

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

VOLUME XXV:6

APRIL 2003

Spoils of War: Women, War and Sexual Violence

by Vicky Basra and Sandra Harrell

Co-Directors of Project Safe

"They came into the village and put everyone in a warehouse. They took 20 women for two days and two nights during which they were raped continuously and then returned to the warehouse half-dead."

—Witness to the actions of Serb soldiers in Kosovo

"[F]lying over a rice paddy, Ridenhour and his pilot sighted a body in the field below...." "It was a woman," Ridenhour later said with emotion. "She was spread-eagled, as if on display. She had an 11th Brigade patch between her legs – as if it were some type of display, some badge of honor."

— Testimony from Ronald L. Ridenhour during the My Lai investigation (Vietnam War)

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month and as we plan activities to raise awareness, we feel heartened by the ground we have already gained. In the fall semester, the Vanderbilt University Medical Center began performing the rape-kit exam in the emergency department. Also last semester, we saw the Vanderbilt campus rally around the victim of an attempted rape in an impromptu "Rape Protest." In the spring semester Lambda Chi Alpha and Phi Beta Sigma sponsored a "Rape-Free Zone" theme party and the Women's Center once again sponsored a successful V-Day performance of the *Vagina Monologues*. As this article goes to press, most local

and national papers are carrying news stories about the cover-up of sexual assaults at the United States Air Force Academy and the sex abuse scandal that continue to haunt the Catholic Church.

We are heartened, but we are also aware that we plan our activities in a country on the verge of war. In those same newspapers, every headline highlights the threat of war with Iraq. On all sides of the issue, people express their concerns: for the soldiers, for the country, for Iraqi civilians. We worry about biological and chemical warfare, about the practicality of buying duct tape, about the reinstatement of the draft. And, here at Project Safe, immersed in plans for Sexual Assault Awareness Month, we are worried about the women.

We know what war means for women: In every war in recorded history, the rape of women and girls (martial rape) has been a fundamental feature, though largely ignored. Women living in war zones, already vulnerable due to patriarchal and sexist structures, become targets for militaristic sexual violence. Their bodies are used to send a message to the community—a message Claudia Card, feminist theorist, terms as "genetic imperialism." According to Card, "rape is a cross-cultural language of male domination" not only by males, but of males by other males. Martial rape serves the military's purposes during war "by undermining national, political, and cultural solidarity, changing the next generation's identity, and confusing the loyalties of all victimized survivors." Research on the mass rapes that occurred in Bosnia-Herzegovina found that genocide, expulsion, revenge,

Continued on page 3

APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

The Women's Center Gallery Features Tennessee Artist Mary Martens

On Wednesday, March 12 from 4 to 6 p.m., the Women's Center hosted Mary Martens' exhibit opening. Martens is known for her realistic and unique views of architecture, landscapes, statues, portraiture and large detailed flower paintings. She is greatly influenced by the old masters, including Hans Holbein the Younger, Vermeer, Edgar Degas, Thayer and Georgia O'Keefe. Her colors are vibrant with many glazes creating a jewel-like brilliance and depth she claims is "only attainable with oil." She is able to capture emotion through her original eye for composition and perspective using light versus dark, while being unafraid of bold color choices. Her technique has become recognizable with a stylized, eclectic, yet modern atmosphere.

Martens has studied under many notable artists such as Daniel Greens and Shirley Pharris. She holds a teaching degree in art, has a background in graphic design and has taught high school. She is a member of the Tennessee Art League and Tennessee Art Guild. Ms. Martens has been featured in many solo art shows throughout the Middle Tennessee area.

Original oil, prints and gift cards are also available. Her large collection of work is available for viewing via her website www.HighTonedArts.com. Ms. Martens resides outside of Nashville in her country home with her husband, two children and three dogs.

Mary's work will be exhibited through April 30th in the Women's Center gallery. For more information, call 322-4843.

Kudos to...

Ginger Skaggs for her work in setting up the Women's Center recycling program.

We often welcome volunteers to assist us with programming, flyer design, receptions and bulk mailings. If you are interested in volunteering your time at the Women's Center, please call 322-4843.



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Hand In Hand By Pamela Williams

Project Safe has sponsored a total of four Hand in Hand trainings this academic year. For those of you who are not familiar with this program, Hand in Hand is a campus organization devoted to helping students, faculty and staff with questions related to violence against women. All Hand in Hand volunteers complete an intensive three-day training on Violence Against Women that is held at least twice each semester at Vanderbilt University. Since its creation in 1999, Hand in Hand has trained over 150 students, staff and faculty.

The Hand in Hand training introduces participants to local service providers, law enforcement departments, university officials and survivors of sexual assault, dating and domestic violence and stalking. The purpose of the training is to provide the volunteers with an intimate knowledge of the institutional responses to Violence Against Women. We explore not only campus offices, but also community agencies that specialize in or respond to dating/domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. In addition to introducing participants to these offices and agencies, the training works to raise the level of empathy and advocacy for victims and survivors.

Hand in Hand currently operates as a part of the outreach and educational services of Project Safe at Vanderbilt University. As Hand in Hand grows, Project Safe envisions it becoming a permanent advocacy program supported by the University. For more information, contact Sandra Harrell at sandra.harrell@vanderbilt.edu or 322-1333.

Pamela Williams, a junior in the Women's Studies department in the School of Arts & Sciences, works with Project Safe as a Peer Educator and volunteer.

Spoils of War

Continued from page 1

and obedience were the primary motivations for the rapes. In many of these areas, native men reject their wives once they learn about the rape and children born as a result of rape provide constant reminders to the community of the violations that occurred.

Certainly, rape sends a powerful message whenever it is committed. In times of peace, women's consciousnesses are littered with the fear of rape. We monitor our clothes, our behaviors, our environments, even the people we date in the never-ending attempt to avoid rape. We do all of this despite the knowledge that in a patriarchy, there are few safe places for women. In wartime, women have even fewer safe places. Testimony from women who had fled to refugee camps from their war-torn countries indicates that even refuges are unsafe. Women reported being sexually assaulted in the camps. The horror that drove women from their homes followed them to their refuge.

Like rape that occurs in "peacetime," martial rape is rarely prosecuted or convicted. Historically, rape of women in war zones received only a passing reference if any at all. Only recently have the realities of martial rape come to public attention. Sifting through the rubble of war-torn countries like Kosovo, Bosnia, the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone, NATO peacekeepers and humanitarian workers discovered so many accounts of mass rape that in 1999 the United Nations convened a tribunal to investigate these rapes as war crimes. There have been no retroactive investigations into the rapes of women during earlier wars (i.e., the Civil War, Vietnam, WWI and WWII) and even those prosecuted have evaded proper remedial measures.

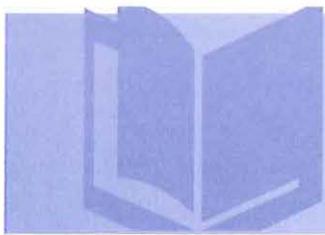
Martial rape not only evades the criminal justice system, its perpetrators and their commanders also fail to identify it as a criminal offense. According to David Scheffer, the Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues, "some soldiers, perpetrators, and world leaders viewed rape as a fringe benefit of war, an unspoken perk." Others explain the act of rape during war as men and boys "simply getting out of hand or control after a rough day on the battlefield." In other cases, raping the women and girls was a direct command from the soldiers' ranking officers. If rape is inevitable during times of peace, it becomes expected during war. Women and girls are considered the spoils of war and as such, the soldiers may do with them as they wish.

In the current geo-political atmosphere, Sexual Assault Awareness Month carries a great responsibility. Because we know that rape is an ever-present aspect of war, our work to end rape must focus also on war. Throughout April, we will be thinking about the threat of war and what this will mean for the women caught in the midst. As we line up to "Speak Out" on April 8, we will carry their voices to the microphone. We will remember them in our "Clothesline Project" and when we participate in the Rape and Sexual Abuse Center's "A Walk in Their Shoes." We refuse to remain silent about the impact of sexual violence on women EVERYWHERE and we hope you will do the same. This is your opportunity to lend your voice to a powerful and revolutionary movement. For more information, contact vicky.basra@vanderbilt.edu or sandra.harrell@vanderbilt.edu.



The Women's Center Welcomes Wendy Doniger

Wendy Doniger, this year's *Margaret Cuninggim Lecturer/Chancellor's Lecture series speaker* is the Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions in the Divinity School at the University of Chicago. Dr. Doniger will be discussing women's roles in the *Kamasutra*, which she has recently retranslated. Please join us Thursday, April 3, 5:00 pm reception, 6:00 pm lecture at the VU Ben Schulman Center for Jewish Life. The reception and lecture are free and open to the public. Call 322-4843 for more information or for directions.

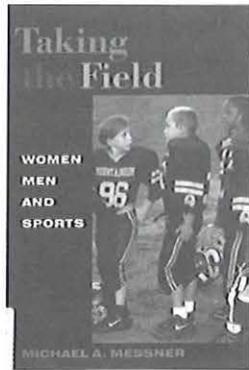


IN THE LIBRARY

BARBARA CLARKE
Women's Center librarian



While girls and women have become much more visible in sports, they still face considerable inequality, trivialization and discrimination. In *Taking the Field: Women, Men and Sports* (University of Minnesota Press, 2002) Michael A. Messner examines these problems and illustrates how traditional gender roles and stereotypes still persist, sometimes in subtle ways.



Since the passage of Title IX in 1972 there has been a tremendous increase in the number of females playing sports at schools and colleges, and much of the remaining gender gap is because girls have nothing comparable to football teams. Most younger women take for granted their access to sports facilities, team uniforms and sports scholarships. However, that access is far from equal, as is the respect accorded to women athletes.

Messner, a professor of sociology and gender studies at the University of Southern California, identifies and analyzes the powerful "center" of sport, where the highly-paid and most-celebrated male athletes are concentrated. He discusses "(1) the routine day-to-day practices of sports participants, (2) the structured rules and hierarchies of sports institutions, and (3) the dominant symbols and belief systems transmitted by the major sports media."

There has been considerable publicity about violence, especially violence toward women, on the part of male athletes. Messner shows that this tendency is not true of all male athletes, but of those in the prominent sports "at the institutional center of

sport." These high-status athletes have been socialized to be misogynistic and homophobic and to suppress empathy.

Consequently they are often dangerous to women, to other men and even to themselves. Alcohol also plays a big role in male sports culture and in violence toward women.

According to Messner, the major mass media treat women's sports in four ways:

with silence, backlash, humorous sexualization, and selective coverage of prominent female athletes. While women's and girls' sports are more visible in the media today, the coverage is still relegated to the margins. For example, women's games are less likely to be seen on prime-time network television and more likely to be found on cable television.

While the influx of women into sports may have challenged the masculinity at the center of American sport, that center still fosters the power and privilege of male athletes. Messner questions whether the gender segregation of many sports is desirable, as there is considerable overlap between the athletic abilities of females and males. When both genders are permitted to compete with one another or play on the same teams some females prove to be better athletes than some of the males. This is unsettling to those men who want to believe in the natural physical superiority of all males over all females. The writer feels that boys and men would benefit more from sports if there were more respect for other players, and less violence, one-upmanship and sexual denigration of

others. Such a revolution would help to make the sports world a healthier place for all.

Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, an assistant professor of women's studies at Emory University, is the editor of *Skin Deep, Spirit Strong: The Black Female Body in American Culture* (University of Michigan Press, 2002), an engrossing collection that

**SKIN DEEP,
SPIRIT STRONG**
The Black Female Body
in American Culture



Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, Editor

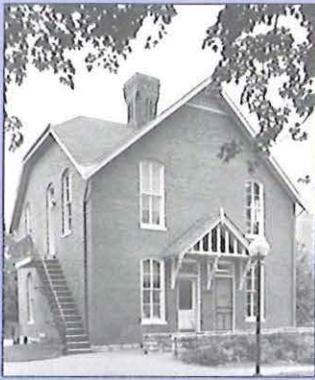
addresses "issues of identity and representation in visual, literary, and historical contexts."

The contributions are organized into three groups. The selections in the first part examine how black women's bodies have been portrayed throughout history, in travelers'

accounts and in science. The second group is devoted to the black female body in art and in literature while the third section shows how American culture has controlled the bodies of black women. In the concluding chapter, Bridgett Davis from Baruch College discusses black women's sexual identity and how she portrays it in her film, "Naked Acts."

The contributors include Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Anne Fausto-Sterling, and photographer and writer Carla Williams. Among the wide range of topics covered are: European explorers' racist attitudes toward African women; nude black women in art; enslaved American women; the photographic image of the black female body; black women as depicted in two of Audre Lorde's works; and Saartjie Baartman, the "Hottentot Venus," who was exhibited as a freak in London and Paris from 1810 until her death in 1815.





**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 and are open to newcomers at any time. For more information on the events listed, call 322-4843.

April 2003

W.E.B.S. (WOMEN EMPOWERED BY SPORTS)

When: Wednesday, April 2 from 5-6 pm at the Student Rec. Center indoor courts.
Who: Co-sponsored by the Student Rec. Center and the Wellness Center, WEBS is open to women faculty, staff, students and community. All women are welcome to attend. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE REC CENTER TO PARTICIPATE. (Just tell them you are there for WEBS and they will open the gate for you.) All women of all ages, shapes and sizes from the Vanderbilt Community as well as the larger community are welcome and encouraged to participate.
What: This night's sport will be basketball. This is a basic skill level teaching and learning experience that is completely non-competitive and in a very safe/fun environment. For more information contact Jennifer.Hackett@vanderbilt.edu, or 322-6518.

WENDY DONIGER

When: Thursday, April 3, 5:00 pm reception, 6:00 pm lecture at the VU Ben Schulman Center for Jewish Life.
Who: This year's Margaret Cuninggim Lecturer/Chancellor's Lecture series speaker (see description on page 3). Call 322-4843 for more information or for directions.

MANGO TRIBE

When: Saturday, April 5, 7:30 pm at the Ben Schulman Center for Jewish Life
Who: Mango Tribe is a pan-Asian American women's performance group that combines multi-arts collaboration and encourages artistic activism through education, mentorship and advocacy.
What: Mango Tribe combines spoken word, theater, dance and other forms to voice the vibrant and multi-faceted stories of Asian American women, many of whom have been largely excluded and marginalized as artists. Sponsored by the Asian-American Student Association, co-sponsored by the Women's Center and Project Safe. Free and open to the public, contact julia.j.park@vanderbilt.edu with any questions.

WOMEN'S CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING GROUP

When: Monday, April 7, will feature *Alison Piepmeier* discussing Third Wave Feminism. (The group meets the first Monday of every month, 6:30 pm-8:30 pm).
Who: A progressive women's discussion group open to faculty, staff, graduate students and community members.
What: This group offers an opportunity to express your views in a supportive community and take part in a monthly activism experience if you so choose. Monthly topics are chosen by consensus and could include: Feminism, war, poverty, hunger, sexuality, etc. Bring \$3 for pizza, snacks and drinks.
Contact Sarah Walton at sarah.a.walton@vanderbilt.edu for more information.

WOMEN, SPIRIT AND POETRY

When: Tuesday, April 8 at 5:15-6:15 pm (Meets the second Tuesday)
Who: A group for all who are interested in poetry and the spirit.
What: This month's speaker is *Ann Kaiser*, who is rescheduled from the January cancellation. For more information, call 322-4843.

CREATIVE LIFE PLANNING GROUP

When: Tuesday, April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 at 12:00noon-1:00 pm (Meets every Tuesday)
Who: A group for all dedicated to living life intentionally

Continued on page 7



women's HEALTH MATTERS

HPV: Get Informed and Get Tested!

by Jana Wheeler

Human papilloma virus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted disease (STD) in the United States. It can cause genital warts in both men and women. Nearly 100% of invasive cervical cancer cases are linked to the virus.

There are about 100 strains of the virus, with some more likely to cause warts and some more likely to lead to cancer if not caught early and left untreated.

There is no cure for HPV and people can be infected and not know it. Condoms do not provide the same protection that they do for other STDs. The virus is transmitted by skin-to-skin contact that occurs in oral, vaginal and anal sex.

Many women believe it highly unlikely that they will ever be infected. Unfortunately, statistics show otherwise. HPV affects 20 million people in the US with the median age of infection being the early 20s. A study several years ago found that, on average, 14% of U.S. female college students are infected with genital HPV each year.

Most women discover they are infected with HPV after being diagnosed with genital warts or an abnormal Pap test (a test which examines cervical cells to identify precancerous or cancerous ones). However, it is important to remember that there are many causes of an abnormal Pap test other than HPV infection.

Because of the high incidence of infection and the link between HPV and cervical cancer, much work has gone into the search for an HPV vaccine. A study published in the November 21, 2002 issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM)

found that a vaccine against one of the viral strains commonly linked with cancer was highly effective in preventing the transmission of this strain.

"HPV affects 20 million people in the U.S. with the median age of infection being the early 20s. A study several years ago found that, on average, 14% of U.S. female college students are infected with genital HPV each year."

An investigational study by a major pharmaceutical company currently underway at Vanderbilt seeks to determine the safety and effectiveness of a vaccine against four different viral strains (two that are highly linked with genital warts and two that are highly linked with cervical cancer).

Vanderbilt is one of many sites worldwide that are participating in this study. Healthy women aged 16-23 are currently being enrolled. The vaccine does **not** contain live virus so women **cannot acquire HPV from the vaccine**. The NEJM study found a very low incidence of side effects from the vaccine, with the most common being pain at the injection site. Women who are eligible for the study and consent to participate will receive study-related gynecological care and STD testing during their participation as well as compensation. Interested women should call Jana Wheeler at 343-0784.

Jana Wheeler currently works as a Nurse Practitioner in Vanderbilt's Dept. of Pediatric Infectious Diseases. Jeannette Carpenter, a medical student, assisted with the writing of this article. 

FYI:

For more information on sexually transmitted diseases, call the Metro health department's STD Free! hotline at 340-0550. Metro also offers free and low-cost STD screenings, call 340-5647. Vanderbilt students can call their student health center at 322-2427.

April Calendar continued

and creatively. Open to everyone in the community and is usually attended by women over 40.

April 1: Issues discussion day.

April 8: Book review of each participant's latest and favorite reading material, and a reading by Beth Grantham.

April 15: Issues discussion day.

April 22: Will be either the vintage clothing talk, or a trip to the Renaissance Center, depending on what we do on March 25.

April 29: Issues discussion day.

Call 322-4843 for more details!

VANDERBILT FEMINISTS (VANDY FEMS)

When: Thursdays in April (3, 10, 17) at 4:00 pm (Meets every Thursday)

Who: Specifically for undergraduates (women and men), but open to all.

What: A group concerned about women's issues on campus, and promoting equality between the sexes. **Watch for the April Pay Equity Bake Sale "on the wall" during the lunch hour.**

For more information contact:

stacie.r.furia@vanderbilt.edu or

justin.f.keith@vanderbilt.edu.

BOOK GROUP

When: Monday, April 14 at 5:15-6:15 pm (Meets the second Monday)

Who: This is a group for anyone of any age who loves to read.

What: This month the group will be reading *Cold Comfort Farm* by Stella Gibbons and librarian *Elaine Goleski* will facilitate discussion.

For more information, contact Goleski@LIBRARY.Vanderbilt.edu. Look on our web site for upcoming books under the book group at www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter

SAFE SPACES: DISCUSSING WOMEN AND RELIGION

When: Tuesday, April 15 at 6:00-7:00 pm

Who: Led by the MCWC Divinity intern *Tricia Gardner* and Human Development counseling candidate *Shelly Sowell*.

What: An informal and frank discussion on women and

their experiences with spirituality, religion, the institutional church, inclusions and exclusions. Come and listen and share your own story (not required). Refreshments will be served. Free and open to the public. Contact Jennifer Hackett @ 322-6518 for more information.

LIVING WITH LOSS

When: Thursday, April 17, 12:00 noon to 1 pm

Who: Open to all Vanderbilt community members as well as community-at-large. Dr. Linda Manning, Director of the Women's Center, will facilitate this discussion.

What: This is a monthly lunch group for those who have lost loved ones. Lunch is provided. For more information, contact Jennifer.Hackett@vanderbilt.edu or call 322-6518.

NASHVILLE NOW

When: Monday, April 28 at 7:00 pm at the Peace and Justice Center, 1016 18th Ave S. (approx. every other month on the 4th Monday).

Who: National Organization of Women Chapter meeting. Open to members and guests.

What: Local Activist *Nell Levine* will be speaking at this month's meeting on "Women in the Maquiladoras," (U.S.-owned companies in Mexico).

For more information, please contact Cynthia Bennett at TennesseeNOW@comcast.net.

ONGOING: The works of Mary Martens. Oil painting exhibit featured in the lounge of the Women's Center through April 30.

*****Unless otherwise indicated, all groups are open to all people and are held at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center at 316 West Side Row on Vanderbilt University's Campus.

Please see page 8 for our complete calendar of events in recognition of April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month

How to find us . . .



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

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

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 1, 11 AM TO 1 PM, On the Wall: "Don't Be a Fool, Ask for Consent!" Visit our table "on the wall" to learn ways to combat sexual violence in our community.

APRIL 3, 11 AM TO 1 PM AND APRIL 8, 5 TO 8 PM On the Wall: "Clothesline Project." Come join other women and men from the Vanderbilt community in creating T-shirts honoring survivors of sexual and domestic violence. T-shirts and decorating material provided but feel free to bring your own.

APRIL 5, 7:30 PM, Ben Schulman Center for Jewish Life: performance group *Mango Tribe*. (description on page 5)

APRIL 8, 12 NOON TO 1 PM, Rand Terrace: Project Safe and its community partners, You Have the Power and the Rape and Sexual Abuse Center, will sponsor their third annual "Speak Out" on Rand Terrace. The program is free and open to the public.

APRIL 9, 5:30 PM, LOCATION TBA:

Laurie Lynn Drummond will be reading from her work about the way sexual assault has impacted her own life. Ms. Drummond, a former police officer and now an assistant professor of writing at St. Edwards University, was a Tennessee Williams Scholar in Fiction at the Sewanee Writers Conference (1993).

APRIL 12, 2003, 1 PM The Rape and Sexual Abuse Center (RASAC) will sponsor their 2nd Annual "Walk in their Shoes" event. The event will include inspiring speakers, community spirit, the survivors' Clothesline Art Project and a march from RASAC to the Hall of Fame and back. Please join us in showing your support for the Rape and Sexual Abuse Center and for victims everywhere. For more information, call Leetah Stanley at (615) 259-9055.

For more information about Sexual Assault Awareness Month activities, call Project Safe 322-1333 or 322-3774.



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- Please remove my name from your mailing list.

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