

Women's VU

Margaret
Cunningim
Women's Center

V A N D E R B I L T U N I V E R S I T Y

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FEDERAL GRANT TO VU

A far-reaching effort to combat violence

The \$435,000 federal grant Vanderbilt has received to combat violence against women will result not only in better programs on campus, but also in greater community awareness and response to the problem, organizers predict.

The grant was awarded to Vanderbilt and its Violence Against Women Task Force as part of a new U.S. Justice Department program that targets the "serious, widespread problem" of violence against women on college and university campuses. Vanderbilt was one of 21 schools nationwide, and the only one in Tennessee, to receive a grant.

The \$8 million program is aimed at countering not only sexual assault, but other forms of violence against women students, faculty and staff: domestic vio-

lence, relationship violence and stalking. The Justice Department's Violence Against Women Office says universities "are in a unique position to educate young men and women about violence against women" and to "create large-scale social change by adopting policies and protocols that treat violence against women as a serious offense."

Dr. Linda Manning, director of the Women's Center, said the federal grant will create "new opportunities" for the center. "We have always been involved in preventing violence against women, but the task force and the federal grant allow us to coordinate and collaborate our efforts across campus and into the community," Manning said.

The task force was organized by the Women's Center last spring to consider

a variety of campus programs that address violence against women. Heather Moss, research coordinator for the VIPPS Center for Crime and Justice Policy, spearheaded the grant application process for the task force and has been named grant administrator.

In addition to funding several new staff positions at Vanderbilt, the grant will allow the university to tap the expertise of community agencies involved in preventing violence against women. Ujima House, a shelter for women of color, the Rape and Sexual Abuse Center, and the YWCA will assist the university in developing its programs and will receive additional training and funding in return.

"We see this as a mutually beneficial process where we learn from each other, and we can provide additional resources

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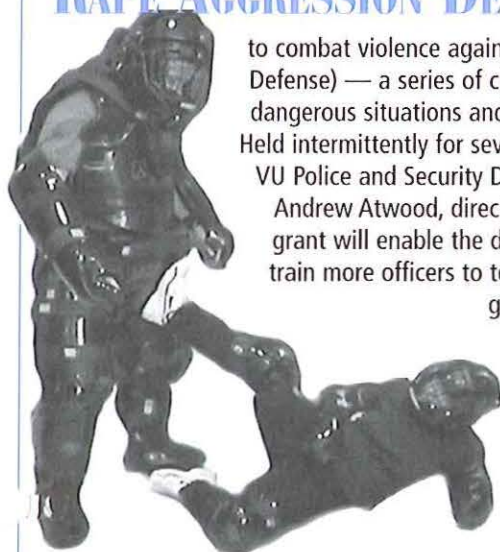
RAPE AGGRESSION DEFENSE

One visible part of the current campus program

to combat violence against women is RAD (Rape Aggression Defense) — a series of classes that teaches women how to avoid dangerous situations and how to defend themselves if attacked. Held intermittently for several years, the RAD courses offered by the VU Police and Security Department are open to students and staff.

Andrew Atwood, director of crime prevention, says the federal grant will enable the department to buy more equipment and train more officers to teach RAD classes. But the impact of the grant will reach beyond these classes, he

notes. The department would like to become a regional center for training RAD instructors from other communities. The security department also hopes to receive training on how to respond to stalking, domestic violence and sexual assault calls. *The next RAD classes begin Jan. 24. Call Atwood at 322-2558 for more information.*



Officers in RAD training suits demonstrate self-defense techniques.

How you can help

The first step in tackling the problem of violence against women is determining the needs of the various constituencies on campus: students, faculty and staff. Early next year, the Women's Center will host a series of focus groups to find out what issues are central to different populations on campus. These small-group discussions will include a wide range of participants: students (male and female), Greeks, athletes, lesbians and gays, faculty, non-academic staff, including Medical Center employees, and survivors of violence. If you are interested in participating, contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518.

From a reader:

Reflections on life at Vanderbilt 40 years ago, and today

To the editor:

So many memories and thoughts came flooding in when I read the transcript of the discussion with men about women's identities on campus (*November 1999*). I've also read the recent letters in the *Hustler* about the "Vandy girl."

My initial reaction was sadness, then disbelief that so little real change has occurred since my freshman year — 1956. We wore sweater sets with pearls, straight skirts below the knee, stockings with penny loafers, Greek pins prominently displayed on our left breasts — as rigid a uniform as the current anorexic ideal. We hid our brains in class and wherever boys were around. There was a good basketball team then, too; and one night seven of us gathered the courage to go as a group to watch them play — none of us had a date. It was our first and last foray in public unescorted. All heads in the student section turned our way in disbelief, conversations stopped, it was like a bad silent movie.

It is probably too much to ask of late adolescence to be different, to challenge

all the social conditioning by families and institutions. All people of all ages in all cultures conform to some set of acceptable behaviors. What today's women — and men — have an opportunity to do at a place like Vanderbilt is explore some modifications in their assigned roles. The sheer size of the university now permits greater variations in behavior than we could have imagined when the entire freshman class could sit in Neely for orientation. There is some anonymity in numbers, after all. If one group doesn't agree with your opinions there are so many others around who might. A harder lesson for young people to learn is not to let anyone have power over you whom you don't respect: they can't make you feel weird if you don't value their opinion. Yes, easier said than done, but true nonetheless.

I am now enrolled in the MLAS [Master of Liberal Arts & Science] program of graduate study. In one class session, the subject of gender roles came up and I have to say that these classes are the first time in my life, ever, that I feel free to let whatever intelligence I have be shared. In the world of work it

has always been prudent (expedient?) to suggest, ask rhetorical questions, pretend to need clarification — all those tricks we southern women are famous for — in order to spare men any threat to their egos. It's the classic method of the servant to control the master. Yes, I'm guilty and shouldn't throw a stone. But I have marched to my own drummer in private life all these years and made the effort to ease the path for younger women.

What is liberating is the androgyny of age, that I'm no longer perceived as a threat to either women or men. It's really wonderful to be sixty at last! That, too, is a startling realization, and a revealing comment.

Linn Blanchard

(Blanchard left Vanderbilt in her sophomore year and later received a B.S. from Memphis State University. "The chance to prove that the Dean of Admissions hadn't been wrong all those years ago came 40 years later" when she enrolled in Vanderbilt's MLAS program, which she describes as "the joy in my life.")



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Combatting violence against women *continued from page 1*

for the community, both in terms of financial support and training," Manning said.


She said the task force also hopes to continue the collaboration with the faith community that was begun last year in a program organized by the Vanderbilt Divinity School. The program trained pastors, rabbis and other spiritual advisors on how to respond to situations involving domestic violence.

Manning noted that the new campus initiative will target violence against women employees as well as students. With more than 14,000 employees, Vanderbilt is the largest private employer in Nashville and the second largest in the state. The Vanderbilt police department responds not only to calls concerning students, but also to domestic violence calls involving staff members who face harassment or violence from spouses

and ex-spouses in the workplace.

In addition to a new full-time coordinator of violence against women programs, the grant will also provide funding for:

- An outreach coordinator at the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to provide advocacy and counseling for victims.
- A counselor at the Psychological and Counseling Center to respond to the needs of victims and conduct education and prevention programs.
- An evaluator at VIPPS (Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies) to focus on research, needs assessments and surveys.

The first goals in implementing the grant are to fill these positions and assess the needs of the various populations on campus through a series of focus groups (see box on page 1). 

DECEMBER Calendar of Events

Monday, December 6

Book Group meets at Elaine Goleski's house to discuss *A Darker Shade of Crimson* by Pamela Thomas-Graham. 5:15 p.m. Call Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 for directions.

Tuesday, December 7

Creative Life Planning Group. Glenda Copeland of John Hancock Insurance will discuss long-term care, why it may be a particular concern for women, and how to finance it. Group also meets Dec. 14, 21 & 28. Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 8

Brown Bag Lunch for Lesbian and Bisexual Women. Monthly meeting for faculty, staff, and graduate students who identify as lesbian or bisexual. For information, contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu. 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 9

Dissertation Writers Group for Women. Facilitated by Darlene Panvini of the Center for Teaching. Noon to 2:00 p.m.

Thursday, December 16

Reading Sisters will discuss *Tumbling* by Diane McKinney-Whetstone. Students, staff and faculty are welcome to participate. Books available at the VU bookstore. For information, contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu. Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Friday, December 17

Students with Kids meets the third Friday of each month to discuss the challenges of balancing graduate work and family responsibilities. For information, contact group leaders: Mary Shelton at mary.shelton@vanderbilt.edu or Linda Knieps at knieps@harpo.tnstate.edu. 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Unless otherwise stated, all programs are held at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center.

Writer Barbara Ehrenreich to speak

Author, feminist and social critic Barbara Ehrenreich will give a free public lecture at Vanderbilt Thursday, December 2. "An Anti-War Activist Looks at the Bright Side of War" is scheduled for 7 p.m. in Wilson Hall, Room 103.

Prior to the speech, Ehrenreich will meet with interested students and faculty for an informal lunch discussion at the Women's Center from noon to 1:30 p.m.

Ehrenreich's most recent book, *Bloodrites: The Origins and History of the Passions of War*, traces the psychological forces behind our eternal fascination with war. Known for



BARBARA EHRENRICH

her biting social and political commentary, Ehrenreich has written for *The New York Times Magazine*, *Time*, *The New Republic*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. Her lecture is sponsored by Project Dialogue and co-sponsored by the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, the Women's Studies program, the Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities, the Opportunity Development Center, and the sociology department.

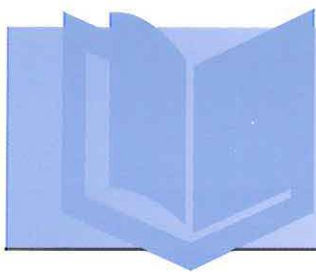
If you would like to speak your mind with a woman who speaks her mind, call Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 to register for the lunch with Ehrenreich.



Peggy McIntosh, associate director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, will give this year's Margaret

Cuninggim Lecture, an annual endowed lecture on a topic involving women in culture and society. The lecture will be held during the spring semester on a date to be announced. McIntosh has written widely on systems of privilege. She is also co-director of the S.E.E.D. Project on Inclusive Curriculum (Seeking Educational Equity & Diversity), which organizes seminars for teachers on how to make school curriculum more gender-fair and multiculturally equitable.





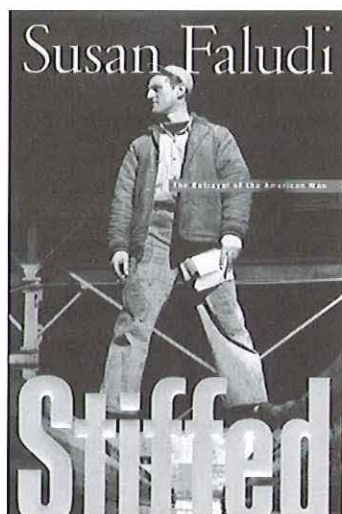
IN THE LIBRARY

BARBARA CLARKE
Women's Center librarian



Faludi sees culture as the culprit in 'masculinity crisis'

In her controversial book, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (William Morrow, 1999), Susan Faludi, the author of *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, examines the "masculinity crisis" which appears to be afflicting men today. The media have focused extensively on this problem, which reveals itself in many forms, including male violence, sexual harassment, suicide and fathers who abandon their children. The writer, who tends to make broad generalizations in her lengthy volume, believes that men have not been fighting for solutions because their troubles have not been clearly identified.



Men's behavioral problems have been attributed to diverse factors: biological or psychological causes, the economy or feminism. Faludi considers the culprit to be today's culture, which naturally also affects women. Men feel anguished, confused and no longer in control of their lives. It is difficult for them to identify with their jobs, which change frequently and often disappear; fewer men join civic groups or feel part of their community. Men are victims of the "ornamental culture" that has long plagued women and that the women's movement has criticized. Men feel similar pressure to appear attractive and to participate in the celebrity-driven con-

sumer culture. The influence of culture is much stronger than Americans realize, and men particularly prefer not to concede its importance. Faludi feels that "to acknowledge its sway is to admit that men never had the power they imagined. To say that men are embedded in the culture is to say, by the current standards of masculinity, that they are not men." Many women believe, however, that men dominate and shape our society and must therefore be less affected by culture.

Most of the chapters are devoted to analyses of men's experiences in different spheres of life since the Second World War. Men who thought that they were entitled to certain rewards often found disappointment

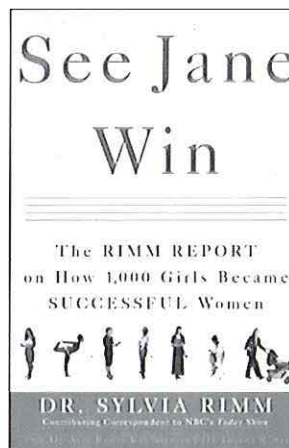
instead. Faludi spent six years interviewing males from a variety of backgrounds and from across the country; she profiles troubled boys, shipyard workers, football fans, Promise Keepers, Citadel cadets, Vietnam veterans, astronauts, gay men, men in militias and others. Many of these men are from working-class backgrounds, and this volume informs us almost as much about class as it does about gender.

See Jane Win: The Rimm Report on How 1,000 Girls Became Successful Women (Crown, 1999) is a practical and informative work by child psychologist

Sylvia Rimm and her daughters, Sara Rimm-Kaufman, a research psychologist, and Ilonna Rimm, a pediatric oncology researcher. Sylvia Rimm, a correspondent for the *Today* program on NBC, is a clinical professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. The writers "wanted to gain a better understanding of the motivating factors in the lives of successful, happy women so that parents and educators might apply those factors to raising and educating their daughters and female students."

The Rimm's surveyed more than 1,200 successful women, ranging in age from 29 to 85, who are happy in their careers. Some are in traditional female occupations, such as teaching and homemaking, while many others have chosen fields that have not always been open to women. The researchers aimed to identify which qualities successful and happy women have in common and to discover which childhood and adolescent experiences and environments tend to lead to success in adulthood.

The writers illustrate the influences on girls of many factors, including parental education, careers, expectations, and encouragement; intelligence and achievement; extracurricular activities, such as music, sports and student government; shyness and sociability; substance abuse; role models; different types of schools and colleges; and emphasis on appearance.



What girls read:

An historical look at the origins of books for girls

By **MARGARET ANNE DOODY**

Professor of English

Formed as we all are by books we read when we were young, we recognize that “books for girls” can tell us a great deal, not only about what women were — or were supposed to be — but also about cultural attitudes toward such matters as class and consumerism.

Works of fiction produced specifically for girls, from ages 8 to 18, first appeared in the United States at the end of the Civil War. One of the first such books was Martha Finlay’s *Elsie Dinsmore*, published in 1867. This novel, with its pious heroine, went into edition after edition. The sequel, *Elsie’s Holidays at Roseland*, came out in 1868. Actually, the two books were originally one, but an astute publisher persuaded Finlay to cut her novel in two, and the first “modern” serial for girls was born. In the course of the series, Elsie is conducted from youth to marriage, and Finlay, an unmarried Ohio schoolteacher, made the phenomenal sum of \$10,000 a year for her writing.

The series form came to characterize many books for girls. Publishers and readers appear to have felt that girls were — or should have been — interested in preparing for marriage, and a series of novels was a suitable vehicle for instructing them. Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*, also published in 1868, was another phenomenal success with good staying power. Despite Alcott’s reluctance, it became a lucrative series. A decade after *Little Women*, the author known as Margaret Sidney (really Harriet Mulford Lothrop) published *Five Little Peppers and How they Grew*. And grow they did — the Five Little Peppers grew into a profitable series (*Five Little Peppers Midway*, *Five Little Peppers Abroad*). The Canadian author L. M. Montgomery, whose *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) was an instant hit, was also induced to turn her story into a series. Anne, too, goes from childhood and adolescence into marriage and motherhood during the series.

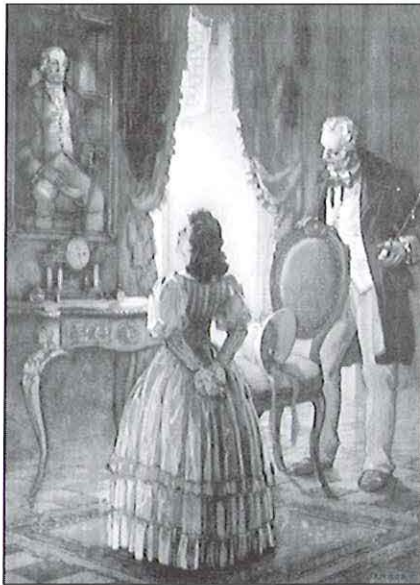
Starting in the 1920s, the series form emerges differently in works like the “Honey Bunch” and “Nancy Drew” books. In the earlier “progressive” or “developmental” series, heroines such as Elsie Dinsmore, Jo March, Polly Pepper and Anne Shirley are shown growing up. In the more “static” series, the characters are ageless, stuck always in their original and profitable youth. Nancy Drew, by the mythical “Carolyn Keene” (really a stable of writers), began in 1929 and presents a degree of strength and independence in its heroine. It is important that Nancy is mobile — she has a roadster and she gets

around. A systematic rewriting of this series in the 1960s not only removed certain ethnic references, but also radically revised Nancy, making her more looks-conscious, most consumerist, and more dependent on her boyfriend.

The heroines of these later “static” series never tackle real family or financial problems, unlike the heroines of the developmental series, in which problems of class and money are often seriously presented. The economic constraints that bedevil these heroines, however, are sometimes solved by an older, much wealthier person, usually a man. I once wanted to write an essay called “The Role of the Millionaire in American Children’s Fiction.” In late 19th and early 20th-century books for girls, millionaires abound. Although these books often dealt frankly with poverty and issues of class, they were often weakened by a quick turn toward a successful (male) super-capitalist as problem-solver and provider. Little Orphan Annie’s Daddy Warbucks is mirrored in many non-comic-strip counterparts. In the *Five Little Peppers*, the poor family Pepper (a single-parent family with five children) gets adopted wholesale by the significantly-named Mr. King, and makes the transition from “the little brown house” to his luxurious brownstone mansion in New York City. *The Five Little Peppers* is a kind of photograph of America on the verge of the Gilded Age, expressing the American desire to mythologize past poverty and effort while moving on the rewards of capitalism.

Millionaire Mr. King’s immediate predecessor in girls’ literature is Mr. Laurence, the wealthy neighbor and benefactor of the March girls in *Little Women*. His successors include the title character in Jean Webster’s *Daddy-Long-Legs* (1912), a spidery millionaire who takes over and educates his New Woman and then possesses her — a rather ghastly love story that supplants what began as an entertaining story of an orphan going to college. A millionaire does come in handy when a girl’s own efforts reach a point of impasse!

Contemporary books for girls are unlikely to rely on millionaire problem-solvers. Problems of class and the hardships of poverty may, however, be less fully and honestly treated in current books for girls than in the works appearing at the start of this (now vanishing) century.



Jo March and Mr. Laurence in *Little Women*.

Margaret Anne Doody, who has been Andrew W. Mellon Professor and Professor of English since 1989, is leaving Vanderbilt in January for Notre Dame, where she will be the John and Barbara Glyn Family Professor of Literature.

A N N O U N C E M E N T S


• **The Angel Shop at Scarritt-Bennett Center**, which adjoins the Vanderbilt campus, is offering a special selection of gift items for the holiday season, including Christmas tree ornaments, nativity sets and angels. The gift shop sells items from two non-profit organizations that work directly with third world artisans to import their work and make sure they are fairly compensated for it. These artisans include a women's group in Ghana that makes dolls and a women's cooperative in Bangladesh that creates fold-out creches. The shop is located on 19th Avenue South near Grand Avenue, on the second floor of the center's Laskey Library. Shopping hours are Tuesday and Wednesday from noon to 2:30 p.m. and Thursday through Saturday from noon to 5:30 p.m. The Scarritt-Bennett Center is a not-for-profit educational center committed to the empowerment of women, eradication of racism and cross-cultural understanding.



Handmade fabric angel is among the items for sale.

• The ninth annual **Wilma E. Grote Symposium for the Advancement of Women** is seeking proposals for papers, panels, creative productions and roundtable discussions on the theme, "Coming of Age." The symposium, to be held March 26-28 at Morehead State University in Morehead, Kentucky, will consider the future of feminism and the prospects for women in the next century. Deadline for proposals is Dec. 28. For more information, contact symposium coordinator Susan Eacker at 606-783-2015.

• Phi Beta Kappa is offering a \$20,000 fellowship for research studies in French language and literature. The **Mary Isabel Sibley Fellowship** requires that candidates be unmarried women between 25 and 35 years of age who plan full-time research work during the fellowship year, which begins Sept. 1, 2000. The deadline for applications is Jan. 15. For information, contact Phi Beta Kappa at 202-265-3808.

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