

## New York Times gets it wrong, women get it right

BY LEIA FORGAY  
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Recently printed in "The New York Times" was a report claiming "51 percent of American women were living without spouses in 2005." Readers were left wondering what caused the sudden increase in bachelorettes, and some even feared the future of our society. In my opinion, women are simply getting smarter.

Literature has long emphasized the strength and independence of women, but it was not until the 20th century that such characteristics became evident in real-life heroines. During World War II, American men went to Europe and Asia to fight, leaving the women at home to work in factories. Now, more than 50 years later, females are still in the workplace and even dominate certain professions.

Females have so much going for them; it makes sense they would not make time to marry a man and then

cater to him. Ladies have the potential to "have it all," children, careers, and ample social lives. In 1967, Aretha Franklin released her hit song "Respect," and the message she spread of women's independence only mushroomed from there.

However, by the New York Times' standards, a "woman living without a spouse" includes women whose husbands live in other cities due to work constraints, whose are in jail or prison; or who are serving in the military. These standards hardly constitute one's typical idea of a single female, so there is no need to worry that spinsters will soon take over the world. However, using data published by the American community survey, I determined that the number of single women in the United States is approximately 39.59%. This number includes only women who, at the time of the survey, were separated, divorced, or had never been married. Even when widows are

considered, the number only increases to 49.01%.

Although there is not a shocking majority of single women in the United States, the unwed population has certainly increased. Currently, the projected divorce rate for all married couples is between 40 and 50 percent. Recent statistics claim that two thirds of marriages in which at least one spouse is under 30 years old ends in divorce. Such information is common knowledge and may deter a woman to marry.

Even so, numbers have little meaning to the average person, myself included, so let's examine pop-culture evidence. Popular series often involve empowered women and their scandalous love lives, including the hits "Sex and the City" and "Desperate Housewives." Celebrity couples, such as Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell, and Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins live happily without marrying. TV personalities Oprah Winfrey and Katie

Couric not only live without husbands, but they also publicize their personal tragedies to help others.

Nowadays, it is socially acceptable for a couple to live together and even have children without saying "I do." The only limitations are a couple's religious convictions and their need for a set of fine china and a blender.

Personally, I can think of at least three divorcees involving people whom I consider role models. Each woman is strong, beautiful, and in no way bitter. I suppose that it is not that they are divorced that makes them so ideal to me, but that they are happy. In marriage, a wife is responsible for her husband's happiness, as he is for hers, but being single means that a woman depends only upon herself. They would still be role models if they were married because marital status has little to do with a person's character. What is important is that a woman maintains her dignity and personality

through marriage, motherhood, divorce, and whatever else life may cause her to endure.

In no way do I condone marriage or divorce. Most likely, I will be a practitioner of at least one, and there is a 50% chance that I will experience both. The true issue is not the percentage of single women in our country, but that everyone is so concerned with it. Rather than mourn the death of an institution, we should acknowledge the achievements of our nation's women and men whether they are married or not. Senator Hilary Clinton may be the first female Presidential candidate in the United States, while Senator Barack Obama, raised by a single mother, may be the first Presidential candidate who represents the African-American population. Regardless of marital status, I would like to wish every reader a happy Valentine's Day and eternal happiness, whether it comes from yourself or a fabulous partner.

## Empowered females climb political ladder

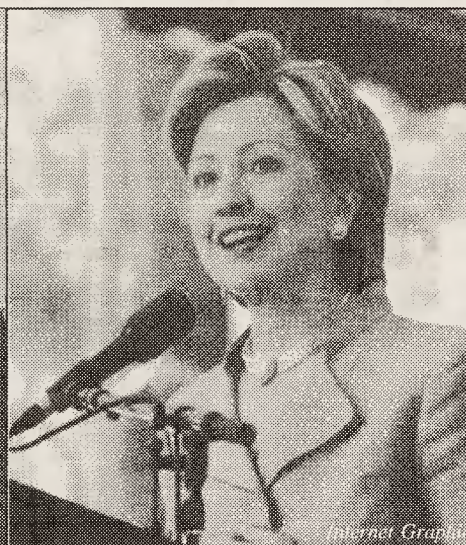
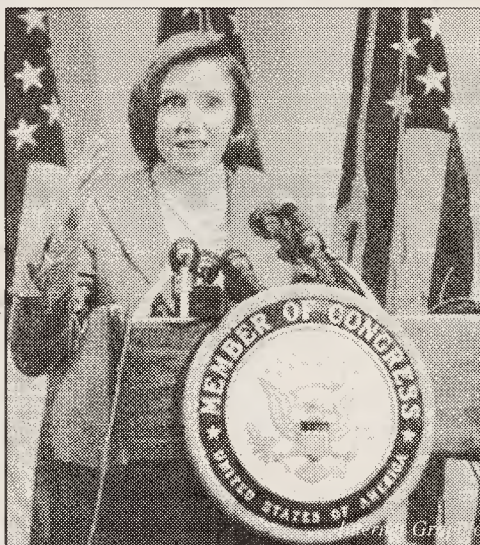
*Female politicians dare to make a difference by running against "the good ole boys." No longer do they stand in the shadows or allow male colleagues to inhibit them from speaking their minds.*

BY EMILY HARDIN  
Opinion Editor

Women and positions of power are rarely associated together in society, much less the same sentence. Until recently, females were victims of discrimination, whether it related to restrictions on voting rights or stereotypes positioning their place in the home; women were restrained from voicing their opinions on issues that mattered.

In the last few decades, however, great strides have occurred for women in the field of politics. Females have not only been elected in large numbers, but they have become more diligent in their pursuit of representation in the United States government.

Jeanette Rankin was the first woman to fill a Congressional seat in 1917. Since then, over 230 women have served in Congress. The 109th Congress held a record number of women with over 80 in Congress for two sessions. Rankin and many other females have set precedents



Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., speaks at a news conference in San Francisco. Pelosi became the first female Speaker of the House on January 2, 2007. Hillary Clinton, US Senator, plans to run as the Democratic presidential candidate in the 2008 election. Clinton has been involved in politics since being elected in 2000 as New York's Senator.

for women; they demonstrate the drive needed for females to make a difference in this world.

Presently, a woman to take charge has been Nancy Pelosi. She became the first female Speaker of the House on Jan. 2, 2007. She represents the Democratic Party and sets a striking example for others to follow. Women in our country today do not understand the magnitude of Pelosi's achievement. She is not only the first woman to hold this position, but she is also a strong force ready to make a difference.

In her inaugural speech, Pelosi stated, "Never losing faith, we waited through the many years of struggle to achieve our rights. But women weren't just waiting; women were working. Never losing faith, we worked to redeem the promise

of America, that all men and women are created equal."

Pelosi is an example for all women; she understands the importance of striving for a better future and serves as a role model by working hard to be treated equally to her fellow male colleagues.

To further women's steps in acquiring more political power, Hillary Clinton recently announced her intentions to run as the Democratic candidate in the 2008 presidential election. While many people hold strong feelings against Clinton and her political views, Clinton's bravery to run for president says much about her character.

Whether one believes in her political views or not, Clinton should be recognized for the step she is taking for women in politics. If she

wins the primaries, Clinton will be the first woman to run for president in one of the two main political parties.

Pointing out the accomplishments of both Pelosi and Clinton shows that, while voters may not always agree with the opinions of political candidates, men or women, Americans should still stand behind them and support their valor.

It is not every day that a human being, yet alone a woman, stands in front of her country and declares her intention to be a leader and her willingness to make decisions affecting the lives of millions. All should respect these individuals, especially the females. Whether individuals vote for Clinton or not, they should at least give respect to trendsetters such as the senator.

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