

# Female drivers, no survivors?

Women should not be on the driver's seat

For years, women have sung their song of liberation — "I can bring home the bacon, I can put up in a pan, and never let you forget you're a man."



**JOHN LEMONS**  
columnist

University released initial findings from a study aimed at determining which gender is safer behind the wheel. The researchers said that women are slightly more likely than men to have an automobile accident. Upon hearing the news, men everywhere exclaimed, "You needed a study to prove that out?"

Ever since that day when we first sat ourselves in the driver's seat, male chauvinists have assumed that women are the weaker sex, but also the worse driver. But until now, nobody has had the evidence to back up that assumption.

Well, the verdict is in. And although it sounds like the punchline to the world's most sexist joke, it really is good news.

See, the Johns Hopkins study confirms that men and women are, statistically, very different animals. The Johns Hopkins study does not assume that women are more potentially dangerous drivers.

After all, if male chauvinists are right about female drivers, they could be right on other issues. Heck, maybe a woman's place is in the kitchen, barefoot and pregnant.

Now before all the feminists and other assorted liberated men out there get angry and start burning their bras, let's talk about what the Johns Hopkins study really means. Well, the study really means is that on average, women have more wrecks than men.

It does not mean that women should not be allowed to drive, or that women are dangerous behind the wheel or that all women are worse drivers than men. To be fair, the same study found that men are more likely to die if involved in an accident.

Men drive an awful lot more miles than women, about twice as much, and given being in a

crash, they're much more likely to die," Dr. Gabe Kelen of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine said in an interview with CNN.

Regardless of men's tendency toward fatal accidents, though, women still are the more accident-prone — when it comes to automobiles, that is.

One does wonder what causes this difference in accident rates. There are a couple of theories that attempt to explain this difference. One is the make-up theory.

See, most men don't wear make-up, while most women do. If a woman applies make-up to her face while driving, as women are often seen doing, her chances of having an accident increase.

Another theory revolves around ovaries. Women have ovaries, men don't.

I'm not quite sure how ovaries would make one more accident-prone, but it is something men don't have to contend with while driving.

Finding the specific difference that makes women more prone to car wrecks than men, however, is not the point. The point is that men and women are different.

And viva la difference! Many people have come to assume that just because the sexes are equal, they must be identical.

This is the kind of reasoning that says women should be as good combat soldiers as men, that men can fulfill the role of mom if needed, and that men and women should be equally skilled drivers.

But in reality, female soldiers don't fight on the frontlines, men don't breastfeed, and women are more likely to get in car wrecks.

Men and women each have their own strengths and weaknesses. The world would be a much happier place if each sex used its strengths to balance out the other sex's weaknesses instead of arguing over who is superior.

The battle of the sexes is a war that cannot be won.

Trying to declare one gender superior to another only separates men and women.

The sexes can be divided, but they cannot be conquered.

Accepting that each gender has its own talents to offer the other brings men and women together.

And in that context, the old joke about female drivers becomes something everybody can laugh about. So remember, female drivers — no survivors.

John Lemons is an electrical engineering graduate student.



## Report's 'women are worse drivers' lacks validation

A recent article from CNN reported the findings of a new study released by Johns Hopkins University for the National Institutes of Health that attempted to determine which gender produces better drivers. The early report indicates that females are more likely to have a wreck when compared to men mile for mile.



**LAURA STUART**  
radio producer

Do not let it go to your heads yet, boys. Just because some senseless survey, which is not even complete, said women are more likely to be in a crash does not mean women are worse drivers. The article said "the findings, so far, don't appear to stack in any gender's favor."

No one study can determine which gender drives better. We should not classify drivers as men and women, but rather look at many factors to determine who is better behind the wheel.

For example, which car is considered to be the most dangerous on the road? According to a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), large vehicles such as full-size vans and full-size pickups are the most aggressive automobiles on the road. With the exception of the rare "female-brute-cowgirl" most of Bryan-College Station's monster-daddy trucks are driven by the average 18-to-24

year-old-so-called-"safe" male driver.

There are two possible reasons why the NHTSA found these large vehicles to be so dangerous.

One reason for this statistic is the vehicle is so large it chooses to ignore other cars and it can't possibly share the road with other defenseless cars. A more logical reason, though, is the big-headed boy behind the powerful engine who considers himself invincible to the world.

So, what does NHTSA say is the safest large vehicle on the road? The mini van. We all know who drives those mini vans — Mom. Just remember all those safe trips to soccer games and middle-school movies with friends. How did you get there? More than likely, Mom took you in the good ol' mini van.

Age can also be used to survey which gender is better behind the wheel. The driver's age is a component which insurance companies deem worthy enough to consider when setting auto insurance rates. Why else would the insurance companies raise the prices for male drivers until they are 25?

Insurance companies at least try to encourage responsible male drivers by setting their rates so high. The insurance companies are so scared they will go bankrupt by insuring males they must cover themselves by charging outrageous rates.

This study which claims to examine which gender drives better must do a little more research. Let's talk about experience. We all

know men learned how to drive first and eventually taught their wives and their children.

How did women all of the sudden be more likely to have a wreck? Well, daddy taught us to drive.

The real problem on the road is the egotistical male. If men would be patient (which is an impossible thought as it is), then women could enjoy the pleasure of a stress-free road. Some men may laugh at the thought of a stress-free road. But you just wait, guys, until you're about 70 or so.

Here is a proposition. Look around when you drive (safely, please). Notice how many old women are driving their husbands around. It is not about women and men as much as it is about age, and who is able to handle the pressure on the road.

Let's be fair. Some women cannot drive. It is that easy. But just as many men are incompetent drivers as women.

The lesson to be learned from this report claiming that males are better drivers is simply that men, if tranquilized, could slow down, enjoy the ride and just let the women take the wheel. We would get there safe and on time (well, maybe on time is an exaggeration). Besides, we want to get there and we're not afraid to ask for directions.

Laura Stuart is a junior journalism major.

# American obsession with youth incorrectly redefines beauty

Mission: To defy old age and restore youth. This misfit's task has lead individuals on a boundless goose chase for the fountain of youth. This search is driven by vanity. Vanity has convinced people into believing that the only place where beauty, elegance and glamour exist is through youth. Adolescent girls are inspired to look like 20-somethings, while middle-aged women are encouraged to look like high-school graduates.



**ALISON LACKEY**  
columnist

Witnessing the latest goose chase for the fountain of youth, I was reminded of the motives that lie behind vanity.

Another type of surgery was broadcast on an afternoon talk show this past week. This latest innovation in cosmetic surgery involves needles. It is performed once a month for about \$400 a pop (it is understood that the high price of vanity is a boom-time market).

This type of procedure tightens the devilish jowls of wrinkled foreheads. The doctor injects something into the skin that tightens and stiffens

the forehead. The patient has a brand new, baby-smooth forehead with agonizing pain to match. Well, pain for only a day or so, according to the doctor. Of course this session of Torture 101 included a celebrity endorsement sitting pretty with the doctor to ensure women everywhere that it was just fabulous, darling.

She was a daytime soap star freed from the "wrinklehead" syndrome. Ignorant soap heads everywhere will now adopt this procedure to rid themselves too from the ominous forehead monster.

Some people believe they have encountered youth restored with their efforts of cosmetic existence. Wrinkle creams, silicone and lasers seem to be their weapons of choice. However, the water from the fountain of youth is slipping through their perfectly manicured hands. Really, the fountain's youthful water has sprayed up noses, leaving only a nasty waterlogged headache to encounter.

Who holds the fountain of youth's rich waters? Do pubescent Kate Moss-ish super models and pre-teeny boppers such as Leann Rimes, Brandy, and Hanson know where the fountain lies? Hardly.

Leann Grimes and Hansuck won't be immortalized or blessed by endless youth. Perhaps soon their musical "genius" will surpass us all, and the mmm-boppers of the world will no longer have

leaders. Besides, most of them are too young to drive. How ever will they reach the fountain?

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Does the fountain exist on an operating table? The battle to resist aging is often fought on the plastic surgeon's table.

It is important to understand as a woman's body matures, she naturally gains pounds in preparation for carrying a child or the nasty and cruel punishment of menopause.

These are natural cycles, but often times these cycles discourage women into thinking they really need some work done.

Liposuction, silicone breast implants, tummy tucks, face lifts, etc. are all procedures on a surgeon's check list to beautify and restore the body to its youthful wonder.

The youthful wonder is splashed around the pages of fashion magazines. There is no room for saggy eyes and droopy butts on the pages of fashion mags. But is there plenty of room for intangible 12-year-olds illustrating what is beautiful?

Society is taught that the aging woman is less of an asset to society. Society sees this as a point system. The older a woman gets, the more beauty or sexual attraction points she loses.

These points equal out to such an absurd sum that there is absolutely no way that a woman over 40 can be attractive. And if she is, she is exclaimed extraordinary, a singular exception, perhaps a Raquel Welch.

This is absurd. Indeed, there are numerous women over 40 who embody the qualities of beauty. It is wrong that society clings to youth as a definition of beauty.

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