



## Love That Tupperware!

mandie rose danielski

### A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to our first issue of the year! We're excited to be up and running again this school year and we hope we can make a positive presence in the lives of women at MTU. For those new readers (and the old ones who forgot), Technobabe Times is dedicated to the empowerment of women in all aspects of technology. We want tbt to be a place where voices not usually heard or seen on campus or in the community can be seen and heard. We want to be a publication that encourages new and different voices.

While our first issue is small, we think it gives a good sense of who we are and the issues we like to cover. Throughout the year you can look for articles that deal with women's issues on campus, in the community, and in our lives. In the past we've published poetry, artwork, interviews, editorials, advice columns, and useful statistics. We have also sponsored a performance of the *Vagina Monologues*, and we hope to do so again this year. We are always looking for men and women to join our staff (no, we're not man-hating dykes. Well, some of us are dykes, but so long as you're not date-raping or talking trash about women on campus, we're more than happy to have you on our staff). We also welcome submissions, so if you have anything you would like us to consider please send it to us at <tbt@mtu.edu>.

We look forward to continuing the tradition of strong, powerful women here at MTU. When you're one of three women in a class, when you're called snow-cows behind your backs, and when most people on campus think feminism is a dirty word, you really have no choice but to be strong and powerful. We hope tbt will continue to empower women on campus and we hope you'll consider helping us out. Enjoy the issue, and consider stopping by our next open meeting: 4pm, Friday, September 12 at The Motherlode Coffee House in downtown Houghton.

The guest list included his two younger sisters (as Brooklyn as Brooklyn gets), the neighbor Jeanie (rumored to have stormed my father's apartment for some of her prized Tupperware... while on medication), his aunt Joan and her eighty-year-old mother, Sophie (affectionately called Grandma), his friend Samara (who never cooks and therefore keeps only ice cream and water in her refrigerator), and the Tupperware saleswoman's mother (leaves half way through the evening, as she's been there, done that). And then there's me. The daughter – fascinated by all this estrogen oscillating in such a tiny living room.

Diane leads the evening's event. She is our Tupperware guru demonstrating for my father how it is done. That's right, my father is my "Tupperware consultant..." and the man I go to for tools and hardware. As I sit at his first official Tupperware party with the above listed consumers, I write my observations on the back of a hardware order form from Burney's Ace Hardware on Atlantic Avenue, Howard Beach, New York.

My father is a salesman – because he is fun and fun-loving and funny. Perfect for selling quarter-inch Hexagon nuts and three-eighths steel bolts... and FridgeSmart Mini boxes and Rock'n Serve deep dish microwavable, freezable, dishwasher-safe containers.

His sister says, "He'll do anything to get women at his house!" But then his other sister debates it: "Don't let him fool ya, he's queer!"

Still, my aunt Cindy claims this Tupperware phenomenon is really a cult. My dad has to answer the phone saying, "Love that Tupperware!" in case the bubbly distributor Anita calls to check up to see that the party really happens. Of course the party is happening, I think. Why else would he make room, moving his three sewing machines aside so we might squeeze hip-to-hip on the couches he reupholstered himself? Why else would he wear black, his slimming color? Why else would he make visible his worn

copy of *Don Quixote*? Why else would he freak out about the dirty towel hanging out ashamedly from the lip of the hamper in the bathroom?

Indeed the distributor does call and probably tells my dad five times how excited she is that he is joining the biz. There are only two other men in the tri-state area who sell Tupperware... and they're gay.

"I would be really nervous if it was Mary Kay..." says Cindy later.



As I scribble some details about the new safari line of lunch gear, Jeanie admits she never saw a man sell Tupperware but that my dad would be good at it. In truth, Tupperware sells itself. Even I'm a sucker for the ice cream scoop that can melt an ice cube in an instant, the egg slicer I can also use for my mushrooms, and the FridgeSmart box that will keep my strawberries fresh for months – no, really, for months! My aunt Lori gets excited about anything the boys can use, too. Her three sons can certainly make a toy out of Tupperware's strawberry de-stemming-thingie.

My dad gets excited about his free stuff, like a Tupperware date book that he's supposed to help him keep track of his Tupperware bookings, but my dad sees other uses for it in seconds. His new "black book," I'm sure. Diane's cakemixing demonstration is botchy because she's doing her best not to spoil her peach and pink flower print summer dress, but her work throughout the evening is followed by plenty of oohs

and ahs and wows and isn't-that-cutes and yup-I'm-buying-thats. There's more bullshitting and gossiping than actual Tupperware talk, but Diane handles it with a Vaseline smile that I imagine my dad puts on for his mostly male hardware clients when they chat away about the weather, the Yankees, the mayor, the ever-rising costs of pizza slices and doctor visits. Again, perfect for the job.

So, why is it so strange that he should take on this part-time work as the man who reveals the magic that is Tupperware? After all, who sells us our Chinaware at Tiffany's? (Okay, so I'm dreaming about ever owning a Tiffany's dinette set, but I know that many of the salespeople are male, particularly on more expensive items.) Who sold your family your first washer and dryer? And who sold your family your furniture? Your computer? And does it even matter that a man (probably) sold you these household luxuries? Does it even matter that a man, too, can love his Tupperware?! From the comments my father received smartly and jovially, I see it does matter.

But why? Because the role of Tupperware consultant traditionally falls to ladies with pink and lilac dresses and white heels and peach lipstick? Such ladies may be most capable of mixing a sensational chocolate-cherry cake in THE Tupperware bowl you MUST have, but can they also advise on the best wall anchor to hang your family portrait or the best plumbing tape to fix a leak or the best wrench to repair a loose bicycle seat – while sporting their slimming black t-shirt and gray plaid slacks?

I say cheers to those multi-knowledgeable, multi-talented, multi-skilled salespeople, be they female power drill experts or male makeup artists! And anyone in between and beyond! May they hold their heads above the scoffs of sisters and neighbors for taking on what is unfortunately gendered. There is more to one's being than favoring nuts and bolts to plastic food containers because the hardware is the male thing to love. Personally, a woman donning a tool belt and hammer is just as natural – even sexy – as a male Tupperware consultant dishing out prizes like the de-stemming-strawberry-thingy.

## FilmClip

matt hill

Long history of the Academy Awards, no woman has ever won a best directing award. What does this say about Oscar? For me, it says screw the Oscars. Gotta go elsewhere. Historically, women have directed many films. One good archive is at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill <[http://www.lib.unc.edu/house/mrc/films/genre.php?genre\\_id=49](http://www.lib.unc.edu/house/mrc/films/genre.php?genre_id=49)>.

The words independent or foreign do not automatically mean more wonderful than mainstream, but these types of movies offer possible alternatives. In the website above, you will find a large number of films to consider. Here are a couple of films that are available in the area:

*Antonias Line*, directed by Marleen Gorris, begins in 1945 with the ruggedly regal Antonia returning to the small-minded backwater village of her birth. Over five decades and several generations, a quiet but profound revolution takes place as Antonia's farm becoming the center of a matriarchal utopia, based on common sense and tolerance. (description from New Yorker Films).

*Monsoon Wedding*, directed by Mair Nair, This is no art film, though it is certainly



### Come to our Next Meeting!

**4pm Friday, September 12**  
**Motherlode Coffee House**  
(in downtown Houghton)

artful. It's a comedy of manners, Indian-style. The cast is exclusively Indian and the setting is Delhi, where the very middle-class Verma family live.

Look for future ideas in upcoming issues of TBT.

## Top Ten Reasons to Join TBT!

in random order

- \* To create public recognition of the work people do on this campus and to create a positive learning environment for all students.
- \* Because too many people on campus gripe about the gender-equal language seminars they are asked to participate in.
- \* Because men on campus still refer to women as "snow cows" and "frat mattresses."
- \* Because you are first-year students, not freshmen
- \* Because there are no women's bathrooms on the third floor of Fisher Hall, a floor in which every freshman female engineering major will frequent at least once a week.
- \* Because they lead tours through the female halls of the dorms to give the impression of gender equity.
- \* Because "feminist" is always preceded by the word radical, rather than enlightened, or normal.
- \* Because women should be seen *and* heard.
- \* Because no one will tell you that you're only at MTU to get your MRS. degree...
- \* Because it's fun!

# Free Publicity for Misogyny

Kristin Kidder—from PopMatters (This article can be found on the web at <http://www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=16681>)

Bambi Hunting. It sounds like the main attraction at some alternative Disneyworld or the latest video game designed to shock and titillate. In reality, it's a combination: In the desolate sand expanses of Nevada, just outside Las Vegas, male hunters reportedly pay upwards of \$10,000 for the privilege of stalking women – naked, save only their tennis shoes – with paintball guns.

If the girls (called "Bambis") manage to elude the hunters' bullets, they are awarded \$2500. If caught, their compensation dwindles to \$1000. Victorious hunters then have the option of "mounting" their prey, a double entendre for the more learned marksmen. The hunters' entrance fee pays for poster-sized photographs of the women they've conquered, suitable for hanging over the mantle. According to some accounts, the "Bambis" double as prostitutes who are available after the hunt.

It gets worse. On the game's official website, [www.huntingforbambi.com](http://www.huntingforbambi.com), Michael Burdick, CEO of Real Men Outdoor Productions, Inc., and the mastermind behind these X-rated safaris, provides a list of prominent Bambis he'd like hunted. The site challenges visitors to "submit other worthy candidates for our review." These are, for the most part, outspoken, moneyed, and powerful in their professional spheres: Oprah Winfrey, Hillary Clinton, Barbara Walters, and Martha Stewart. In other words, the targets include not only women's bodies, but also the female power, success, and stature that these wishful-thinking Bambis represent.

When the story broke on major media outlets in mid-July, public response was at once varied and deafening. Women's organizations called "Hunting for Bambi" yet another example of the dangerous social surroundings for women in the United States. National paintball associations warned of the potentially disastrous consequences of aiming paintballs – which exit guns at approximately 200 mph – at naked flesh. Oscar Goodman, the mayor of Las Vegas, immediately called for an investigation, less out of concern for the morality of the venture than on the grounds that "these paintballs can hurt people and take out someone's eye" ("Mayor Blasts Local Bambi Hunt Game," KLAS-TV.com, 21 July 2003).

But for all the huffing and puffing from outraged pundits, another group emerged to pledge their support for Bambi hunting. Men from all across the county, and reportedly from as far away as Germany, inquired about organizing a hunt. Unsurprisingly – considering the sums of money at stake – interest in the venture was not gender-specific. Burdick claims to have received scores of emails from eager would-be participants who wanted to know if he was hiring Bambis. Afraid that the hunts were getting a bad rap, women who had already received their antlers began to defend the game publicly: "We're not getting hurt that bad," one participant told Fox News. "The [paintballs] don't hurt as bad as everyone says they do. It's about as bad as getting slugged in the arm" ("Vegas Game Has Men Hunting Nude Women," FoxNews.com, 16 July 2003).

And for those few days in July, Burdick was the news stations' It Guy, fielding interviews from CNN, Fox News, The O'Reilly Factor, MSNBC, and ABC's Diane Sawyer. KLAS-TV, Las Vegas' CBS affiliate, broke the story and dedicated a four-part exposé to the "sport." But these news organizations were suspiciously silent when, late during the week of 28 July, the "Hunting for Bambi" expeditions were revealed as a hoax designed to generate publicity for Michael Burdick's spoof video of the same name.

The controversy surrounding "Hunting for Bambi" is indicative of several contemporary trends: the ongoing coupling of sex with violence in American consumer culture, an economic climate that would drive some women to seek this kind of lucrative and highly degrading work, and the seeming decline of white, heterosexual male prestige (Burdick reported that the game is best suited for "the individual who's used to saying, 'I can't go out with the boys tonight' or the wimp of America. It's a chance for him to come out and vent his

aggression and really take charge and have some fun" ["Bizarre Game Targets Women," KLAS-TV.com, 21 July 2003].)

No surprise, the majority of news reports generated in the early days of the "Bambi" hoopla focused on one or more of these key issues. However, in the relative media silence that followed Burdick's disclosure of fraud, a significant component of the story has been left unaddressed: how the love 'em and leave 'em news coverage of the "Hunting for Bambi" investigation has come to typify contemporary journalistic practices.

Ideally, the role of journalism in a democracy is to act as a "Fourth Estate," monitoring the behaviors of elected officials and seeking to report and interpret issues relevant to their constituency/readership. Over the last decade, lax restrictions on media ownership have allowed the same parent company to have controlling interests in a variety of media outlets, resulting in the synergistic phenomenon known as "Big Media." Consider Paramount Pictures and publishing house Simon & Schuster. Or, multinational conglomerate Viacom, best known for its association with MTV, but also controlling 38 other television stations (not counting the 200 CBS affiliates) and, through Infinity Broadcasting, 180 radio stations.

Such mergers make it difficult for alternative viewpoints to come to light. They also make it easy to manipulate the system. So, "Hunting for Bambi"'s media coverage – all similarly sensational and "outraged" – functioned as little more than a press release for Real Men Outdoor Productions and their products. Which is, presumably, what CEO Michael Burdick hoped would happen.

Certainly, media hoaxes are not uncommon. Prankster Joey Skaggs has been pulling them for almost a decade as a means of social commentary. As both he and the "Hunting for Bambi" crew prove, all that hoaxers require is some official-looking letterhead, access to the Internet, and/or some folks willing to pose for the cameras. In a media environment increasingly driven by ratings and profit, such deceptions are almost inevitable. The more scandalous a story, the more likely it is to draw viewers (and thus, advertising dollars). Increasing pressure to be first on the scene discourages fact-checking and background investigations. Because production teams assume consumers have short attention spans, they don't follow up on stories, or, in the case of the "Bambis," report the retraction. In a corporate climate antagonistic to the basic tenets of responsible journalism, it becomes almost impossible to distinguish the evening news from a commercial.

Although his \$10,000 safaris were fake, the publicity generated by the "Hunting for Bambi" stories wasn't, and the controversy clearly boosted sales of the company's video. The hunts were, in fact, newsworthy, because the very possibility of their existence raises the issue of an increasingly violent consumer culture. But news organizations failed to get the real story: Why was it so easy for Michael Burdick to reach a captive audience for the offensive merchandise of Real Men Outdoor Productions, Inc.? And why were the media so quick to jump on the story, pillory it, and then refuse to acknowledge their own participation in producing and promoting the hoax? Now that would be a story worthy of the nightly news.



# Tips for a Safe & Successful Year @ MTU

Kristin L. Arola

Speaking from experience, sometimes we do things we know are wrong and sometimes it helps to have people remind us "Hey, don't do that!" And in case you didn't remember... underage drinking is illegal and MIPs (Minor in Possessions) are a pain in the ass.

- 1) Don't go to parties alone. Just don't. Most sororities on campus have a buddy-system at parties so that someone is always watching your back. Bring a buddy, be smart.
- 2) Don't leave your drink unattended. We have had reports of the date-rape drug on campus, so think before you leave that drink to hit the dance floor.
- 3) Don't get out of control drunk. Losing inhibitions can be fun, but losing self-respect can be detrimental. When you get that slightly dizzy, ready to make-out with strangers feeling, drink some water, find your buddy, and go sit on the porch for some air.
- 4) Don't crash on strangers' couches after a party. Find a safe ride or walking partner and go home.
- 5) If something bad does happen to you, get help! The counseling center on campus is awesome (we're big fans of the women who work there). More people than you think go there regularly. Stop by or make a phone call, you'll be surprised how much better it will make you feel.
- 7) Get involved in campus organizations (plug plug) but don't get too involved. Over involvement can deter from getting school work done (remember, the reason you're here). You'll meet new people, build up your resume, and have fun in the process.

Have fun, be smart, take care, and you'll undoubtedly have a great first year at MTU.

## Several organizations on campus focus on women and women's issues. If you know of any groups who are not listed, let tbt know (tbt@mtu.edu).

Society of Women Engineers  
<[www.sos.mtu.edu/swe](http://www.sos.mtu.edu/swe)>  
swe-l@mtu.edu

Women's Hockey Club  
<[www.sos.mtu.edu/whockey](http://www.sos.mtu.edu/whockey)>  
womens-hockey-l@mtu.edu

### SORORITIES

Alpha Delta Alpha  
<<http://www.sos.mtu.edu/ada/>>

Delta Phi Epsilon  
<[http://www.geocities.com/epsilon\\_lambda\\_2000/](http://www.geocities.com/epsilon_lambda_2000/)>

Alpha Gamma Delta  
<<http://www.sos.mtu.edu/agd>>

Delta Zeta  
<<http://www.sos.mtu.edu/dz/>>

Alpha Sigma Tau  
<<http://www.sos.mtu.edu/ast>>

Phi Delta Chi  
<<http://www.sos.mtu.edu/pdc/>>

Alpha Xi Zeta  
<<http://www.sos.mtu.edu/alphaxis>>

Theta Chi Epsilon  
<<http://www.sos.mtu.edu/tce/>>

**Send us your events for a free listing; send the events to [tbt@mtu.edu](mailto:tbt@mtu.edu) by the third Wednesday of each month for inclusion in the following month's issue.**

## Resources

**Barbara Kettle Gundlach Shelter** ..... 337-5623  
*domestic violence shelter; 24-hour crisis line*  
**Career Counseling**.....487-2313  
**Counseling Services**.....487-2538  
**Dial HELP**.....482-4357  
*Crisis intervention: a gentle, helpful voice, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week*  
**Employee Assistance Program** ....482-2299  
**Houghton Community Health Center** .....483-1860  
**Keweenaw Pride**..... [pride@mtu.edu](mailto:pride@mtu.edu)  
*an MTU group for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered or Questioning Students, Staff, Faculty, Community Members, Friends, and Allies*  
**Legal Services of Northern Michigan**.....482-3908

**Office of Student Affairs**..... 487-2212; 487-2465  
**Office of Residence Life**..... 487-3404  
**On-campus emergencies** .....123  
**Planned Parenthood** .....482-0790  
**Society of Intellectual Sisters (SIS)** .....  
<http://www.sos.mtu.edu/sis/>  
*Promoting sisterhood primarily amongst African-American women and scholarship among members*  
**Society of Women Engineers**.....  
[mmsasucc@mtu.edu](mailto:mmsasucc@mtu.edu)  
**Western UP District Health Department** ...  
.....482-7382  
*AIDS testing, family planning, immunization, pregnancy testing*

## WHAT IS tbt POLICY?

**The TechnoBabe Times is dedicated to the empowerment of women in all aspects of technology.**

We want tbt to be a place where voices not usually heard or seen on campus or in the community can be seen & heard. We want to be a publication that encourages new and different voices. And so: we solicit thoughtful, reflective, critical writings (or drawings or mixed media pieces or poems or...) that offer us all positive views and smart actions...

If you have any ideas, questions or comments—or wish to advertise in tbt—please contact our staff at [tbt@mtu.edu](mailto:tbt@mtu.edu). You may also write the list to submit a piece of work or to become part of the tbt staff (all girls and boys interested in the cause are welcome!).

THANK YOU to the CCLI for help on this issue.

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