

brother

Singing To The Bride-To-Be

A Wedding gift from NOMAS



"May I give you a Gummi penis?"

I thought it was a decidedly odd question, until one remembers that many of the things that often accompany a bachelorette party are activities designed to embarrass the bride. This bride had a basket of Gummi penises, and was being sent from table to table at the hotel restaurant making this odd request to everyone, including the eight NOMAS council members relaxing after a day of

meetings.

"May I give you a Gummi penis?"

While the women members of the council were deciding how to respond, the heads of all the men snapped towards Phyllis. This may have seemed a bit odd, since she was not the only woman present, but it was understandable. Phyllis, notoriously quick on her feet, often helped point a

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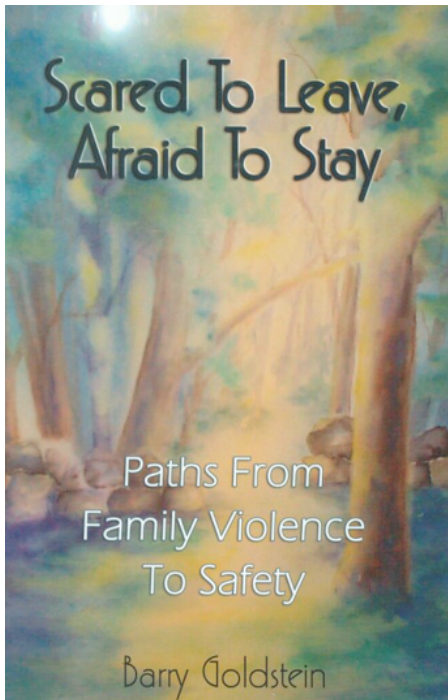
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Body Image, Photoshop® and Unrealistic Ideals

Many people have seen the short film by [Dove Video](#) showing the process of taking an already lovely woman's photo and turning it into a fashion magazine image. A similar [Beauty Reel](#) film shows alterations in music videos, for both dancers and artists. There's also a [Seeing Is Believing](#) site that documents the alterations of photos in entertainment magazines and newspapers. Mainstream media has also done this, as when ABC News did a [slide show](#) of altered magazine covers. There are websites (not necessarily sharing NOMAS' political analysis) wholly devoted to digitally altered photographs, such as thislooksshopped.com. Each image put forward in the media serves to enforce an ideal to which women and men are intended to aspire. Ads

and images are designed to prey on insecurities, so that we will buy something. They generate demand, "need." Every time we get to pull back the curtain on how these images are manipulated, it helps us to recognize that there is no way for a human being to achieve the kind of perfection regularly presented by the advertising world. Women's and men's lives will be better when we don't have to spend time and energy trying to attain an impossible ideal, an ideal even the models themselves cannot achieve.



Dear Friends:

For many years, the NCADV, Battered Mothers Custody Conference and many other domestic violence, professional, educational and community organizations have been privileged to hear Barry Goldstein speak about domestic violence, child custody and related issues. He speaks with a passion and knowledge on these topics that many of us envy and over long years of service to the cause has earned our trust.

As most of you know we have a crisis in the custody court system that has resulted in thousands of children being sent to live

with abusers. Too often the courts have responded to justified criticism of their mistakes with retaliation against protective mothers and anyone daring to support them. In January, the NY courts retaliated against Barry by suspending his license for exposing an abusive judge. This involved a case in which the judge gave custody to an abuser and denied any contact between a woman who had been named Dutchess County Mother of the Year and her children. The judge used a certainty standard against the mother and probability standard for the father and jailed her for almost a month when she was seven-months pregnant because she kept saying 'objection' in order to preserve her right to appeal. Among the charges the court had the nerve to level against Barry was that he said the judge was "biased" and "on the wrong side of history." Their real complaint was that *Newsweek* and other media used the case as an example of the failure of the court system to protect children from abusers.

Obviously the court was hoping to silence Barry, but he has decided to work full time speaking, writing, consulting, teaching and serving as an expert witness. If any of you need an expert speaker, I would strongly recommend you consider hiring Barry. His diverse experiences include 14 years on the board of My Sisters' Place, 10 years as an instructor and supervisor in a NY Model Batterer Program, 30 years as an attorney representing protective mothers and author of books and articles. This informs his speaking on many issues including domestic violence, child custody, the role of men in ending domestic violence, domestic violence in higher education and many related topics.

We are particularly excited about a book Barry is co-editing with Dr. Maureen Hannah, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, ABUSE and CHILD CUSTODY. The book includes chapters by over 25 leading experts in the US and Canada including judges, lawyers, psychiatrists, psychologists, sociologists, journalists and domestic violence advocates. Although the writers come from many different backgrounds and disciplines, there is remarkable concurrence that custody courts have failed to protect mothers and children in domestic violence cases. We believe the up-to-date research and information in this book has the potential to fundamentally change this

broken system. Once this book is published in February 2010, extant failed practices will have to be abandoned because they can only be viewed as malpractice. Barry Goldstein is already including this information in his workshops and doing so in ways professionals can utilize.

In his first book, SCARED TO LEAVE AFRAID TO STAY, Barry told the story of three children who complained their father was abusing them physically and sexually. Their mother obtained an order of protection and sought custody. The children told the judge, evaluator, their attorney and CPS caseworker what their father did. As happens too often, these "experts" decided the mother was brainwashing the children and threatened to change custody if she didn't stop. Right before the first unsupervised visit, the baby sitter confronted the father in the presence of the law guardian and the father admitted to kissing the girls on their privates. The law guardian immediately filed a motion to stop the visitation. The judge consulted with the evaluator who said the father used bad judgment but there was no reason to stop the visitation. Barry called CPS to report the father's admission. When the judge found out, he berated Barry saying CPS had already investigated and there was no reason for a new report. The four-year-old was penetrated during the first unsupervised visit. A different caseworker investigated Barry's complaint and found the father's actions were even worse then reported. They filed charges against the father and he never again had anything more than supervised visits. The mother invited the caseworker and Barry for a celebratory dinner after the mother won custody. The children had a name for them. They called them "believers" because they believed the children when all the professionals who were in position to protect them didn't. Barry Goldstein has received the highest honor someone in the movement to end domestic violence can earn: the children called him a "believer."

--NCADV

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

NOMAS concurs with NCADV's endorsement.

You can learn more about Barry's speaking and these issues on his website barrygoldstein.net/. He can be contacted by phone at 914-643-3142, or emailed at barry78@aol.com.

More information on the circumstances of Barry's "punishment" can be had by visiting <http://batteredmomslosecustody.wordpress.com> and search for "Barry Goldstein"

Barry will also be at NCADV's conference (in conjunction with M&M 35) in Anaheim, CA, August 1-4, 2010. Information about the conference can be found at the [NCADV conference site](http://ncadvconference.org).

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direction in response to politically questionable situations. We looked at Phyllis, to see what she might say. Should we take offense? Respond with self-righteous gravity? Pass off this interruption as a momentary annoyance?

"May I give you a Gummi penis?"

"Do you have a cherry one?" asked Phyllis with a smile . . . and the tension was broken. Even the table of merry women twenty feet away smiled with relief.

As Gummi penises were given out to our table, we talked about this challenge and other aspects of her bachelorette party festivities (including the fact that 'bachlorette' is the diminutive of 'bachelor'). The women walked on to others patronizing the restaurant.

You can likely think of the jokes, quips and double entendres that crossed our minds in the moment, including the comment from several of our men that though they tasted good, the Gummies were really quite small. The sidesplitting, award-winning remark of the evening: Jim looked up and said, "Really? I actually thought they were life-size!" What a brother!

As our drinks and food arrived, we discussed the table of women across the room that occasionally erupted into gales of laughter as the bride continued her rounds. We wondered how an organization of women and men who oppose sexism might respond to this female version of the bachelor party. Is this an example of women competing to be just as crass as men have been? As is often the case, the NOMAS council had a wide-ranging and fascinating discussion. And though we came up with no grand political solution, we did have a plan for that evening.

We decided that since the bride had given us a gift, we were going to give something back, NOMAS style. We left our table and walked together, the NOMAS council members, to the table of the bride and twelve attendants.

"We are all here with NOMAS, the National Organization for Men Against Sexism. You gave us a gift and we would like to offer a special wedding gift back to you. Their smiles of acceptance were our opening.

The council sang to the bride and her friends. The song, written by Libby Roderick in 1988 is a NOMAS favorite and has been sung for years at the close of the Men and Masculinity Conferences. We looked directly at the bride – and at each of her friends – and sang:

How could anyone ever tell you
 you are anything less than beautiful?
 How could anyone ever tell you
 you are less than whole?
 How could anyone fail to notice
 that your loving is a miracle?
 How deeply you're connected to my soul.

The Bride and her friends were crying, as were several of us. We thanked them, and they thanked us. And if nothing else happened that night, it was a moment that they and we will not forget.

The Al Franken Amendment

The Al Franken anti-rape arbitration-only military contractor amendment requires, in short, that if a company gets federal dollars, it has to allow an employee raped or sexually assaulted by another employee while on the job to sue, rather than requiring the raped or assaulted employee to submit to binding arbitration (with non-disclosure agreements, no public record, and so on) . Opposition to the amendment suggested that it is not the business of the US government to determine with whom the US government does business, when in fact that is *exactly* the business of the US government: to determine with whom it does business. The US government can and should mandate the highest standards of behavior from any contractor who would like to receive US taxpayer dollars. While the amendment passed, and those who have been raped on military contracting jobs can sue, NOMAS would like to point out the thirty senators who voted against the amendment.

Alexander (R-TN)	Graham (R-SC)
Barrasso (R-WY)	Gregg (R-NH)
Bond (R-MO)	Inhofe (R-OK)
Brownback (R-KS)	Isakson (R-GA)
Bunning (R-KY)	Johanns (R-NE)
Burr (R-NC)	Kyl (R-AZ)
Chambliss (R-GA)	McCain (R-AZ)
Coburn (R-OK)	McConnell (R-KY)
Cochran (R-MS)	Risch (R-ID)
Corker (R-TN)	Roberts (R-KS)
Cornyn (R-TX)	Sessions (R-AL)
Crapo (R-ID)	Shelby (R-AL)
DeMint (R-SC)	Thune (R-SD)
Ensign (R-NV)	Vitter (R-LA)
Enzi (R-WY)	Wicker (R-MS)

On December 19th, President Obama signed into law the Department of Defense Appropriations Act with the Franken amendment intact:

Sec. 8104. (a) None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used for any existing or new Federal contract if the contractor or a subcontractor at any tier requires that an employee or independent contractor, as a condition of employment, sign a contract that mandates that the employee or independent contractor performing work under the contract or subcontract resolve through arbitration any claim under title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or any tort related to or arising out of sexual assault or harassment, including assault and battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress, false imprisonment, or negligent hiring, supervision, or retention.

Anti-Trafficking installation in NYC

[Journey](#) is an art installation made up of seven cargo containers, each a phase in the life of "Elena" who left Moldova when she was 18 after her father died, and was sold and forced to become a prostitute. It was on display at NYU, after which it will continue its world tour.

The Stupak/Pitts Amendment

Conservative Democrat Bart Stupak (MI) proposed an amendment to House of Representatives health insurance legislation to prevent any plans that include coverage for abortion in the proposed health insurance exchange from receiving federal subsidies. This amendment also passed. NOMAS would like to point out the 63 other Democratic senators who joined Stupak on this issue:

Altmire (D-PA)*	Driehaus (D-OH)	Oberstar (D-MN)
Baca (D-CA)	Ellsworth (D-IN)	Obey (D-WI)
Barrow (D-GA)*	Etheridge (D-NC)	Ortiz (D-TX)
Berry (D-AR)	Gordon (D-TN)*	Perriello (D-VA)
Bishop (D-GA)	Griffith (D-AL)*	Peterson (D-MN)*
Bocchieri (D-OH)*	Hill (D-IN)	Pomeroy (D-ND)
Boren (D-OK)*	Holden (D-PA)	Rahall (D-WV)
Bright (D-AL)*	Kanjorski (D-PA)	Reyes (D-TX)
Cardoza (D-CA)	Kaptur (D-OH)	Rodriguez (D-TX)
Carney (D-PA)	Kildee (D-MI)	Ross (D-AR)*
Chandler (D-KY)*	Langevin (D-RI)	Ryan (D-OH)
Childers (D-MS)	Lipinski (D-IL)	Salazar (D-CO)
Cooper (D-TN)	Lynch (D-MA)	Shuler (D-NC)*
Costa (D-CA)	Marshall (D-GA)*	Skelton (D-MO)*
Costello (D-IL)	Matheson (D-UT)	Snyder (D-AR)
Cuellar (D-TX)	McIntyre (D-NC)*	Space (D-OH)
Dahlkemper (D-PA)	Melancon (D-LA)*	Spratt (D-SC)
Davis (D-AL)	Michaud (D-ME)	Tanner (D-TN)*
Davis (D-TN)*	Mollohan (D-WV)	Taylor (D-MS)*
Donnelly (D-IN)	Murtha (D-PA)	Teague (D-NM)*
Doyle (D-PA)	Neal (D-MA)	Wilson (D-OH)

* also voted *against* the Health Care legislation.

Roots of Change Men, Sex and Justice

Men & Masculinity Conference in Portland

In a slight break from tradition, the [34th Men & Masculinity conference](#) (M&M34) took place, not during the summer, but October 28-30 at Portland State University. As registration was capped at 200 people, those who attempted to register late in the month had to be turned away. The Oregon State Attorney General's Sexual Assault Training Institute, part of the Sexual Assault Task Force, organized the conference around the theme of Men as Allies. Keynotes by Luoluo Hong, Robert Jensen and Byron Hurt addressed the elements of the intersecting nature of oppression. Workshops covered music, trafficking, yoga, theater, youth, farm workers, all within a framework that was pro-feminist, LGBTQQII affirming, anti-racist and so would enhance the lives of the men and women who attended.

NOMAS is thrilled to announce that M&M35 will be held in conjunction with the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence conference in Anaheim, CA on August 1-4. This is in close proximity to several of Southern California's theme parks (Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm) and so could be part of a family vacation. More information about the conference (lodging and registration) is available [here](#).

Feminist Blog recommendation

There are a large number of Feminist blogs that deserve a mention, and first on the list is one that serves as a reference point: [Finally, A Feminism 101 Blog](#), one of my new favorites. When one is in the midst of an online discussion, there are several elements that can derail the conversation: spam, newbies and trolls. Preventing spam is the subject of another conversation, but trolls and newbies are issues that the Feminism 101 blog addresses.

A *newbie* is someone whose inexperience ends up derailing a conversation by making people stop and explain basic assumptions. They are genuinely seeking information, but in order for the conversation to proceed at the level desired, these new readers and commenters need to be directed to a place to get basic ideas. The Feminism 101 Blog is the blog to which they should be sent. There they can find posts on "What is male privilege?" or "What do you mean by 'the male gaze'?" or "In what way is the US a 'rape culture'?" This will allow genuinely interested but inexperienced readers an opportunity to get actual help and not frustrate the ongoing conversation.

A *troll*, on the other hand, is someone who is not interested in anything other than disrupting the discussion. A troll will throw out irrelevant details, *ad hominem* attacks, red herrings, anything to push people's buttons just to get them to take the bait while claiming that they are innocent seekers of the truth. "Why are you concerned about X when Y is so much more important?" A Feminism 101 Blog is a place to send people who ask these kinds of questions. If they come to the blog, and read the materials here, they may reveal themselves as actual truth-seekers and not intentionally vexatious surfers. If they don't engage the material of the blog, they reveal their bad faith in making the comments in the first place. The site also becomes an online anthology of the best of feminist blogging on introductory subjects with links aplenty in each article. Highly recommended.

I'm also a fan of this [Radical Profeminist](#) blog by Julian Real. It's a much more personal blog than Feminism 101, while at the same time taking on a wider swath of topics. Rather than Feminism 101's more reference-resource agenda, whatever strikes Julian's interest can become a blog post, from a TV ad to Men's Rights Advocates spewing bile. He has a fearless, radical agenda. He takes the time to answer questions about why he "hates men" (he doesn't, any more than Andrea Dworkin did). He wants people to be more fully conscious of the manifold forms of privilege. His blogroll includes lots of other fascinating reading, and it was his blog that alerted me that [brownfemipower](#) has started blogging again after a long quiet spell.

If you have a blog that you like to read and want to suggest (no endorsement) others visit, send it in to [brother](#).

-- Allen Corben