

Women's VU

Margaret
Cunninggim
Women's Center

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

VOLUME XXIV:1 SEPTEMBER 2001



Attorney General John Ashcroft and Dr. Linda Manning, Director of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center.

Cuninggim Women's Center Receives Grant from U.S. Department of Justice

On August 16th, Attorney General John Ashcroft visited Vanderbilt to present a \$360,000 award to the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center. The grant is allocated under the Violence Against Women Act, which provides funding to 40 colleges and universities around the country in an attempt to decrease the incidence of violent acts against women on American campuses.

Dr. Linda Manning, director of the center, stated, "Because we bring to our work a feminist perspective, we know the importance of bringing a community together to...share in creating a solution. Our goal is to...surround victims with services and offer them a safe place in which to speak out." In an inspirational closing to the award ceremony, Manning offered: "We do not have to live with the status quo. Together working collaboratively and with the support of programs like this one, we can change the culture, we can reduce the violence."

Local Painter to Exhibit at Women's Center Gallery

Elizabeth D. M. Wise received her B.F.A. from Tulane University in New Orleans. Her exhibit is entitled: "Light, Particle, and Shadow." She describes her work as "exploring the middle ground...involving the space between light and dark, between opposites...yin/yang...speaking of shadows...and mystery." Wise's exhibit at the Women's Center will run from September 10th through October 26th.

Maureen Duffy: In your statement you talk a lot about "middle ground," of balance and reconciling opposites; yet also of respecting the "enigma of the line" that separates "polarities." I love these statements, and am interested in ideas about understanding and making sense of dichotomies in a new way as well. What I am wondering is, if you have ever thought of these statements in terms of gender, of the female and the male? Do you have any thoughts or impressions on that?

Elizabeth D. M. Wise: When male and female come together, life is created, filled with all the possibilities which that meeting implies. When polarities come together, there is tension...that's where the action is...and the potential. Middle ground cannot exist without opposites. The meeting is where life begins, where it is continued. The line between is the breeding ground

for possibilities, a place of fluidity, change. Man as warrior/ woman as the nurturer; then this: woman as the warrior, man as the nurturer...ah, yes, the roles change, but it is still the opposites that balance each other to create the place where growth occurs. And the balance is always shifting; when one side becomes too heavy or too light, the existing balance is thrown off and chaos occurs, then change, then the

struggle for balance again...the middle ground. Relationships. Rhythm. The Dance. Yep, we've discovered there's a rhythm in chaos. I love it! The roles of men and women change and swirl, but it still takes the two to create life...until they perfect cloning, heaven help us! Men and women still need each other; and if we forget that, we're in serious trouble!

MD: What are your immediate plans? I see from your bio that you have won a grant to the Vermont Studio...is that something that is coming up?

EW: Paint, paint, and paint. Continuing on the above theme. I'm in that space where I pull into myself, gather force, focus, then produce like crazy. In 1999, I spent a month at the Vermont Studio Center, painting on a grant. I did receive



Elizabeth D. M. Wise

continued on page 2

another grant, which I don't know when I'll be able to use. I married about a year ago, and one can imagine that I'm working on the "balance" thing! It's going very well, by the way, my husband being a wonderful, nurturing, supportive kind of guy. I also love to travel and hope to do so later in the fall.

MD: You have been lucky (and talented, of course) enough to make your living as a pure artist. Do you have any feelings about current cultural devaluation of pure art in a world where it seems business and/or money seem to control everything: to dictate value and infringe upon the realms of pure creativity?

EW: Oh boy! Money and politics do control art in our Western society. It's a shame that artists aren't as valued for our vision, but then, this is a very old cry. The 10 minutes of fame, our picking up trends and casting them quickly aside; the instant gratification society that we are and the money we have to spend on our things. Well, that's the U.S.! It can be disheartening. Art can be a way of life, not depending so much

on money, but totally incorporated into it [life]. I think this is happening a little more with average people. I love public murals painted by kids. Art doesn't have to be traditional or trendy. At times I've walked the line between total "sell-out" and total self-indulgence. It's not easy. I've struggled. I've raised a son with painting...giving the people what they said they wanted: subjects I could relate to, portraits which hopefully depicted something besides just facial features. Like a sessions musician, I preferred rather to be in the business wherever I could, than to not use my skills except in limited spare time. I've taken short breaks, worked in a wilderness school, traveled, supported various causes; but I always return to my art. It grounds me. Now I'm painting questions I ask myself, feelings I feel. For me, certainly, if someone truly likes this piece or that one, is moved by my work, and wants to own it, I feel wonderful. They see something I'm trying to say; and therefore, I've succeeded in my role as translator. I do need the connection between others and my work; but of course, we can't wait for recognition. It is truly

sad to be filled with passion and not have the financial resources to develop it.

MD: Have there been any major shifts in your work historically? If so, can you describe them or identify what caused them?

EW: In the past I've painted to sell and painted what I liked. Now my work is more about my own vision and what I like. I'm becoming more abstracted. I think my abstraction stems from wanting to create a mood, a feeling, an atmosphere. It's exciting to see where it will all lead. Early on, one professor told me I "used too much color" in my work, and forced me to paint in browns, blacks, and grays. Now people tell me: "I LOVE your colors!" I just want to have fun and paint what moves me.

MD: Anything about your work or anything at all that you'd like to add?

EW: I once asked an old, wise person what would be the one word of advice that person would leave me with concerning life. This person said: "Enjoy life." And that's what I try to do. It's a balancing act.

An opening reception for the exhibit will be held September 13th from 4:30 pm to 6:00 pm. The public is invited to attend.



Women's VU is published monthly September through June at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.
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Welcome!

The Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center wishes to extend a warm welcome to all new and returning students. While dedicated to addressing women's, feminist, and gender concerns of Vanderbilt students, the Center is equally involved with promoting awareness of these issues in the staff and faculty of VU, as well as in the community at large. All staff, faculty, students, and community members are cordially invited to visit the center and to utilize its resources, which include an extensive library, a wide range of information on women's issues, and, not least, a devoted and friendly staff. We look forward to meeting you!



Men Promoting a Solution

MPAS, or Men Promoting a Solution, is a group of Vanderbilt men organized to combat violence against women. Justin Montenegro, a founding member, explains that those involved with MPAS are "try[ing] to personally live in ways that are not threatening to women. We recognize that while this is part of the solution, it is not enough." Consequently, the group focuses the majority of its efforts building awareness of this issue on campus, though they believe that education should begin in high school or earlier.

Montenegro, along with the other two organizing members of MPAS, Bola Diaz and Scott Wallitsch, agreed to answer some of the questions I had about MPAS. What has intrigued me most about this group, and what I could not wait to find out, was what compelled these young men to take a stand, and to take action, on an issue that most people—most men—seem perfectly capable of ignoring. In response, Diaz told me that he has "basically been sur-

rounded by all components of violence against women for most of his life." He continued, "It's not enough that when I see something wrong, I feel bad about it. I believe that I should do something."

In addition to their program of outreach to other men, the members of MPAS also analyze their own beliefs and behaviors related to violence against women. They educate themselves. They speak out against degrading comments, sexual abuse, rape, and stalking. "This is not a 'one-shot deal,'" says Wallitsch. "If we are surrounded by violence, our resistance must be ongoing."

MPAS is currently planning its fall schedule. One of their upcoming activities is a white ribbon campaign; the white ribbon symbolizes that the bearer

opposes violence against women. MPAS also seeks new members; if you are interested in joining, or know a man who may be, contact sandra.harrell@vanderbilt.edu.



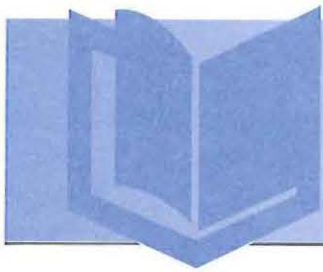
Bola Diaz and Scott Wallitsch

Speaker Series to Begin

The University Chaplain's office has announced its lecture series, "Sojourner's Quest," for the academic year. Gary White, University Chaplain, describes the series as "how belief and faith inform our lives. The intent is to find speakers who have had interesting journeys in their personal faith development and have them share their story with the Vanderbilt community. Our hope is that audience members will discover that where they are currently does not necessarily determine where they will go. The event is not so much about religion but more about the pursuit of our authentic selves and how that pursuit directs us through life's maze." The series will begin September 25th at 7:00 pm in Benton Chapel with author Jack Miles, who has won a Pulitzer Prize for his book: *God: A Biography*. Miles will present a lecture entitled "An Autobiography of the Biographer of God." For more information and a schedule of upcoming speakers, contact the Chaplain's office at 322-2457.

Love Your Body Day

On September 19th, the National Organization for Women is once again sponsoring this annual event to celebrate and cultivate women's pride and self esteem related to body image. Log on to NOW's website at www.now.org for ideas—hold a gathering, inform others, and most importantly, make a commitment to respect and appreciate your own body.



IN THE LIBRARY

BARBARA CLARKE
Women's Center librarian



New Acquisitions Cover Diverse Topics

Women Sailors and Sailor's Women: An Untold Maritime History (Random House, 2001) is an engrossing volume by British maritime



researcher, David Cordingly. Comparatively little has been written about women and the sea, which is usually regarded as a male domain.

Cordingly discusses women who went to sea

as wives or mistresses of officers, cooks, and other crew members, sometimes even on warships; women who for various reasons disguised themselves as men or boys and worked as crew members; two female pirates; heroic wives who took the helm during emergencies at sea; prostitutes; female lighthouse keepers; women and whaling; sailors' families who stayed on shore; and images of women and the sea.

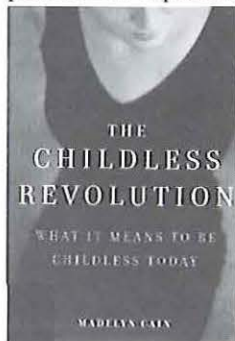
The writer focuses primarily on the ports and ships of Great Britain and the United States and covers mainly the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Much of the data about seagoing women does not appear in official maritime records or ships' logs but can be discovered in the reports of ships' doctors (perhaps mentioning a birth at sea), in diaries and journals, newspaper reports, and legal documents such as transcripts of court-martials.

Madelyn Cain's *The Childless Revolution* (Perseus, 2001) explores another topic on which little research has been done. The writer, who

teaches English at Mission College, became a mother fairly late in life and had assumed that virtually all women wish to be mothers. After interviewing over 100 childless women she realized that a growing number of women do not want children and are not afraid to admit it. In 1998, 42.2 percent of all women in this country were childless.

Cain divides women without children into three groups: those who are childless by choice, by chance, and by happenstance. She includes women who are unable to have children; those who choose not to have them for a variety of reasons; single women who would like children but who do not wish to become single mothers; nuns; and childless women of achievement.

Society acts as if childless women do not exist and the writer feels that she has "discovered an unnamed problem: a reproductive choice that



was not sanctioned by society, but was nonetheless being embraced with staggering momentum."

Cain hopes that women without children will finally feel free to

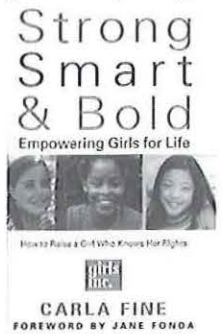
discuss their state without having to justify it. Childless females are not targeted by advertisers, educators, or politicians and they tend to be discriminated against in the family-oriented workplace. Cain found generational differences in women's attitudes toward their own childlessness, with younger women being

more comfortable with their situation.

Parents and caregivers of young girls will find

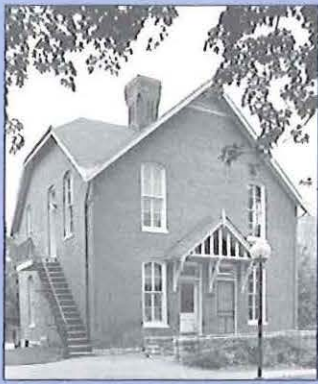
Strong, Smart, and Bold: Empowering Girls for Life (Cliff Street, 2001)

by Carla Fine to be very helpful. The book is based on the Girls Inc. Bill of Rights, which has been designed to help girls lead successful, happy, and independent lives. Since 1945 Girls Inc. has been working to assist and empower girls. Jane Fonda, the chair of the organization's Girls Rights Campaign, wrote the foreword.



According to the Girls' Rights Survey, which surveyed 2,000 girls and boys in 1999, most girls are frustrated by outdated gender stereotypes and feel pressure to conform to narrow and often conflicting expectations. Fine aims to provide readers with "practical tools for helping a girl to be her own best advocate by knowing and asserting her rights, and becoming strong, smart, and bold in every aspect of her life."

Other new acquisitions include: *Pretty in Punk: Girls' Gender Resistance in a Boys' Subculture* by Lauraine Leblanc; *Going to the Top: A Road Map for Success from America's Leading Women Executives* by Carol Gallagher and Susan K. Golant; *Women's Wicked Wit: From Jane Austen to Roseanne Barr* by Michelle Lovric; and *Mothers & Sons: Feminism, Masculinity, and the Struggle to Raise Our Sons* edited by Andrea O'Reilly.



September

Tuesdays, September 4, 11, 18, 25, 12:00 noon - 1:00 pm
Creative Life Planning Group - (TBA)

Monday, September 10 - Friday, October 26, 8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Light, Particle, and Shadow, painting exhibit by Elizabeth D. M. Wise, Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center Gallery. The opening reception is September 13.

Monday, September 10, 5:15 pm
Book Group - The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver. Amy Bohnert will facilitate the discussion.

Tuesday, September 11, 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
New Female Faculty and Administrators Reception - The Women's Faculty Organization and the Women's Center are cosponsoring their annual welcome reception for new female faculty members and administrators in the University and the Medical Center.

Wednesday, September 12, 5:15 pm
Women, Spirit and Poetry - Jan Rosemergy and Linda Manning will lead this discussion on "The Word" from *Cries of the Spirit: A Celebration of Women's Spirituality*. This group is open to the public.

Thursday, September 13, 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm
Artist Reception - Please join us in celebrating local artist Elizabeth D. M. Wise. Free and open to the public.

Friday, September 14, 12:00 noon - 1:00 pm
Dissertation Writers Group for Women - An organizational meeting. Dr. Darlene Panyini, Assistant Director of the Center for Teaching, will serve as facilitator. This group offers brainstorming strategies and helps students find solutions to problems experienced while working on a dissertation. During this session, a regular meeting time will be selected.

Thursday, September 20, 12:00 noon - 1:00 pm
Reading Sisters - Organizational meeting. This book group focuses on the writings of black women authors. All students, staff, and faculty are welcome to participate. We will select books for the semester.

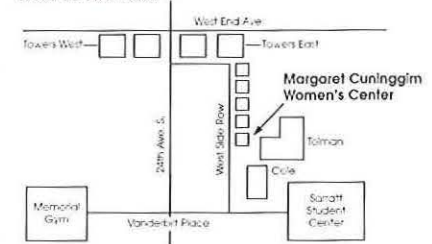
Friday, September 21, 12:00 noon - 1:00 pm
Living with Loss lunch group - This group is for all students (women, men, undergraduate, graduate) living with the loss of a close family member or friend. Erika Callaway, Divinity School, facilitates the group. Lunch is provided. Register with Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu.

Friday, September 21 - Sunday, September 23 (time and location to be announced)
Hand in Hand training - Hand in Hand trains students, staff, and faculty about the dynamics of violence against women and how to help students make informed decisions about services and options available to them related to dating/domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. Limited space so contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu to register.

Thursday, September 27, 6:00 pm - Sarratt 189
ABCs of Car Maintenance - Pat Claybaker, co-owner of The Workshop, will offer tips on how to wisely care for your car. It will begin at 6:00 pm and should end around 7:30 pm. Light refreshment will be served. Free and open to the public. Registration required. Contact 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu.

How to find us . . .

HOW TO FIND US...



The Cuninggim Center is located in the Franklin Building at 316 West Side Row.

Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

Calendar of Events

PLEASE SAVE AND POST.

Unless otherwise stated, all programs are held at the Cuninggim Center, Franklin Building, 316 West Side Row. For more information on the events listed, call 322-4843 or hilary.a.forbes@vanderbilt.edu.



Fibrocystic Breast Disease: A Contradiction in Terms?

When is a disease not a disease? When you're describing lumpy breasts. Fibrocystic Breast Disease (FBD) is not actually a disease. It is a normal condition found in most women.

FBD is characterized by the presence of non-cancerous lumps in the breast. The lumps are palpable and often accompanied by swelling and pain. The pain may extend into the armpit area, and ranges from mild to severe. It is not known what causes this condition, but it is thought to be due to an exaggerated response to normal monthly hormonal fluctuations. Symptoms usually correlate with the menstrual cycle, and almost always disappear when a woman reaches menopause. According to Dr. Roy Jensen, a Vanderbilt pathologist who specializes in characterizing non-cancerous breast abnormalities, FBD is indeed very common. "At least half of all women have some degree of changes in the breast," he says.

Breast cancer is one of the leading causes of death in women in the U.S. But most lumps in the breast are not cancerous. The majority of these lumps are small fluid-filled sacs called cysts, which are completely harmless, and seldom removed. Does the presence of cysts lead to cancer? "Until 1985, we thought that FBD was related to cancer," says Jensen. However, a study from two Vanderbilt physicians showed this wasn't true. In this comprehensive study, patients were monitored for 20 years after first reporting cysts and other abnormalities associated with FBD. The study showed that these patients were no more likely to develop cancer than women having no symptoms of FBD. Therefore, Jensen says, "we know that FBD is not associated with an increased risk [of cancer] at all." Because of this, it has been recommended that the term FBD be substituted with the terms "Fibrocystic Change," says Jensen.

Know Thyself

The breast is a naturally lumpy gland, made mainly of fat, and filled with milk glands, ducts, and ligaments. While lumps associated with FBD are a temporary inconvenience, cancerous lumps are persistent, and change shape and size over time. "A woman should get familiar with her own body and look for changes," says Jensen. Women should perform breast self-exams once a

month. To eliminate anxiety over the presence of lumps which may be normal, always perform exams about a week after your menstrual period, when hormonal levels are lowest. You should see a doctor if you find a lump that has changed—one which has appeared that you haven't noticed before, one that seems to have grown, or one that is especially hard. Report any of these changes to your doctor, who will likely give you a clinical breast exam, and mammogram. Ultrasound may be used to distinguish cysts from other structures, and these tests will determine whether the lump is normal or possibly cancerous. In deciding whether to biopsy any suspected lumps, your doctor will also consider your risk factors for breast cancer, including your age and family history of breast cancer.

Unique Solutions

There is no scientific evidence of any single prevention or treatment for FBD. However, a plethora of treatments have been suggested over the years. These include eating a low-fat and high-fiber diet, drinking herbal teas, and taking vitamins, or even iodine. Jensen says it is often recommended to eliminate caffeine from the diet, by avoiding foods that contain methylxanthines such as coffee, tea, chocolate, and soft drinks. Many doctors also prescribe pain relief or birth control pills to help ease the symptoms for some women.

However, a recent study in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* evaluating evidence supporting nutritional interventions found no solid evidence that any of these treatments are effective. This doesn't mean that nothing will work—just as the symptoms are unique to each woman, the mode of relief may also be unique.

FBD is a common condition in women, but while the symptoms are often uncomfortable, they do not lead to cancer. To best deal with FBD, women need to be aware of changes in their own body, and find a treatment which works best for them.

-Molly A. Thoreson
PhD Candidate, VU

Are YOU a Feminist?

Bola Diaz, student:

I can only speak for myself, [but] I believe that women should have equal rights. There are many who disagree, but there are more who [do] agree.

Justin Montenegro, student:

Feminism is a movement for equality. By changing the ways we view the roles of men and women in society, we bring equality between the sexes. Men and women are complementary sides of humanity. One is not meant to dominate the other. Most men have a negative connotation of feminism due to the impression that its purpose is the subjugation of men to women. They fear it will be emasculating.

Elizabeth D. M. Wise, painter:

I am a feminist, still! Men continue to hold the power because they hold the money and the political positions. Women have come a long way since I was born...my age group went through a lot of hell so that our daughters could have choices about their lives. I hope we as women don't lose ground. ALL human beings have basic rights. If all women here and worldwide could stand together, I'm willing to bet companies would have childcare at the offices, flexible hours, and equal pay for equal work. Women need to support each other in gaining and maintaining our basic human rights. We are only as good as we treat our poor, our women, our children, our men...as we treat each other.

BODY IMAGE GROUP

The Psychological and Counseling Center is continuing a therapy group for women experiencing problems with eating patterns and/or body image. The group will meet on a weekly basis beginning on September 12 from 4:15 pm to 5:45 pm at the Psychological and Counseling Center. For more information, call 322-2571 or email Arian Rea at arianrea@yahoo.com or Michelle Patterson at mmpatterson95@hotmail.com.

Looking for short-term, rewarding volunteer work? Women are needed for "Better Decisions," an eight-week program that teaches decision-making and life-planning skills to inmates at the Tennessee Prison for Women. Volunteers work one-on-one for an hour weekly during the weeks, September 17 through November 5. Volunteer training is scheduled for September 8-9. Please call Kathy Masulis at 832-8327 for more information.

LIBRARY'S COLLECTION IS NOW ON ACORN

More than half of the books in the Women's Center Library's collection have been added to ACORN and we hope to have all the books (about 2,900 volumes) listed there shortly. Our library is designated as VU-CENTERS and our locations are: WMCTR for most of the collection, WMCTR-Good for the works in the Dean Goodman collection, and WMCTR-REF for the non-circulating reference volumes. Most items circulate to all users for three weeks and may be renewed (online, by phone, or in person) for another three weeks, as long as no one else is waiting for them. The library is open on weekdays from 8:30 am to 5 pm. Please bring your Vanderbilt ID card when you come to check out material.

Call for Contributors

National Coming-Out Day is October 7th. In recognition, Women's VU plans to present a collection of coming out stories in the next issue. Please contact Maureen Duffy at 343-4367 or mo22duffy@hotmail.com if you would like to contribute.

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

The Women's Equality Summit: September 24-25

Sponsored by the National Council of Women's Organizations in Washington, D.C., the summit brings together women from across the country to advocate for reproductive rights and economic equality and progress for women. Free registration. \$35 materials fee. Go to www.womensorganizations.org for more information.

Above and Beyond

Above and Beyond Sanctuary in Valley Head, Alabama is pleased to announce expanded facilities and programs to provide for young mothers under 30 and their children in transition. The sanctuary offers two-week programs throughout the year that range from parenting to job training to self-defense. Programs are provided at no cost to the participants; funding is provided by private individuals, churches, and corporations like Home Depot. For more information on programs offered by Above and Beyond, please call Charla Hermann at 256-635-6304.

Writing Workshops

Carolyn Cottom, Ph.D. is offering two writing workshops this fall. *Shaping the Truth: Writing the Personal Essay* will take place Tuesdays, September 4 through October 23 from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Cost is \$225 (\$200 if paid before August 25th). *Women's Spiritual Quest: Writing for Discovery* will take place Thursdays, October 4 through November 29, 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm. Cost is \$210 (\$190 if paid before September 28th). Both workshops are offered in the Green Hills area. For further information, call 385-9883.



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