli said that,

"All eyes were on the Libyan leader, wearing a general's uniform as he sat on a reviewing platform next to Libya's top military brass." Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the longest serving leader in both Africa and the Arab World, is enjoying his celebration with an opening as grand as the Olympics.

According to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN), 1 in 6 women will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime, and college-aged women are four times more likely to be abused. These statistics makes it incredibly important for Meredith students to be on guard against sexual assault and abusive relationships. Prevention begins with the steps mentioned above: being aware of the surrounding environment, being safe with alcohol, traveling in groups, and sharing concerns about relationships. Meredith students are intelligent, empowered women in the Raleigh community, and while fear of sexual predators should not be limiting, safety is important and should never be overlooked.

If you ever feel unsafe on campus, please call security at 760-8888. If you are off campus you can call 911 for police assistance. Counseling Center Director, Beth Meier, can be reached at 760-8427. The Interact Center has two 24-hour phone lines. Rape and Sexual Assault Services can be reached at 919-828-3005 and Domestic Violence Services can be reached at 919-828-7740.