

Women's VU

Margaret
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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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A VISION FOR EDUCATION'S FUTURE

Students hunger to learn through experience

by MITZI CERJAN

Program Coordinator, Office of Volunteer Activities

When Rachel Tallman, *Women's VU* editor, asked me to write an article about women and community service, I readily agreed to what I was sure would be a simple task. I would do a little research on current surveys and statistics, link that material to a bit of history, and compare both to what we know about volunteerism at Vanderbilt, all in a neat little package of words.

Fortunately for me, after a few days of looking into the statistics and thinking about Harriet Beecher Stowe's portraits of New England society, Jane Addams, and Women's Clubs, my better self, the one that chooses meaning over image and ambiguity over facts, began to rebel.

It seemed to me that a synthesis of that sort would be a disservice to readers. Even if such an article did not turn dry and deadly, it would still flatten the jagged contours of the rich and varied experiences we file under the catchall term "service," for lack of a more comprehensive and satisfying word. With that in mind, I sought a better vehicle, one that could give a Vanderbilt readership entry into the realm of meaning that Vanderbilt students create through their service experiences.

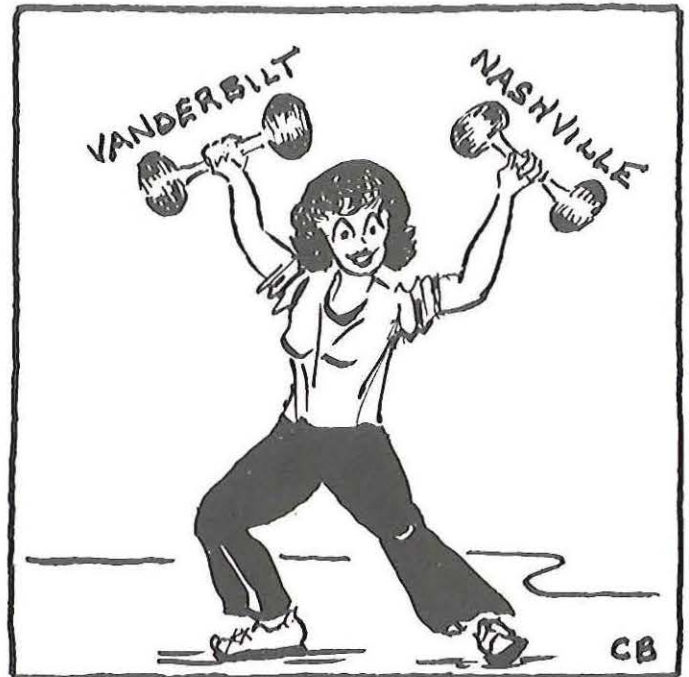
Serendipitous timing brought Patricia (Peachy) Myers' sociology honors thesis across my desk, just as I was wishing for that special vehicle.

Peachy Myers graduated from Vanderbilt on Friday, May 12th with high honors in her major, sociology. A four-year Ingram Scholar, Peachy was named this year's Most Outstanding Undergrad-

uate in sociology. She was also this year's recipient of the Office of Volunteer Activities' Outstanding Contribution to Service Award. Her service to Nashville, Vanderbilt, and beyond is clear from her many service activities, which include founding and serving as president of V.E.R.S.E.S., an arts and letters enrichment program for young students in the Nashville community, actively participating on the VU Service Learning Task Force, and being an Alternative Spring Break trip participant and site leader. These are just a few examples of her service interests.

Peachy is a young woman who has given 100% effort to academics, service, and friendships here at Vanderbilt, carrying the weight of responsibilities on campus and off with strength and grace. She leaves a legacy of care and commitment to all those whose lives she enriched while she was a Vanderbilt student. Happily, she has also left us with her honors thesis, "Alternative Spring Break at Vanderbilt University: A Case For Service-Learning."

Peachy's honors thesis is about Alternative Spring Break (ASB), the most highly visible of Vanderbilt's 37 student service groups, and the one most often cited as evidence that VU



students are engaged in the world outside of our campus boundaries. It is also about much more than ASB.

As a woman who spends many hours each week working in the community and tying her academic interests to the issues she and her student colleagues address through community service, Peachy knows that ASB, as significant as it often is for participants, is not the be-all and end-all of service on this campus. For Peachy, and for the students she interviewed, service is part of their struggle to become truly educated. Indeed, Peachy's thesis, based on interviews with 15 randomly chosen 1999 ASB participants, is really about education, the education they hoped for and dreamed of when they were high

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Hungry for experience *continued from page 1*

school seniors applying for admission, and the realities of the education they found when they arrived on campus. These students' reflections make for compelling reading. They are by turns hopeful, disappointed, angry, grateful, confused, or filled with a new certainty.

Some of the most poignant passages read like pages from a letter to an unrequited love, in this case, a letter to the life of the mind: *I guess when I was a senior graduating from high school I kind of had this idealistic view that I was going to come to college and learn so much about myself and about the world . . . that I was going to have all these experiences, and I was going to know so much more about the world. And then, you know, you get to college and you spend most of your time doing homework and that sort of thing. And so a lot of times you don't get the time to stop and have these growing experiences . . . A lot of experiences I've had at Vanderbilt have been relatively sterile. . . but through ASB we developed a really close-knit group . . . I think I'm really searching for a hunger. I don't want to leave here with a satiation . . . I want to find something that will push me to continue to ask questions. . . I want an educa-*

tion that will help me develop a passion. . . I think ASB embodies what I want to get out of college.

Peachy reports that nearly half of her interviewees made similar references to the importance in their lives of the kinds of opportunities for education, action, and reflection that ASB can provide. Most, however, agree that one week of this approach to learning out of an academic year is not enough. Their goals of self-discovery and broad experience of the world require more time, more energy, more guidance, and fewer barriers.

Students in Peachy's study experienced a need to break down barriers. They named and discussed with her the kinds of barriers they have encountered. One of these barriers is between professors and students.

Students long for more interaction with their professors, and they place that longing in the context of how more interaction would facilitate learning: *. . . I think it's kind of sad at Vanderbilt because the material is so fascinating and so applicable to real life, but the professors leave it there in the books. I get frustrated with that. My ASB experience was real, and it mattered. That's why I carry it with me. I don't want to separate it from my academic work. But I have to. What could professors do to make the material come alive . . . They could do more application outside of class, have more interaction outside of class. . . I think if that happened students would be much more interested in the material and in each other.*

Students broke down other barriers through ASB. Stereotypes of Vanderbilt students that get so much notice on campus dissolved in the face of ASB dynamics.


I really believed that there was a stereotypical Vanderbilt girl and Vanderbilt guy. And I totally don't believe that now. . . I thought I had typical Vanderbilt girls and guys on my site and . . . I had nothing in common with them, but everybody has a story . . . I came back from ASB, and I wanted to know everybody's story.

Students came to know homeless citizens, people with AIDS, children in crumbling schools, people from many backgrounds. In every instance, human reality trumped pre-conceptions. In one student's words, *. . . it allows you to relate with people, move beyond yourself, move beyond stereotypes, move beyond barriers . . . I mean reading about things and hearing about things is one thing, but then seeing things and observing them is another . . . It's just much more, it's in your face.*

Peachy's thesis is more complex and addresses many more issues than can be explored in this brief article. I believe her thesis holds lessons for everyone at Vanderbilt who interacts with students, whatever their opinions of service-learning. I learned several ways our office needs to change in order to better meet student needs: we need more issues education events, more opportunities for students to come together for discussion, and better outreach tools, to name just a few. I also confirmed something that I have suspected for months now: students have vision for the future of the university, as well as for their own futures. It is a vision well worth incorporating into our plans.

On commencement day, Chancellor Wyatt reminded us that we like to say, "that . . . at Vanderbilt, we educate the whole person, not just the intellect, but the heart and soul as well." Student participants in Peachy Myers' study can give us priceless advice about the methods we use to attain this educational goal.

I urge everyone who is interested in Vanderbilt students, their personal and intellectual development, their lives and their hopes, to read Peachy's study. Well-written, cogent, and home-grown, it is yet another service Peachy has performed for her community and for Vanderbilt. Thank you, Peachy – and Godspeed.

Copies of "Alternative Spring Break at Vanderbilt: A Case For Service-Learning" are available through the Office of Volunteer Activities. Call 3-7878 to receive a copy through campus mail. 



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Campus address: Franklin Building, 316 West Side Row.
Mailing address: Box 1513, Station B, Nashville, TN 37235.
Phone: (615) 322-4843. Fax: (615) 343-0940.
E-mail address: womenctr@ctr.vax.vanderbilt.edu.

Visit our web site at:
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Et cetera...

Science in the summer

By Virginia Shepherd, Professor of Pathology

The Vanderbilt University Medical Center's Science Community Outreach Partnership for Education Program (SCOPE) will host the second summer science camp for middle school girls from July 10 - 21, 2000. The Girls and Science (GAS) camp was established at Vanderbilt in the summer of 1999 in response to the gender differences in science achievement found in high school. The goals of the GAS camp are to engage girls in science activities, to foster confidence in science achievement, and to encourage girls' enrollment in high school science courses.

It has been well documented that the middle school years are a critical time for girls in developing an interest in science. Due to a number of factors, including peer and societal pressures and a lack of appropriate mentoring, girls begin to move away from science. Through the camp, sponsors hope that by putting girls in a completely female environment, with exposure to female science researchers, teachers, and graduate students, the campers will enjoy the excitement of performing experiments, talking with women scientists, exploring the amazing number of science sites on the web, and learning about the possible career options open to them in the various scientific fields.

Two one-week camps will be held: week one for 7th graders and week two for 8th graders. Brochures including registration forms have been distributed to all middle school science teachers in Davidson County. Forty students will be selected for each camp, and participants will be enrolled on a first-come, first-served basis. Two middle school science teachers, one Vanderbilt science education Ph.D. student (previously a middle school teacher), and one geology graduate from Carlton College will serve as the co-directors for this year's camp. In addition, Vanderbilt science graduate students will assist in the planning, the day-to-day action, and the implementation of the hands-on experiments and the technology-based exercises.

Vulvar pain not a psychological condition

Many women suffer from a variety of female-only conditions. One condition that is not very well-known is vulvodynia. According to the "Vulvodynia Homepage" (www.vulvodynia.com), "[v]ulvodynia, also known as vulvar dysesthesia, literally means pain in the vulva. It is characterized by itching, burning, stinging or stabbing in the area around the opening of the vagina. Pain can be unprovoked, varying from constant to intermittent, or occur only on provocation such as attempted vaginal penetration with sexual intercourse, a condition also known as vulvar vestibulitis syndrome or vestibulodynia. Symptoms of vulvodynia may range from mildly irritating to completely disabling. While a distinct sore, or area of redness may be visible, often the vagina shows no abnormalities or infections on gynecological and/or dermatological evaluation. Unfortunately, many doctors are unaware that these conditions even exist, and may mistakenly suggest to patients that this is a psychological condition. It is common for women with vulvodynia to suffer for many years and see many doctors before being correctly diagnosed."

Treatments for the pain associated with vulvodynia include surface electromyographic feedback, avoidance of vulvar irritants, use of oral and topical medicines, vulvar injections, and surgery.

If you or someone you know experiences any of the symptoms described above and would like more information on vulvodynia, its treatment, and how to connect with other sufferers, the following resources may be of assistance:

Vulvodynia Homepage, www.vulvodynia.com

340 East 63rd Street, Suite 1A,

New York, NY 10021

howardg@idt.net (Howard Glazer)

Phone (office): 212-832-0477, Fax: 212-371-6102

National Vulvodynia Association, www.nva.org

P.O. Box 4491, Silver Spring, MD 20914-4491

Phone: 301-299-0775, Fax: 301-299-3999

The Vulvar Pain Foundation, www.vulvarpainfoundation.org/index.html

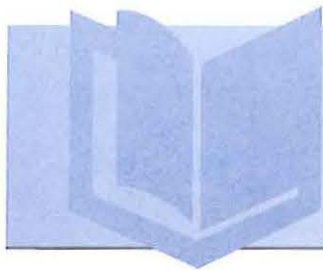
P.O. Drawer 177, Graham, NC 27253

Phone: 336-226-0704 (Tuesdays and Thursdays), Fax: 336-226-8518

Camp activities will take place in the Stevenson Center Bioscience laboratory and computer laboratory at Vanderbilt University. Each camper will conduct age-appropriate hands-on activities in the areas of physics, biology, geology, and chemistry throughout the week. Campers will be assisted in these experiments by the camp directors, teacher participants, graduate students, and student volunteers. The campers will also spend time using the web to research the specific subjects and work on a specific computer-based project, such as a report and presentation on notable women scientists. Through this

camp experience it is anticipated that more girls will be "turned on" to science and continue taking science courses in high school and college. It is hoped that this experience will encourage some of these girls to consider science as a career.

The GAS camp has been supported primarily through funds from the Department of Medicine at VUMC. In addition, monies have been received from a variety of other sources including the VUMC Women's Auxiliary, the Community Giving Campaign at Vanderbilt University, and the Margaret Cuningim Women's Center.



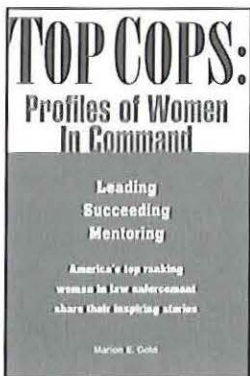
IN THE LIBRARY

BARBARA CLARKE
Women's Center librarian



Women in policing are equally effective, but few

Marion E. Gold examines the current status of women in policing in *Top Cops: Profiles of Women in Command* (Brittany Publications, 1999). Her goals are to increase the visibility of women



in positions of leadership, to inspire females already in law enforcement, and to encourage other women to enter the field.

The percentage of women in policing is low and is increasing at a very slow

pace; today women comprise only about 13 percent of law enforcement officers. They tend to be concentrated in the lower ranks, and almost half are minority women. There has been great resistance, particularly by male officers, to the hiring, retention, and promotion of women. Yet studies illustrate that female law enforcement officers are as effective as their male colleagues.

Gold summarizes the history of women in policing, an occupation they entered less than a century ago. Only in recent decades, after laws against sex discrimination were passed, did sizable numbers of women join this field. The author details four key issues which she believes would enhance the future of women in law enforcement.

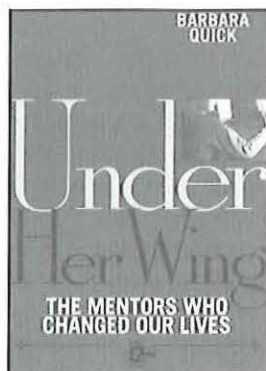
A chapter is devoted to each of 13 successful women who have earned positions of command in law enforcement in differing capacities and in various areas of the country. Included with each biography are statistics giving the percentages of women, female supervi-

sors and women of color in the department in which each notable woman has risen to prominence.

Barbara Quick's *Under Her Wing: The Mentors Who Changed Our Lives* (New Harbinger Publications, 2000) is a lively study of women and mentoring, particularly the personal and psychological aspects of the relationship. The author quotes extensively from about 30 women, of varying ages and from diverse backgrounds, who have benefited from female mentors. Only about one-fifth of the women she queried had ever had a woman mentor.

Quick explains why women need the support and encouragement of female mentors, how to find them, how to be a good mentor, and the difference between role models and mentors. Often mothers or older female relatives make ideal mentors, but this role is frequently filled by someone women encounter at school, in the workplace, or through friends. Mentors need not be older than their protégées, and women of any age can benefit from mentors.

Anthropologists Dorothy Ayers Counts and Judith K. Brown have long been concerned about the wife beating and battering observed by ethnographers. Together with Jacquelyn C. Campbell, an expert on domestic vio-



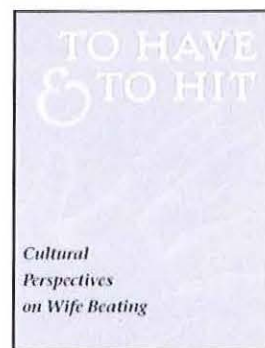
lence and a professor and associate dean at Johns Hopkins University, they have edited *To Have and To Hit: Cultural Perspectives on Wife Beating* (University of Illinois Press, 1999), a cross-cultural study of a problem that is nearly universal.

The editors hope that this study will enable us to search for societal reform.

The selections examine domestic violence in fifteen diverse societies around the world; one contributor focuses on aggression against females in groups of nonhuman primates. Certain factors tend to lead to the abuse of women while others inhibit it; in two of the cultures discussed domestic violence was uncommon.

Women tend to experience more violence when they are isolated from their kin and are less likely to be beaten when their partners are dependent on them for most of their food. Younger women tend to be abused more often than older women. Many cultures condone and expect some degree of wife battering; they seem more concerned about maintaining their social order than about violence and injury being inflicted on females.

An earlier edition of this work was published in 1992 under the title *Sanctions and Sanctuary: Cultural Perspectives on the Beating of Wives*. One of the new chapters focuses on how international laws could be used to lessen violence toward women.





Nurse-midwives provide range of care

By Rosemary Janofsky, MSN, CNM

Currently, 5,500 certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) practicing in the U.S. attend approximately 6% of the births. The use of CNMs varies considerably from state to state, from fewer than 1% of births in Missouri to 20% in New Mexico. In the Virgin Islands, 55% of women bearing children choose CNMs to provide their care. In Tennessee, CNMs attend 4% of the births. A question often asked is whether CNMs do births at home. In the U.S., 96% of CNM births take place in hospitals and freestanding birth centers.

CNMs are licensed registered nurses educated in the two disciplines of nursing and midwifery. Among its 14 specialty graduate programs, Vanderbilt University School of Nursing (VUSN) conducts a graduate program in nurse-midwifery. Established in 1995, the nurse-midwifery program has graduated 45 CNMs who are practicing all over the country. Some of these graduates have served in Africa and have established a practice in Saipan in the Northern Marianas.

VUSN has its own Nurse-Midwifery Faculty Practice. The CNMs have had offices in several locations since the practice's inception in 1995. The CNMs attend births at the Vanderbilt



Lori Cabbage, CNM, holds Lanie Byrd, a twin born to Holly and David Byrd in March.

Medical Center. The goal of the practice is to promote the health and well-being of women and their infants within their families and communities through the development of nurse-midwifery and support of the profession of nurse-midwifery. Lori Cabbage, MSN, CNM, FNP and Rosemary L. Janofsky, MSN, CNM are the VUSN faculty in the practice, serving the VUMC and surrounding community. The two have 33 combined years in practice.

CNMs care for women during pregnancy, including planning to get pregnant, prenatal visits, labor, the

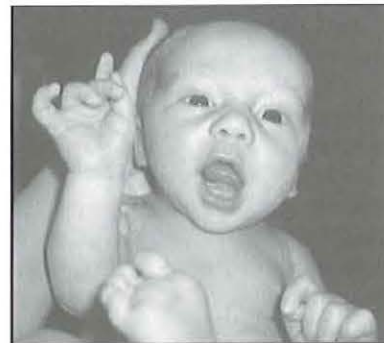
birth, and postpartum care. They also provide health care to women including normal annual gynecological exams for pap smears and breast exams, family planning, health maintenance, nutrition and disease prevention, and care of menopausal woman. CNMs are certified through the American College of Nurse-Midwives Certification Council (ACC) and are members of the American College of Nurse-Midwives, which was incorporated in 1955.

A frequently asked question of CNMs is, "Why would you choose a nurse-midwife for gynecological or childbearing

care?" According to Cabbage, care by a Certified Nurse-Midwife is about relationships, choices, and family-centered care. Nurse-midwifery care is much less medically invasive, focusing on the evolution of motherhood.

In the book, *Midwifery & Childbirth in America* (1997), Portland, Oregon CNM, MPH Judith Rooks explains, "The women who are choosing midwives don't want such a medical approach. It's not just, 'How are we going to get this baby out of your uterus?' but, 'How are we going to make this transition into being a mother?'"

The biggest differences noted when using CNMs to attend births might be explained in part by differences in prenatal, labor, and delivery care practices. Certified nurse-midwives emphasize not only careful assessment but the importance of education, counseling, and provision of emotional support to the mother and her family. CNMs offer personal one-on-one



Gleeson Kinnick, son of Dhan and David, seems happy to be here.



The Kinnick family in their room at Vanderbilt University Hospital.

care during the labor and delivery process.

When asked what is the best thing about being a nurse-midwife, Janofsky responds, "I find each birth so renewing. I do this for the love of life, respect of women, and the awe for the miracle of birth."

For more information about the VUSN Nurse-Midwifery Faculty Practice, call Lori Cabbage or Rosemary Janofsky.

Phone (615) 343-0226, fax (615) 292-9706 or e-mail Rosemary.Janofsky@mcm.vanderbilt.edu. For more information about the VUSN, its 14 specialty graduate programs, opportunities for bridge, RN to MSN option, or PhD programs, call the VUSN Admissions Office at 342-3800. An open house for RN to MSN options is scheduled for early June.

C A L E N D A R

Tuesdays, noon-1:00pm

Creative Life Planning Group

Topics to be determined. *Group meets each Tuesday during the summer.*

Thursday, June 1, noon-1:00pm

Painting Journal Workshop

Julie Russell, artist and yoga instructor, teaches participants how to explore their feelings and dreams through keeping a painting journal. This is the second session of this three-part program. The cost for this single program is \$10.

Thursday, June 8, noon-1:00pm

Painting Journal Workshop

Third session of a three-part program. The cost for this single program is \$10.

Monday, June 12, 5:15pm

Book Group

The Sparrow by Mary Doria Russell, facilitated by Kathy Hofeldt.

Thursday, June 15, noon-1:00pm

Reading Sisters

Ladies First: Revelations of a Strong Woman by Queen Latifah & Karen Hunter. Books are available at the VU bookstore.

Saturday-Sunday, June 17-18,

10:00am-5:00pm & 1:00pm-6:00pm

Wrestling the Writing Demons

Karen Essex, award-winning journalist, biographer, and novelist, is offering another writing workshop for women. She will help participants renew their commitment to writing, re-focus their attention on their writing projects, and teach them to trust their own process.

To enroll in this workshop, contact Karen Essex at P.O. Box 150244, Nashville, TN 37215. Please include a \$75 deposit to hold your registration.

Monday, July 10, 5:15pm

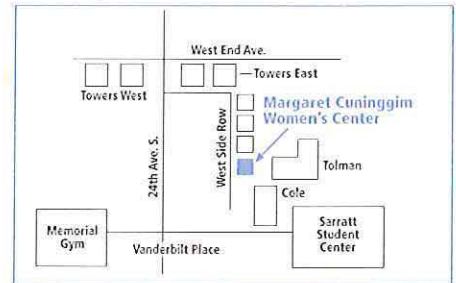
Book Group

The Girls' Guide to Hunting and Fishing by Melissa Bank, facilitated by Jennifer Carlat.

Monday, August 14, 5:15pm

Book Group

The Archivist by Martha Cooley, facilitated by Lois Brown.



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.



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