

WOMEN'S VU

January 1980

A publication for and about women
at Vanderbilt University

II:4

Women's Center Sponsors Film Series

The Women's Center is sponsoring a series of films and discussions, "Identity and Role: Options for Women and Men," beginning on Thursday, January 24 and running for five consecutive Thursdays. Each film will be shown at 7:00 p.m. in room 118 Sarratt, and discussion will follow. All are open to the public free of charge, and are relevant for both men and women. A similar film series last year, well attended by both campus and community people, was one of the Center's most popular programs.

The first film will be "Between Men," focusing on men's relationships in mili-

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Students Prepare for Women's Week

Vanderbilt's fourth annual Women's Week will take place this year from March 16-23 in Sarratt Student Center. Planning has begun with the selection of "Women in the 80s" as the theme. Included in this year's activities is the Southeastern Women's Studies Association Conference being held at Vanderbilt the closing weekend of Women's Week.

Women's Week is an event created by and for women who seek to educate, enlighten, and share with others their concerns about women. Women's Week is insured through University funds, but one of the added bonuses of Women's

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ENGINEERING WORKSHOP FEATURES WOMEN'S CAREERS

On Friday, February 15, Vanderbilt will host a workshop "Women in Engineering and Technology: Perceptions, Realities, and Opportunities." Faculty, administrators, counselors, and students from secondary schools and colleges are invited to attend.

The workshop is an activity of the American Association for Engineering Education, jointly sponsored by Vanderbilt, Nashville State Technical Institute, Tennessee State University, and Dupont.

Sessions are designed to help participants identify and meet changes likely to occur in engineering and technical education and in career opportunities as more women enter traditionally male-oriented professions. The objectives of the workshop are to provide information (1) to faculty and counselors for advising women students, (2) to faculty and administrators for planning curricula and support programs for women students, and (3) to women high school and college students for making career decisions in engineering and technology.

Three two-hour sessions are scheduled, running from 1:30 to 8:30. Panelists and speakers are being selected from industry and education to ensure diverse perspectives. Each session will allow time for questions and open discussion.

Session 1, "Perceptions," will be moderated by Martha Nord, Director of Women in Engineering at Vanderbilt. Keynote speaker and discussion leader will be Sheila Tobias, Visiting Professor of Women's Studies at Vanderbilt. From

the perspective of sociology and psychology, Ms. Tobias will discuss how women are perceived by others in organizations, how they perceive themselves, and how perceptions influence realities and opportunities. Session 1 will include "The Tale of 'O': On Being Different," a slide-and-sound presentation, produced by Rosa-beth Kanter, which concerns the dynamics of tokenism.

Session 2, "Realities," will offer case studies, presented by practicing women engineers and educators to illustrate the challenges women meet in non-traditional careers. Panelists will represent diverse backgrounds, including MBA, engineering, and technical degrees.

Following dinner, Session 3 will focus on "Opportunities." Sheila Tobias will moderate a panel of persons from industry and education, including Cy Fraser, Personnel Specialist from Dupont, and Nancy Ransom, Director of the Women's Center at Vanderbilt. Panelists

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Dr. Barbara R. Bergmann, Professor of Economics at the University of Maryland, will speak on "Sex Roles and the Economic Support of Children." This seminar, to be held at 3:00 p.m. on February 8th in Room 5026 Stevenson, is sponsored by the Department of Economics and is open to all.

PROFESSOR SEEMAN RECOMMENDS GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

Some Suggestions for the Use of Sex-Gender Language

By Jules Seeman

Language is a powerful tool for conveying attitudes and transmitting cultural norms. Speech forms serve not only to symbolize our views and beliefs, but also to shape and perpetuate those beliefs. Because we learn language so early in life, our language forms become imprinted and we are programmed in their use.

There are times in the history of a culture when norms require reexamination, and when language forms require review. The present is such a time. Within the past decade we have become increasingly aware of the profound sex-related inequalities existing in our culture. One symbol of these inequalities occurs in our prevailing language forms. Such language forms typically accentuate the use of the masculine gender and exclude systematically any reference to the feminine gender where sex-general meanings are intended.

The purpose of this paper is to call attention to our deeply conditioned language use and to offer alternatives which are sex-general in nature. It is not the purpose of the paper to persuade their use, but rather to sensitize you to language options which are available to you. Because language use is so imprinted we speak automatically and are often not aware of choices. It is precisely because of this early imprinting that changes in language use require not only renewed awareness, but intentional practice in the learning of new language habits.

Proposals for language change sometimes meet with objections. For example, the argument is sometimes advanced that conventional usage has long recognized the masculine form as the carrier of sex-general meanings. The problem with this formulation is that language is in its essence an act of communication, an interpersonal transaction. Consequently the indivisible unit of language is defined by the sender-receiver link and not by sender norms alone. It is not enough for the sender to assume that masculine

forms are sex-general. If the receiver of the message does not accept this premise, communication is disrupted no matter how strongly the sender holds to earlier language conventions. Effective communication requires some meeting of minds concerning the ground rules of language use.

Finally, the intentional adoption of sex-general language is an affirmative act which may communicate a message for deeper than technical correctness alone. The real message may be that all persons are clearly recognized as equal in worth and dignity, whether woman or man.



The chief principle in the use of appropriate language is to note that you may choose sex-general language forms when you are using terms which include both sexes. To put it another way: avoid the use of sex-specific terms when you intend sex-general meanings. The large majority of errors in this connection occur under two conditions: first, when you use singular pronouns such as *she* or *him*; and second, when you use universal terms such *humankind* (often stated as *mankind*).

1. *Singular forms.* For the first case, the use of singular pronouns, the most frequent error is the use of the sex-specific masculine form (he, him, his) when a sex-general meaning is intended.

Suggestions: A close study of these instances will reveal that you may often use a plural term, such as *people*, *they*, *workers*, *students*, etc. The principle here is to determine whether sex-general plural terms convey your meaning appropriately. You may be surprised at the frequency with which you can appropriately use plural forms.

If a singular form is appropriate, some useful forms are "she or he", "him or her", "he/she", "her/him", "his/hers", or some similar designation.

A word about usage: some persons, when first confronted with the foregoing forms, say that they are "awkward". Another way to look at the problem of awkwardness is that awkwardness is not a property of the language form itself, but is rather an interaction between the form and our personal experience of its differentness to us. In other words, the "awkwardness" is imbedded in our experience of the term rather than in the term itself. What is likely to happen is that continued use of these forms will result in an increased adaptation to them and a consequent disappearance of the sense of awkwardness.

2. *Universal forms.* The chief universal forms which need revision are the widely used terms *man* and *mankind*. Some simple modifications to sex-general forms are *humankind*, *people*, *humans*, and the like.
3. *Sex-linked terms.* A third class of terms which create language usage problems are terms designating roles or occupations which have been sex-linked. Such terms perpetuate cultural bias because they imply that the roles are appropriately sex-linked where in fact considerable reexamination is now taking place.

Examples:

Not chairman but chairperson
 Not policeman but police officer
 Not mailman but mail carrier
 Not manpower but employment resources, employment tool, etc.
 Not manning but staffing

And finally: Remember that you started learning your present speech forms years ago. Language change will take *awareness* and *practice*.

Emily Harsh

Discusses Title IX

Early in December, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare issued its new interpretations of Title IX, the 1972 Education Amendment aimed at ending sex discrimination in college athletics. What differentiates the revised guidelines from previous interpretations is that they specifically indicate how the equivalence of benefits is to be measured, zeroing in upon athletic scholarships.

The major revision states that in intercollegiate sports "the total amount of scholarship aid made available to men and women must be substantially proportionate to their participation rates." Colleges and universities must also offer equivalent athletic benefits for women and men in areas such as equipment, scheduling of games and practices, and publicity. An unofficial estimate is that colleges and universities will have about three years in which to meet the new guidelines.

Title IX applies only to varsity level sports. In order for a Vanderbilt sport to be considered varsity, there must be a definite level of competition in three areas: in the state, in the region, and in the Southeastern Conference. Three years ago marked the beginning of women's varsity sports at Vanderbilt. Currently, the department has five teams: basketball; volleyball; swimming and diving; tennis; and track and cross-country. Although there have been budget increases in the women's program each year, if Vanderbilt had to be in compliance with Title IX criteria at this moment, the women's scholarship budget would need to triple.

Women's Athletic Director Emily Harsh says that the new interpretations of Title IX will definitely help the women's program. Although about 25% of the campus athletes are women, they currently receive only about 9% of the total scholarship budget. Presently, 21 women receive athletic scholarships: 9 on the basketball team, 6 on the tennis team, and 6 on the swimming and diving team.

The decision to award a scholarship depends in part upon which of three Association for Intercollegiate Athletics

WEST END METHODIST PRE-SCHOOL OFFERS EXCITING PROGRAMS

As a continuation of articles on child care facilities near the Vanderbilt campus, this newsletter will feature the West End Methodist Pre-school under the direction of Carolyn Billings.

Ms. Billings was most excited about our article featuring her pre-school because of the recent addition of a 2-year old program that the Vanderbilt community might not be aware of and also the exciting program for 5-year olds.

West End Methodist Pre-school is located at 2130 West End Avenue (across

for Women divisions a team competes in. At Vanderbilt, the basketball and tennis teams play in Division I, in which over 50% of the players are on scholarship. Swimming and diving compete in Division II, in which 10% to 50% of the athletes receive financial aid. The volleyball and track and field and cross-country teams have chosen to participate in Division III, in which less than 10% of the women have scholarships.

Another factor restricting financial aid for female athletes, Harsh explains, relates to Vanderbilt's recruitment priorities. In awarding a scholarship, Vanderbilt goes for blue-chip athletes who will make significant contributions to the team. If, for example, a top-notch recruit in track and field turns down Vanderbilt's offer, that money will not go for a recruit of lesser ability, but will be channeled into an area with better prospects. She also differentiates between the priorities of women's and men's teams. Since the women do not have a football team, they can afford to allot scholarship aid to other sports. For example, the women have swimming and diving scholarships, whereas the men do not.

Harsh is encouraged by the new Title IX guidelines. She expressed the hope that Vanderbilt will do more than simply adjust enough to meet the Title IX criteria, and will become a front-runner in the financial support of women's athletics.

—Robyn Ruth Wells

from Vanderbilt University). It is open between 7:00 A.M. and 5:30 P.M. daily, Monday through Friday, except New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. The tuition is \$130.00 monthly for the 3, 4 and 5-year olds and \$135.00 monthly for the 2-year olds. Scholarships are also available for those who do not have the ability to pay. Scholarship applications are reviewed and approved by members of the Governing Board. Tuition includes a hot lunch, 2 snacks daily, resting cots and linen.

The licensing capacity is 76 children and maximum group sizes are as follows: 2-year olds: 16 children and 3 teachers; 3-year olds: 16 children and 2 teachers; 4-year olds: 17 children and 2 teachers; 5-year olds: 20 children and 2 teachers.

Developmental programs at West End Methodist Pre-school provide for arts, crafts, dramatic play, block building, language arts and science activities. Field trips are also a large part of the curriculum.

The facility includes five well-equipped spacious rooms, 2 fenced playyards (one gravelled, one grassy), gym and playroom to foster large muscle activities.

In addition to the kitchen facility used for preparation of food by the professional food service manager, there is also a small kitchen used to provide experiences in cooking for the children. Ms. Billings stated that the students not only do the cooking, but also participate in the grocery shopping. Through cooking, it is anticipated that the children will learn to follow directions, measuring, taking turns, develop reading skills, observations, conversation and nutrition.

The best time to apply for admission is summer and early fall. A \$25.00 deposit is required to hold a place on the waiting list. This is applied toward the first month's tuition. Anyone interested in West End Methodist Pre-school can get more information by calling Ms. Carolyn Billings at 327-0751.

—Hattie R. Lane

Women's Week

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Week in the past has been its outreach to women in the Nashville community. Many undergraduate organizations have also contributed funds, and also have developed their own ideas into workshops.

The workshops and other events comprise a wide range of subjects and attitudes relating to women. The 1980 Women's Week Group is beginning to plan specific workshops and to determine speakers. Any person or group who is interested in contributing to Women's Week is invited to attend the general planning meetings, which are announced in the Calendar. For more information, contact Nancy Ransom, at the Women's Center, 322-4843, or Phyllis Pittman, 298-1589.

—Phyllis Pittman

PRESCRIPTIONS FOR BIRTH CONTROL PILLS declined 24 percent between 1975 and 1978. The decline came despite an increase in the number of women of childbearing age. According to a report in *The Washington Post* on November 3, 1979, the number of prescriptions for diaphragms increased 140 percent during the same period.

—*Women & Health Roundtable III:10*
(Oct. 1979)

Engineering

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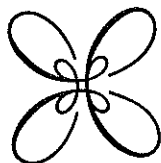
will discuss two topics: (1) present and future status of women in technical fields, and (2) actions schools and industry are taking or might take to prepare both men and women for productive careers in these fields,

Paralleling Session 3, a separate program on career planning will be presented for high school students and guidance counselors. Brenda Hunter, Career Counselor at Nashville State Technical Institute, and members of the Society of Women Engineers will coordinate the session. Information will be available on high school preparation needed for technical careers, on levels of technical education (including the two-year associate degree and four-year engineering degree), and on career opportunities in the mid-south.

An optional tour of the Dupont plant at Old Hickory, TN, will be offered the same morning.

For more information and registration forms, contact Martha Nord, Box 56, Station B, Vanderbilt, Nashville, TN 37235 (615-322-3518).

—Martha Nord



Film Series

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tary settings, produced by the team that made "Men's Lives." The discussion will be led by Chaplain Beverly Asbury of OUM.

On January 31 the feature will be "Joyce at 34," which examines a woman's roles as spouse, parent and professional. Sue Morgan, Associate Professor of Psychiatric Nursing, will comment.

On February 7, we will have a narrated slide presentation, "Images of Males and Females in Elementary School Textbooks." This presentation demonstrates one way in which children learn gender stereotypes early. Discussion will be led by Dr. Jack Willers, Professor of Philosophy and History of Education.

February 14 will be a Valentine's Day special. "A Wedding in the Family" gives insight into the thoughts and feelings of female and male family members on the occasion of a wedding. Dr. Peggy Way, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology and Counseling, will lead the discussion.

The last film in the series will be "Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Images of Women." Dr. Karen Heldman, Assistant Professor of Psychology, will be the discussion leader.

Brochures are available at many campus locations. If you want more information, call the Women's Center, 322-4843. Plan now to attend and bring a friend!

—Julia Kinschner

Women's VU is edited by Julia Kinschner

If you do not receive *Women's VU* with your name and address on the label, and you would like to, please complete the form below and return to the Women's Center.

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