

Making up for lost time

Women's Health Initiative addresses issues that affect all members of society

Andrew Grogan
assistant editor, Women's VU

"Women's health is only different from men's health once a month."

It's a common attitude that many people take because either they don't care, don't understand, or simply don't know. It is an attitude based on ignorance and which many feminists are hoping to address in the next few years.

Because scientific and clinical studies have never placed emphasis on examining women's health and wellness issues specifically, and because most studies were done on men and then generalized to apply to women, many people have very little knowledge about the real differences between men's and women's health.

All of this, however, might change with the work of the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) and the dialogue it has sparked.

"I think people think 'Oh, that was pretty dumb that women weren't included in studies, and of course that's happening now, and I'm sure it's all getting better,'" said Deborah Narrigan, assistant professor of the practice of nursing at the Vanderbilt School of Nursing. "But it takes a long time for those kinds of problems to change."

And change is what former National Institutes of Health director Dr. Bernadine Healy was striving for when she pushed for the WHI earlier this year.

At an estimated cost of 625 million dollars and with over forty research centers throughout the country, the WHI and its supporters have set out to prove conclusively that women's health is different from men's health not just once a month, but every single day of the month.

It is going to take fifteen years of intensive research on subjects like cancer,

cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis, but in the long run, this just might be the most significant step anyone has ever taken toward addressing women's health-related issues.

For years, women's health issues have not always been taken as seriously as men's: women's complaints of heart problems are often attributed to stress rather than a physical illness, and Narrigan said that it is mostly young white men who receive kidneys.

"Women are oftentimes not taken seriously [in cases] where men are taken to the emergency room," said Beth Colvin-Huff, RN, MSN.

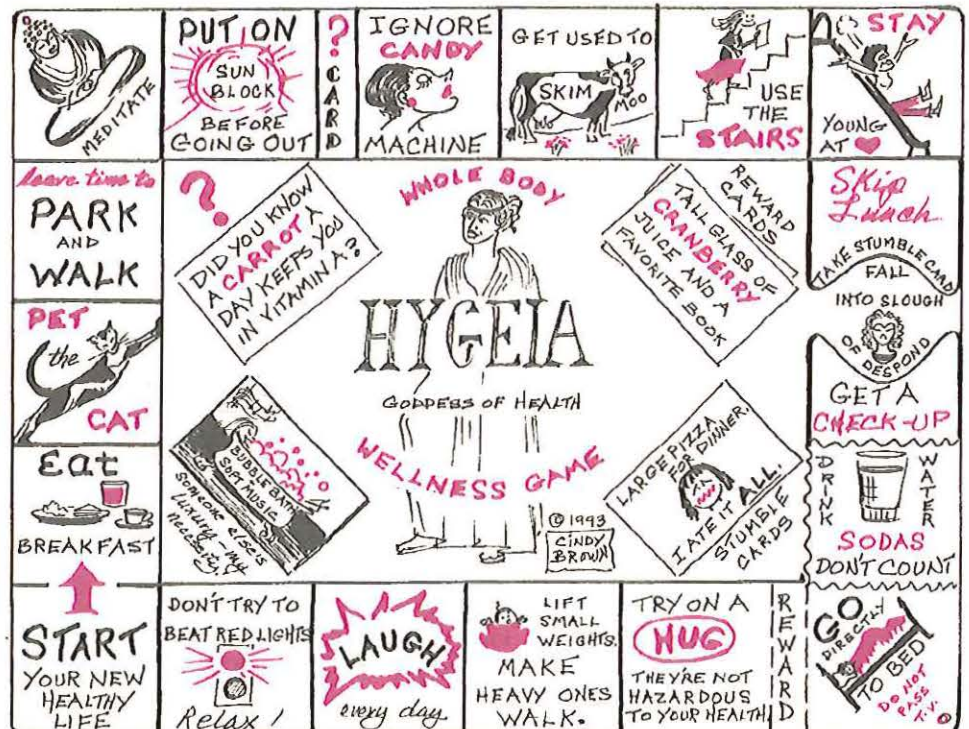
Kathlyne Mueller, Student Wellness Coordinator, said that many college-age women who attend the recreation center's health programs are just now

learning about the health-related issues that affect them.

"Usually I find that we're educating women for the first time," Mueller said. "Something that has mortality and morbidity related to it, that's the kind of thing that—men or women—you get a little bit concerned if they don't do anything about it."

The Vanderbilt Student Recreation Center has numerous programs (free weights classes, self-defense workshops, aerobics, and breast cancer discussions) that are geared primarily toward educating women about issues that affect them.

Mueller said that the Vanderbilt community seems very interested in women's health issues—although that —see *WOMEN'S*, page 2



“NEWS QUOTES”

National Merit Scholarships: Merit or Gender Bias?

Although young women consistently receive higher grades in both high school and college, more than 60 percent of the nearly 16,000 1992-93 National Merit Scholarships go to men, continuing a pattern which has been criticized for many years. Females received 35 percent of the awards, while at least 61 percent went to males. The gender of the remaining 4 percent could not be determined by name.

For further information contact FairTest, National Center for Fair and Open Testing, 342 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139.

About Women on Campus
Fall 1993

Women's VU

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Pages 4 and 5 photos by Rebecca Fischer

Stanford University gives women's sports a big boost

Stanford University announced a four-year plan to achieve parity between men's and women's sports programs. Three varsity teams (synchronized swimming, lacrosse, and water polo) will be added, one each year, and an additional 29 scholarships will be offered. Currently, women are 40 percent of the athletes in varsity sports but receive about 30 percent of the scholarships.

The university will also provide more office space, locker rooms, playing fields, coaches' office space, additional clerical support, publicity, academic advising, and athletic training. The Women's Sports Enhancement Program will begin with the 1993-94 academic year, continuing through 1996-97, with annual costs to reach \$1 million by the fourth year. The impetus for the new program grew out of a 1991 review committee which examined men's and women's sports programs.

Men's programs will not be reduced to pay for the women's programs.

About Women on Campus
Fall 1993

Male gets highest award ever in sexual harassment case

A former male manager at a spa successfully sued his former female supervisor, receiving more than a million dollars in damages under state law. Although there are some other cases of men charging sexual harassment by women, this may be the largest damage award, in part because California, unlike many states, and the federal discrimination in employment law (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act), places no limits on the amount of damages allowed.

Although the case does not involve academic personnel, it indicates the seriousness with which courts view the relatively rare phenomenon of women supervisors harassing male employees, as well as illustrates the potential for damages under state law.

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Fall 1993

Women's Health

—from page one

might not be the case everywhere.

Rebekah Williams, a student at Samford University's Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing, said that in her experiences in nursing school, the differences between men's and women's health have not been properly and completely addressed.

"We don't have classes that focus primarily on women," Williams said.

Williams, who will begin a nursing career in January, said that the reason many professors do not focus on women's health might be because scientific studies simply have not produced enough sex-specific results.

"Professors do address differences between men and women, but it is usually done within the context of a larger discussion," said Williams.

She indicated that the Birmingham-based nursing school often examines issues such as muscular and skeletal distinctions and problems related to cancer, but that even those topics are not given the proper attention in class.

The problem, then, seems obvious: no conclusive research has been done on women's health issues. But it begs an important question: will the WHI be successful in making amends?

Mueller indicated that women will gravitate toward that which focuses on them as a group and feels that the WHI might serve as a unifying force by which women's health can be addressed.

"I think women as a group are very receptive to anything that can specifically identify them," she said.

Narrigan seems to agree. "The answers may not be forthcoming that are meaningful, but on the other hand, [it is] the opportunity to enroll thousands of women in a study; it's the first time it's ever been tried . . . it ought to be very hopeful," she said.

However, there has been considerable criticism from different groups that claim that \$625 million will not be enough to carry out the WHI's goals.

"[The WHI] has been carried out in a way that no other study has ever been carried out. So, there's a lot of trepidation," Narrigan said.

"It's a gamble. It's not at all the conventional way of going about answering questions," she said.

But whether the WHI gives women all the answers might be less important than the giant step women have just taken toward a new era in health and medicine. ■

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*Calendar of
Events*

Margaret
Cuninggim
Women's
Center



Please save and post. Individual flyers for these programs will not be sent.

December 1 (Wednesday)

Gender Study Group, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m., Cuninggim Center. Text required. Before joining the group for the first time, please call 322-4843 for more information.

December 7 (Tuesday)

Creative Life Planning: What Kind of Old Person Do You Want to Be? Lynne Hays, PhD, speech/language pathologist, shares her ideas regarding visualization of the future self. Dr. Hays spent twenty years working with people who were forced into major life changes by brain injury. Informal setting with a focus on ways to improve your problem-solving skills and make changes in your life. 12:15 to 1:15 p.m., Sarratt 205. Registration required. Call 322-4843.

December 8 (Wednesday)

Writers Workshop, 5:15 to 7:15 p.m., Cuninggim Center. New members welcome.

December 9 (Thursday)

Finding Her Voice: The Saga of Women in Country Music, co-authored by Mary A. Bufwack and her husband, Robert K. Oermann, explores the history of women in country music. Come meet and hear Mary Bufwack at a reception, Cuninggim Center, 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. Copies of the book will be available for purchase, and Dr. Bufwack will autograph them.

December 13 (Monday)

Book Group discusses *The Murder at the Mimosa Inn* by Joan Hess. Facilitator is Elaine Goleski. This meeting will be held off-campus. Call 297-6302 (daytime) or 329-0180 (evenings) if you plan to attend. 5:15 p.m.

December 15 (Wednesday)

Gender Study Group, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m., Cuninggim Center. Text required. Before joining the group for the first time, please call 322-4843 for more information.

Coming up in 1994

Starting in January the Cuninggim Women's Center will resume a program that was suspended during expansion to the ground floor of the Franklin building: **brown bag lunch meetings for new staff and faculty members**. The second Friday of each month throughout the year is designated for the meetings. Women's Center staff will be available between noon and 1:00 p.m. to meet with guests and answer questions about activities and programs.

All interested persons, men as well as women, are invited to bring a lunch and spend an hour at the Center. Hot and cold beverages will be provided.

Dissertation Writers Group for Women

The Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center sponsors two Dissertation Writers Groups for women. The groups are task-oriented and provide problem solving, trouble shooting, and moral support needed to complete a dissertation. Group I meets on the third Monday and group II on the fourth Monday of each month.

The first meetings for spring '94 are scheduled for Monday, January 17 and 24 from 4:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. at the Cuninggim Center. New Members should submit a one-paragraph synopsis of the dissertation or proposal before the January meeting of the group you wish to join. Include your name, address, and phone number and send or bring it to Nancy Ransom at the Women's Center.

Nancy Ransom, Director of the Cuninggim Women's Center, and Katharyn May, Chair of the Department of Family and Health Systems Nursing, facilitate.

Norton publishes anthology of women's lives

Extracts from autobiographical writings help portray famous women

Phyllis Rose, professor of English at Wesleyan University, is the editor of *The Norton Book of Women's Lives* (Norton, 1993). This is an anthology of extracts from diaries, autobiographies, and memoirs written by women in the twentieth century. Preceding each selection is a brief biography of the writer.

The editor has included the works of more than sixty women from all areas of the world and from a variety of backgrounds. While some of the contributors are not well-known there are selections from many noted women, including Beryl Markham, Simone de Beauvoir, Bernadette Devlin, Anne Frank, Helen Keller, Sophia Tolstoy, Maya Angelou, Jill Ker Conway, Margaret Mead, Colette, and Billie Holiday.

Men, Work, and Family (Sage Publications, 1993) is edited by Jane C. Hood. The articles in this volume focus on men's work and family roles in different areas of the world. Among the topics discussed are the work and family orientations of adolescents, changing gender roles in Sweden, work and single fatherhood, men and families in inner cities, and men and housework.

Hood found a picture of "resistance and change," and she notes that "both structural and cultural barriers continue to prevent gender symmetry in the work/family balancing act."

Doing "Women's Work": Men in Non-traditional Occupations (Sage Publications, 1993) is edited by sociologist Christine L. Williams. The articles in this collection "document the consequences of our societal preference for men."

The contributors show that female-dominated jobs will need to be greatly transformed before large numbers of men will be attracted to them. Women's jobs pay less and "the economic difference in pay is due to the cultural devaluation of women—and over-

Barbara Clarke,
Women's Center
librarian



valuation of men." Men in women's jobs are paid more than their female colleagues.

While young women today are encouraged to enter fields that have traditionally been dominated by men, few men are encouraged to enter women's occupations. Those men who do so tend to rise to the top. The writers believe that job segregation will not end in the near future.

coming managers, they are concentrated in the lower and middle levels of management. Only about five percent of senior executives are women. Subjects discussed by the contributors include the history of women in management, discrimination against female executives, women of color in management, opportunities and the future for women managers, and the use of feminist practice in organizations.

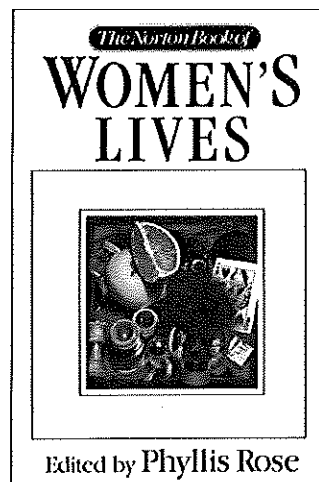
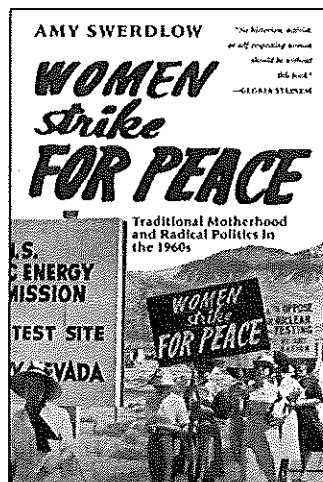
Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s (University of Chicago Press, 1993) is by Amy Swerdlow, professor of history at Sarah Lawrence College. Women Strike for Peace was founded in 1961 and was active through the Vietnam War. In the early years WSP was concerned mainly with peace and the control of nuclear weapons. By the 1970s the group's protests focused on the war in Vietnam.

The first action by Women Strike for Peace occurred on November 1, 1961, when about fifty thousand women in over sixty areas of the country staged a one-day national march for peace. Several weeks earlier a handful of women in Washington had started to plan the demonstration. By the end of 1962 a national organization had been formed, with groups in sixty areas and offices in ten cities. The author took part in

the first march and became very active in the movement. For several years she was the editor of WSP's national newsletter.

Most of the women involved in the movement were white, educated, middle-class homemakers and mothers. Many of them eventually became feminists; many, like the writer, later returned to school. Swerdlow states that "the story of WSP is the story of white, middle-class women who built on the post-World War II celebration of domesticity and motherhood to challenge mili-

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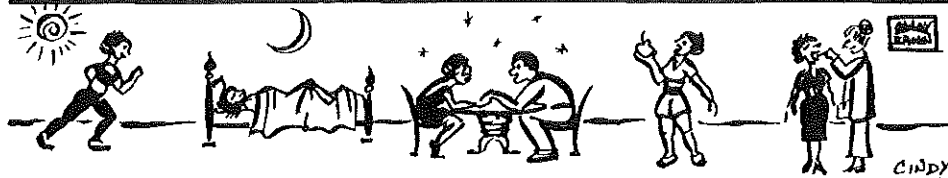


Included in the volume are articles on comparable worth, male turnover in female-dominated positions, and male secretaries, elder caregivers, elementary teachers, and strippers.

Ellen A. Fagenson is the editor of *Women in Management: Trends, Issues, and Challenges in Managerial Diversity* (Sage Publications, 1993). This work "presents a summary and critical analysis of the key issues facing women managers today and suggests directions for their futures."

While many more women are be-

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Neural tube defects can lead to serious problems for babies

Having a healthy baby is an important goal for women planning a pregnancy. There are many behaviors that we know can influence a healthy pregnancy—stopping smoking, minimal alcohol intake, exercise, diet and adequate vitamin supplementation.

Recent research has found relationships between one of the B vitamins, folic acid, and neural tube defects (NTDs).

Neural tube defects are birth abnormalities that involve the brain and spinal cord. Spina bifida and anencephaly are examples of NTDs. The causes of most NTDs are unknown, but high-risk women are considered to be those who have had one child with an NTD, a couple with a close relative with an NTD, diabetic women on insulin, and women on certain anti-seizure medications.

Folic acid is found in liver, green leafy vegetables, legumes and some citrus fruits. Many breakfast cereals are fortified with folic acid as are many multi-vitamin supplements.

Scientific data has shown that adequate folic acid supplementation before conception and during early preg-

Beth Colvin Huff,
RN, MSN



nancy can significantly lower the risk of having a child with an NTD.

Therefore, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Public Health Service recommend that all women of childbearing age consume 0.4 mg (400 mcg) of folic acid a day to reduce the risk of an NTD-affected pregnancy. Check your breakfast cereal or your multivitamin to ensure you are reaching this level.

If you are in the high-risk category, consult your healthcare provider. You may require higher levels of folic acid supplementation which can only be obtained by prescription.

Having a healthy baby means working at being healthy yourself before you get pregnant. Pre-conceptual counseling is available from your obstetrician or nurse midwife to discuss these issues.

Court, 9-0, makes sexual harassment easier to prove

Ruling with surprising speed and unanimity, the Supreme Court today announced a broad definition of sexual harassment in the workplace that will enable workers to win suits without having to prove that the offensive behavior left them psychologically damaged or unable to do their jobs.

In an opinion by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the Court rejected a standard adopted by several lower Federal courts that required plaintiffs to show that sexual harassment made the workplace environment so hostile as to cause them "severe psychological injury." While psychological harm is one factor among many that courts may weigh in a sexual harassment case, Justice O'Connor said, the protection of Federal law "comes into play before the harassing conduct leads to a nervous breakdown."

New York Times
November 10, 1993

Library

—from previous page

tarist definitions of national interest and male control of foreign policy and the atom bomb."

Other new acquisitions include: *Finding Her Voice: The Saga of Women in Country Music* by Mary A. Bufwack and Robert K. Oermann; *Hostile Hallways: The AAUW Survey on Sexual Harassment in America's Schools*; *Current Controversies on Family Violence* edited by Richard J. Gelles and Donileen R. Loseke; and *It Could Happen to Anyone: Why Battered Women Stay* by Ola W. Barnett and Alyce D. LaViolette.

AAUW now accepting nominations for Recognition Award for Emerging Scholars

The AAUW Educational Foundation announces a call for nominations for the 1994 Recognition Award for Emerging Scholars. This award honors an untenured woman scholar who has a record of exceptional early accomplishments that promise future distinction.

Dr. Lee E. Limbird, associate professor of pharmacology at Vanderbilt's School of Medicine, won the award in 1983.

The award carries a stipend of \$3,500 and includes a trip to AAUW headquarters in Washington, D.C. in

June, 1994.

The recipient must accept the award in person.

For more information concerning the award, call Martha Luckham at (202) 728-7617 or write to The American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 1111 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

All application materials must be received by December 15.

A few remaining copies of the Long Range Plan are available at the Cuninggim Center. To receive a copy by mail to an off-campus address, send a written request with \$1.00 to Long Range Plan, Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, Box 1513, Station B, Nashville, TN 37235.

Announcements

CONFERENCES

The Women's Studies Consortium of Louisiana and the South Central Women's Studies Association will sponsor **Hands On, Hands Across: Doing Women's Studies**, March 11-12, 1994 at Tulane University in New Orleans. The conference will serve as a forum for members of the community and the academy to share with one another their expertise on the practical aspects of research, teaching, writing, and trying to ensure that women's lives will be made easier, better, or richer.

The conference will feature numerous workshops and roundtable discussions. For more information, write Beth Willinger at the Newcomb College Center for Research on Women, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118 or call (504) 865-5238.

The Southeastern Women's Studies Association will hold its eighteenth annual conference, **Constructing the Twenty-First Century: Women and/in the World**, April 8-10, 1994 at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. For more information, write to SEWSA Conference Division of Con-

tinuing Education and Summer School, East Carolina University, Greenville NC 27858-4353.

The University of Delaware's Women's Studies Interdisciplinary Program will host its **Conference In Celebration of Women's Studies**, April 15-16, 1994 in Newark, Delaware. Keynote speaker for the conference will be bell hooks. For more information, write to Women's Studies Interdisciplinary Program, 333 Smith Hall, University of Delaware, Newark, DE 19716 or call Jessica Schiffman at (302) 831-8474.

GROUPS

The American Association of University Women (AAUW), founded in 1881, is open to all graduates who hold a baccalaureate or higher degree from a regionally-accredited college or university. AAUW College/University membership is open to all two- and four-year regionally-accredited institutions of higher education. Individuals who are enrolled as undergraduates at regionally-accredited two- or four-year institutions are eligible to become AAUW student affiliates. For more information,

contact Dr. Nancy A. Ransom, campus representative, at the Cuninggim Women's Center.

SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

In summer 1994, Educational Testing Service will sponsor an eight-week internship for selected candidates in a summer work experience at ETS's headquarters near Princeton, New Jersey. The program, which is modeled after ETS's Summer Program in Research for Graduate Students, will give participants interested in a career in measurement and evaluation an opportunity to work closely with members of the ETS professional staff who manage the development and operation of ETS's testing programs.

The program will last from June 6 to August 5, 1994. Each participant will receive \$2,500 for the eight-week period, with a supplemental living allowance for a spouse and/or children. Applications, including references and transcripts, must be received at ETS by February 1, 1994. For application materials or information, write or call Linda J. DeLauro, mail stop 16T, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ 08541-0001, telephone (609) 734-1806.



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