

## Mags stray far from reality

From *Cosmo* to *Redbook*, women's magazines hurt women more than serve them

At the University, there's a dichotomy of the politically correct world — those who never veer from their political correctness and those who strongly adhere to the PC backlash. Those of us who fall between these two categories find ourselves realizing that not every "issue" is worthwhile and that those issues that are worth fighting for often come across as repetitive and worn out.

Many people, men and women, consider sexism to be a tiresome "female" issue even though men are just as affected. Likewise, many people seem to think sexism extends only so far as getting paid less for the same quality of work as a man or simple derogatory statements.

**OPINION**



Laura Daniel

But sexism creeps into our lives in a multitude of ways, many of which have been pointed out time after time. A few, such as "women's" magazines, have slipped past the soapbox and need to

be addressed.

We all know that magazines such as *Playboy* and *Penthouse* encourage men to look at women as brainless objects that must have large breasts and a tiny waist in order to be desirable human beings. But other, less obvious magazines are fighting hard against women gaining respect for themselves and from men.

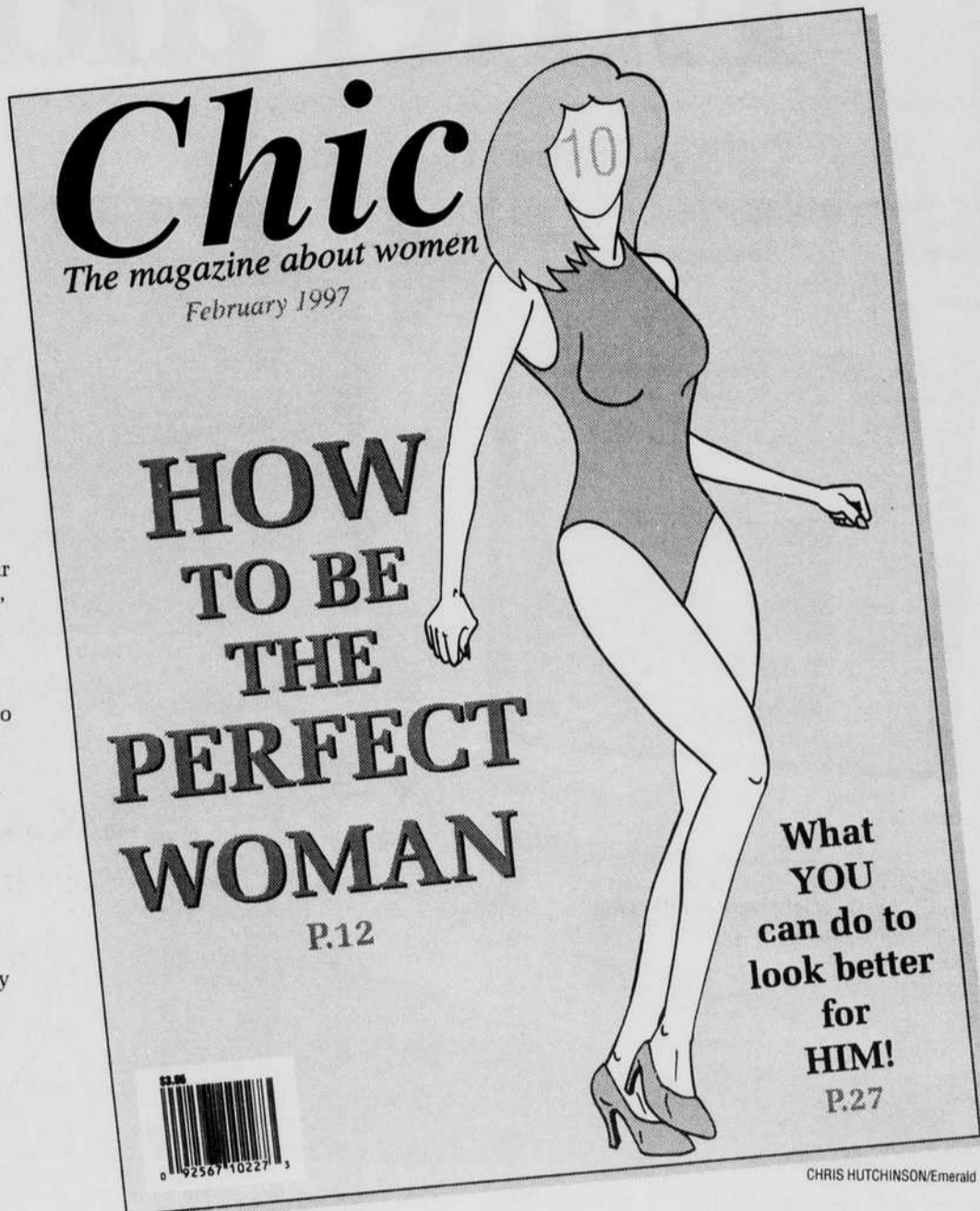
These are the magazines in the grocery store checkout line like *Cosmopolitan*, *Mademoiselle* and *Redbook*, whose covers often feature scantily clad women next to phrases like "12 Love Tests (Will your relationship last?)" and "Want Him Back? (Making love stick the second time around)."

There is nothing inherently wrong with magazines focused on females in their twenties and early thirties. But these specious magazines, which feature articles aimed at improving the lives of women, actually teach women how to pretend in order to get what they want.

One article actually suggested that women not talk to their partners about their problems because men just don't want to hear about them. At another point, the article advised women not to mention when something positive happened at work because the man would be jealous.

So in other words, if you're male, it's OK not to care about your girlfriend or wife, and if you're female, don't admit that you have a brain and talents that might actually get recognized.

Even if we ignore all the tips on how to successfully land a man (which, according to these types of magazines, is what gives women their worth), we are bombarded with hundreds of pic-



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

tures of grossly underweight women who rarely represent the general female population.

So much exposure to underweight women makes many women feel that their bodies are inadequate, when in fact they are fit and healthy. Eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia are propagated by these "thin" expectations, a problem which is not going to go away until advertisers realize that normal body weight is beautiful, too.

Everyone strives for beauty, be it inner, outer or both. And there is nothing wrong with wanting to be attractive and desirable. But when magazines send out the message that being attractive is

keeping one's mouth shut and being desirable is living 20 pounds underweight, it's unacceptable.

These magazines show very little respect for either women or men and perpetuate the unequal roles that many of us are trying to leave behind. Women's magazines should stop trying to teach women how to appear happy and start showing women that by making their own decisions, they can learn to be happy.

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**READER VOICES**

What are your plans for Valentine's Day?



"I'm done with all my midterms so I'm probably going to just hang out."

Jackson Kellogg  
Fine Arts



"All my friends and I get together and buy ice cream and paint our toe nails and stuff. It's a bitter-and-single party."

Heather Nadolny  
Classical civilizations



"I'm going to a Valentine's party and am going to be using some pick-up lines."

Brian Forsythe  
Sociology

**LETTERS**

**Kicker options**

I am writing to express an opinion and a possible third option to the tax kicker debate. If the kicker is kept to fund education or other programs, it is really a band-aid that will help for this year only — unless it happens again next year and the same debate is revived.

If the kicker is returned to citizens, each Oregonian will receive a chunk of money. It's great to get a few hundred dollars back that you didn't expect, but the reality is that for most people this will buy some nice evenings out or a couple weeks of groceries.

The third option that I am proposing is to take the money and invest it into a money fund that will benefit the people of Oregon forever. Alaska is the perfect example of a system that works for the state and the people. The state has a permanent

fund that is growing at a rate that is projected to be \$26 billion by the year 2009. The principle in this fund can't be touched, but a portion of the interest goes to the residents of Alaska every year. You can get detailed information about the fund on its web page at: <http://www.apfc.org/>

Please take the time to talk to Alaska Gov. Tony Knowles about the program and how it might work for us in Oregon. I am one that is not in favor of the state government keeping the tax kicker. We would be much better served to address unnecessary bureaucracy rather than eliminate necessary programs. I would, however, be in favor of my portion of the kicker being deposited into a permanent fund that would eventually provide a healthy stability for this state well into the future. Since this type of surplus occurs from time to

time, changing our protocol to deposit these funds into a permanent fund would be logical.

I don't think the majority of people want the money back because they need it to survive. Instead, they want it back because they feel the state government hasn't been paying attention. If the money was directed toward a good investment in the future, instead of patching problems in perceived irresponsible spending, I believe it would receive a wide base of support.

Eric Heidmann  
Clackamas

**More than a cross**

In her Feb. 5 letter to the editor, Stephanie Jacobs argues that the cross on Skinner's Butte should be allowed to remain because the cross, once a religious

monument, has been redesignated a war memorial. She concludes, "The cross is a cross. Nothing more, nothing less."

Does Ms. Jacobs actually expect us to believe that a huge cross high above Eugene can simply be designated a secular object? People attach great significance to the symbolism of certain objects and the cross is a strong symbol of Christianity.

If Ms. Jacobs is correct and we can simply ignore the meaning attached to objects, then nobody would object to a giant swastika looming over Eugene as a war memorial. After all, it's only a twisted cross. Nothing more, nothing less. Right?

One can't separate the symbolism from the object. The cross is clearly a religious symbol and as such should be removed from public property.

Sean Brient  
Eugene