



Women's VU

The monthly newsletter of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

 VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

November 2005, Volume 28, Issue 4

On the Calendar

Don't miss being a part of Vanderbilt University's 2006 College Campaign of the *Vagina Monologues*. If you are interested in auditioning or volunteering, please contact vicky.basra@vanderbilt.edu

Community-Wide Book Event! The Vanderbilt and Nashville Communities are invited to participate in collectively reading *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. The book will be discussed at an open meeting, facilitated by Women's and Gender Studies Director, Dr. Monica J. Casper near the 33rd anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, which is January 22, 2006. Details about date/time TBA.

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For more info, please see our website: www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter

The Miers Nomination: What the Future May Hold for the Nation's Highest Court

by Suzanna Sherry

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor served on the Supreme Court for almost a quarter of a century, and was a pivotal vote in many cases. Now that Harriet Miers has been nominated to replace her (and Chief Justice Roberts has replaced the late Chief Justice Rehnquist), what can we expect from the Supreme Court? With little known about Ms. Miers's judicial philosophy, it is hard to predict her likely performance on the High Court, but we can draw some tentative conclusions.

First, the most controversial cases currently on the Court's docket will probably need to be reargued next Term. Justice O'Connor agreed to remain on the Court until her successor was confirmed, which is not likely to happen before January and may take even longer. So Justice O'Connor will continue to participate in the cases

that are argued this fall and early winter. She will read the briefs, hear oral arguments, and cast a vote in each of those cases. Her vote will only count, however, for cases that are decided by opinions written before she steps down. Most years, only a handful of cases are decided before February and they are usually unanimous and uncontroversial. (The Supreme Court is unanimous in between a quarter and half of its cases every year and few of those cases make headlines.)

So most of the cases that are argued in front of Justice O'Connor this term will ultimately be decided without her. But Ms. Miers, assuming she is confirmed, probably won't vote on those cases either, because she wouldn't have participated in the oral argument or the Justices' conference and vote on the cases. Technically, she could read the oral argument *continued on page 3*

"Not Just:" Debunking Asian American Stereotypes

by Christy Te

Every year, the **Asian American Student Association (AASA)** tries to articulate its vision and theme through a catchy phrase or slogan which oftentimes appears on a t-shirt. As you walk around Vanderbilt's campus, you may have noticed the brown t-shirts with NOT JUST written largely across the front in a bold, blue font. On the back of the shirt are several stereotypes that are associated with being Asian/Asian American, some positive, some negative, but stereotypes nonetheless.

Our goal with this message is not only to debunk common stereotypes associated with being Asian American, but also to address the common misconception that just because we choose to participate in an Asian American organization it does not mean we can be defined by that one aspect of our lives. Many people believe that AASA is an organization that caters only to Asian American students and only allows Asian American members; that by joining, we are automatically segregating ourselves into a racial *continued on page 2*

“Not Just:” Debunking Asian American Stereotypes

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clique. Our message to the Vanderbilt community is that we are NOT JUST AASA. Yes, we are Asian American, but that is just one part of our identity. We are so much more than that. An issue that many of us deal with is the tension between choosing/wanting/needing to identify ourselves as Asian American while not wanting to be limited by anyone's perception of what it means to be Asian American.

But what does it mean to be Asian American? What is an Asian American identity? Unlike our yearly theme, the Asian American experience cannot be neatly defined and categorized into a simple phrase. There are so many different variables affecting our lived experiences as Asian Americans such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, geographic location, generational status, etc. A first generation Vietnamese American who grew up in Louisiana will have a different perspective on what it means to Asian American than a fifth generation Japanese American who was raised in California.

So if there is no one Asian American identity, what function does AASA serve? With the celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM) in November, how do we address the needs of our members while raising awareness about Asian American heritage and issues in the greater Vanderbilt community? All we can do is try. AASA was founded as and continues to be a safe haven in which we can express our Asian American voice. It serves as a place where we can explore and

hopefully discover personally what it means to be Asian American. While we may not address every issue pertinent to the Asian American community, Heritage Month is a time in which we students have the ability to bring in speakers and plan events that we feel are relevant to our lives. While we will still grapple with concepts of identity long after November has passed, at least we will have been able to share a part of that struggle with the Vanderbilt community. We want Heritage Month to be a time in which we can say, we are Asian American, but we are so much more than that and NOT JUST Asian American.

Christy Te is currently serving as Treasurer in the Asian American Student Association (AASA). She is pursuing an English/Women's Studies double major; Class of 2006.

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH 2005

| | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|
| Oct. 30 | General Body meeting: APAHM kickoff |
| Nov. 2 | Student / Faculty Mixer |
| Nov. 5 | Diwali: Festival of Lights |
| Nov. 11 | Taste of Asia |
| Nov. 13 | General Body Meeting: |
| Dec. 1 | Keynote Speaker: Dat Phan |

Please refer to the AASA website for more details:
www.vanderbilt.edu/AASA/events.php

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Address changes: Please contact our office manager at robin.l.van.arman@vanderbilt.edu

Deadline for newsletter: Submissions are due on the 1st of the month preceding publication.

Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center Project Safe Position Announcement

Project Safe is recruiting a graduate assistant for the Fall and Spring semesters of this academic year. Project Safe, a program of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, is a coordinated campus-wide effort aimed at education, prevention and responses services for Vanderbilt students, faculty, and staff affected by sexual assault, intimate partner abuse, and stalking. The graduate assistant would work ten hours a week and focus primarily on providing administrative and advisory support to the group (MPAS) Men Promoting a Solution. The position would also include providing administrative support to the Project Safe Director and Associate Director.

Job duties would include: Coordinate MPAS Meetings and Events; Provide Targeted Outreach to Men and Underserved Populations; Provide support to Project Safe team; Develop recruitment plan; Meet Weekly with Project Safe Team and Women's Center Staff

Please contact Kacy Silverstein at 322-3774 or by email at Kathryn.w.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu for more information about the position.

The Miers Nomination: What the Future May Hold for the Nation's Highest Court

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transcripts and cast a vote, but traditionally new Justices don't do that. This means that only eight Justices will be deciding these cases. If at least five Justices agree on the decision, that decision will stand. But if the Justices split four to four, the case can't be decided. While the Court can choose to keep the tie vote, which affirms the lower court without creating any new precedent, it is more likely to order that the case be held over and reargued the following year when there will again be nine Justices.

Which cases are likely to result in a 4:4 split and be held over for reargument? The ones in which Justice O'Connor would have been the deciding vote, which are often the cases raising the most difficult and controversial questions. This term, that includes cases on religion, on Congress's power to enact civil rights laws, and on campaign finance reform.

The Court also has one abortion case on its docket so far this Term, involving a requirement of parental notification before a minor can obtain an abortion. The issue is quite narrow: parental notification requirements have been upheld before, but this one lacks any exception for cases in which the minor's health is in danger. In any case, Justice O'Connor's absence, or a new Justice's presence, is not likely to make much difference in most abortion cases, since five of the Justices still on the Court have voted to uphold abortion rights. It is only when one of those five Justices leaves the Court that *Roe v. Wade* will be at risk.

The one abortion context where Justice O'Connor's absence will be felt is when the new federal law prohibiting D & X or partial birth abortions reaches the Court (which will probably be in early 2006). In 2000, the Court struck down Nebraska's ban on D & X abortions by a vote of five to four. Justice O'Connor joined the majority, but Justice Kennedy, who has voted to support abortion rights in general, voted to uphold the ban on this one type of late-term abortion. Based on that five-to-four 2000 decision, one federal Court of Appeals and several federal district courts have held the federal ban on D & X abortions unconstitutional. But once Justice O'Connor departs, the Court will again be split four to four, and the new Justice's vote will make the difference. While we can't be sure how Ms. Miers would vote, it is a good guess that she will vote to uphold the federal law.

The broader question, of course, is what effect Justice O'Connor's departure will have in the long term. Three areas are worth watching. First, Justice O'Connor has been a crucial vote in Establishment Clause cases, often voting

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to restrict public religious displays and to prohibit direct governmental funding of religious organizations. If the new Justice favors more governmental support of, or involvement with, religion, the wall of separation between church and state may crumble. Second, Justice O'Connor provided the crucial fifth vote in upholding affirmative action in educational institutions. If the new Justice dis-

agrees, the Court may well invalidate affirmative action as unconstitutional.

Finally, Justice O'Connor made a subtle but significant difference

in gender discrimination cases. Both her vote and her very presence allowed the Court to broaden the definition of discrimination and to see its less obvious effects. Here her influence is less likely to disappear. Justice Ginsburg is still on the Court, and, more important, if Ms. Miers is confirmed, there will be another Justice who succeeded in an era in which law was very much a man's world. So Justice O'Connor's legacy can survive at least for a while. The harder question is what happens when this generation of women, those closest to the most blatant forms of gender discrimination, are gone. Then it will be our responsibility.

Suzanna Sherry is the Cal Turner Professor of Law and Leadership at the Vanderbilt University Law School. She has written extensively on constitutional law and the Supreme Court.

TENNESSEANS

To voice your opinion on the newest Supreme Court nominee, Harriet Miers, please contact your representatives:

U.S. Senator Bill Frist
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3344

U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-4944

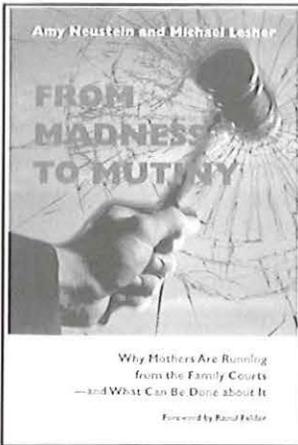
Representative Jim Cooper
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-4311

VAWA Reauthorized!

This past October, the Senate unanimously voted in favor of reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The House had passed the latest version of the bill on September 29, a few days before it expired. The Senate did not vote on it until October 4th, but its passage ensures that programs that receive VAWA funding will continue. VAWA will now move to conference committee where differences between the House and Senate versions will be ironed out.

Women's Issues in the News

A New Release examines why Family Courts are failing; Another look at the Waves of Feminism



Sociologist Amy Neustein and lawyer Michael Leshner have collaborated on the disturbing *From Madness to Mutiny: Why Mothers Are Running from the Family Courts—and What Can Be Done about It* (Northeastern University Press, 2005). They illustrate what all too often happens when mothers report suspicions or evidence that their children have been sexually abused by their fathers, often during or after a divorce or separation. Family court records are closed to

the public and most people are unaware of its rulings.

Mothers who make charges of abuse are often disbelieved and disparaged or are considered to be unstable or unfit parents. Not infrequently they lose their children to foster parents or to the fathers, even when there is medical or other evidence that the fathers are indeed molesting their children. This devastating outcome leads some mothers to drop the charges of sexual assault. Others rebel and some flee with their children and go into hiding via an “underground railroad.”

The writers, who have long experience with the family court system, show how and why it fails to protect children and why so many mothers are punished, discredited, tormented and falsely accused of being mentally ill. Not only are lawyers, judges and law guardians at fault but mental health experts and child welfare agencies too often seem indifferent to the welfare of the children involved. It is not unusual for cases to be postponed for trivial reasons even when children seem to be in imminent peril. Mothers who appear to be aggressive or overly concerned about their children are more likely to have those children taken away than are more passive mothers. Often court personnel seem more concerned with retaliating against women they consider to be overprotective or hysterical rather than with protecting children. The writers point out that many of the lawyers, judges and child welfare agents involved in such cases are women so there is more than misogyny involved; the whole system is at fault. They also show that women rarely make false accusations of child sexual abuse to retaliate against their husbands or ex-husbands.

Several chapters are devoted to ways that the family court system should be reformed and Neustein and Leshner believe that this will happen only when the citizenry demands it. They feel that “most people believe—wrongly—that no one in the United States can lose something as precious as a child without something resembling basic due process of law.”

This volume will be revealing and distressing to those readers who have never been involved in family court and who trust

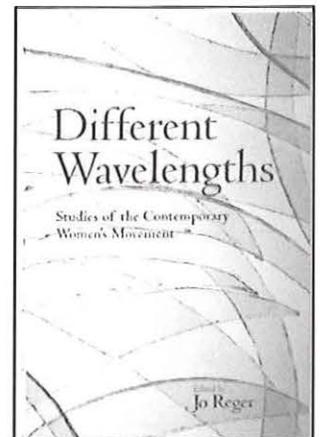
that those charged with protecting children are actually doing so, rather than placing them in situations where they are likely to suffer even more trauma. Most people assume that the cases involving outrageous treatment of mothers and children that have been publicized in the popular media are rare occurrences but the writers show that this is far from being the case.

Different Wavelengths: Studies of the Contemporary Women's Movement (Routledge, 2005) explores the complex topics of second and third wave feminism and the interactions between them. The editor, Jo Reger, understood that feminism was far from dead and that it is a broad and often divisive topic, frequently denoting different concepts to different people. She states that “By examining issues of divisions and inclusivity in contemporary feminism; shifts in feminist ideology and strategy; and the origins and delineation of feminist “waves,” this volume provides a lens through which to comprehend the complexity of contemporary feminism.”

Reger, an assistant professor of sociology at Oakland University in Michigan, explains how the term “waves” originated and explains that the second wave, which centered on bringing about equality for women, is usually considered to date from about 1960 to the 1980s. The third wave began in the 1990s and continues to the present. The writer found it advantageous that she had not defined the term “third wave” for the writers from whom she sought articles, for their varying opinions show how the term can be defined and interpreted in different ways or even rejected. The chapters, contributed mainly by academic women of diverse backgrounds and ages, are arranged in four categories, covering the themes of diversity in the third wave, relations between the second and third waves, the tactics of the third wave, and the third wave confronting the future. Individual chapters focus on such topics as Chicana feminists; Riot Grrrls and white privilege; sex and sexuality in a second wave organization; transgender women, men and feminism; zines and third wave feminists; and the third wave and ecofeminism.



Barbara Clarke
Women's Center
Librarian



November 2005 Calendar



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

SPECIAL EVENTS

COMMUNITY WIDE BOOK EVENT!

The Vanderbilt and Nashville Communities are invited to participate in collectively reading *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood. The book will be discussed at an open meeting, facilitated by Women's and Gender Studies Director, Dr. Monica J. Casper near the 33rd anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, which is January 22, 2006. Details about date/time TBA. For

more information, please contact jennifer.hackett@vanderbilt.edu

WOMEN IN ACADEME

Thursday, November 3, 4:10–5:30pm,
Featheringill Hall, Rm 110

What: *Session 3: How to Pick a Mentor*

In this panel we will look at the method used in selecting a mentor that will be effective in your journey through graduate school and beyond.

Who: Women in Academe is a year long series that will offer programs to women in graduate school or those who are considering it. For more information, contact vanessa.k.valdes@vanderbilt.edu

WOMEN'S CENTER SEXUALITY SERIES - PART 2

Thursday, November 3, 6:30–8:30pm in Wilson Hall Rm 126

What: The Big "O" and other kinds of fun in bed: A discussion about the part of our sexual selves that never gets discussed—pleasure. What triggers sexual pleasure, for men and for women? Come and learn tips, suggestions, and scintillating information that you won't want to miss, including the hot topic, "the myth of the vaginal orgasm."

Who: This event is free and open to everyone and is co-sponsored with Women's and Gender Studies.

For more info, contact jennifer.hackett@vanderbilt.edu

HOLOCAUST LECTURE SERIES, "FORGIVING, FORGETTING, OR REVENGE"

An Uncommon Friendship: From Opposite Sides of the Holocaust

Thursday, November 10, 7pm at the Law School Renaissance Room

What: Bernat Rosner and Frederic Tubach will discuss their

highly acclaimed book *An Uncommon Friendship: From Opposite Sides of the Holocaust*.

Who: This event is free and open to the public. It is sponsored with the University Chaplain's Office. For more info, go to www.vanderbilt.edu/holocaust or contact gary.white@vanderbilt.edu

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK, NOVEMBER 14-18, 2005 *Americans Around the World: Perceptions, Policies, & Patriotism*

Go to www.vanderbilt.edu/iss for a full schedule of events

ONGOING:

ARTIST KATHLEEN MADIGAN PRESENTS BREAKING OUT

What: Come and see this body of work which celebrates abstract, modern art through quilting.

Who: This show is free and open to the public. It is running from October 20 through December 11. Call 322-4843 for gallery hours. For more information, please contact jennifer.hackett@vanderbilt.edu

REGULAR GROUPS/ MEETINGS

SISTAHS READING SISTAHS

Wednesday, November 2, 12:30pm–1:30pm (Meets the 1st Wednesday)

What: A book group for everyone interested in reading African-American women authors. This month the group will be reading *Best Kept Secret* by Kimberla Lawson Roby.

Who: This group is free and open to everyone.

For more info, please contact regina.snell@vanderbilt.edu

DISSERTATION WRITERS GROUP

Wednesday, November 2, 9, 16, 30) 11am–12noon (Meets every Wednesday)

What/Who: This support group meets every week to provide women Ph.D. candidates with objective reactions and fresh perspectives, as well as a place to unwind during the dissertation writing process. For more information, contact roxy.dicker@vanderbilt.edu

T-BLAST (TRANSGENDERED, BI WOMEN, LESBIANS AND STRAIGHT WOMEN TOGETHER) BROWN BAG LUNCH GROUP

Monday November 14, 12:00noon–1:00pm (meets the second Monday)

What: Too often, lesbians, bi women and straight women are portrayed as being on opposite sides of a great chasms of difference and transgendered women are left out of the equation all together. Yet women throughout history have had great friendships despite differing sexual identities. T-BLAST provides women a space for conversation about issues that affect us all

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November 2005 Calendar Listings

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and a celebration of our differences and our friendships.

Who: This discussion group is free and open to all women. Co-Sponsored with the VU GLBT Office. For more information, melinda.brown@vanderbilt.edu

CREATIVE LIFE PLANNING GROUP

Tuesdays, November 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 11:30am–1:00 pm (Meets every Tuesday)

What/Who: A group for all dedicated to living life intentionally and creatively. Free and open to everyone and is usually attended by women between 40 and 90 years of age.

For more information, call 322-4843.

CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

Tuesday, November 8, 5:30–7:00pm.(meets the 2nd Tuesday)

What: The Creative Writing Group is open to new members! We look forward to hearing your piece. No writing experience necessary. You can bring a piece or create one at the group.

Who: This group is free and open to everyone. It is led by Anna Sir who will be doing some writing instruction as well as facilitation of the group. For more information, or to RSVP to the group, contact annasir@bellsouth.net

VANDY MOMS

Thursday, November 10, 11:30am–12:30pm (Meets the 2nd and 4th Thursdays, but this month only the 2nd due to Thanksgiving.)

What/Who: Moms of any age! Women who juggle! Superheroes! Open to all mothers, partnered or single. This is a support network that provides advocacy for moms in the Vanderbilt and larger communities. It also provides programming to inform, empower and enrich. Thursday, November 10th, we'll welcome *Mary Hance*, better known as *the Tennessean's* Ms. Cheap!

To RSVP, contact misa.culley@vanderbilt.edu or call 343-4367.

BOOK GROUP

Monday, November 14, 5:15pm–6:15pm (meets the second Monday)

What/Who: The book group is open to new members at all times and is for anyone who loves to read.

The book group will read *Sacred Time* by Ursula Hegi.

For more information, contact Jane Du Bose at jdubose@bellsouth.net or Carmen Gherman at cggherman@yahoo.com.

VANDERBILT FEMINISTS (VANDY FEMS)

Wednesdays, November 2, 9, 16, 30, 7:00–8:00pm (meets every Wednesday.)

Who: Open to all students of any gender.

What: A student group concerned about women's issues on campus, and promoting equality between genders.

Contact emily.c.baunach@vanderbilt.edu or katie.protos@vanderbilt.edu Or just come to a meeting!



PEER EDUCATORS OF PROJECT SAFE

Meets Sunday nights at 7pm.

What/Who: Peer Educators are students trained to facilitate workshops that promote discussion and encourage understanding of violence against women.

For more information, contact katie.protos@vanderbilt.edu or kasie.r.luttrell@vanderbilt.edu



MEN PROMOTING A SOLUTION

Meets Monday nights, 6pm in Sarratt 363 except Nov. 14 - that day it is in Sarratt 345.

What/Who: A group of men dedicated to creating awareness about violent crimes against women and eliminating those crimes through social change. New members are always welcome!

For more information, contact steve.frooman@vanderbilt.edu



SUPPORT GROUP

What/Who: A support group for women who are survivors of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault and stalking.

This group meets weekly at a confidential time and location.

All information shared is kept confidential. For more information, please contact kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu or 322-1333.

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A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR TAKE BACK THE NIGHT SPONSORS:

Margaret Cuninggim
Women's Center

Project Safe

School of Religion, Belmont University

Metro Public Health Department

Office of Student Activities, Vanderbilt University

Community, Leadership, Intercultural Programs & Services

Charu G. Raheja

Vanderbilt Divinity School's Office of Women's Concerns

Vera Stevens Chatman

Nick Rather

International Student & Scholars Services, Vanderbilt

Tennessee Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence

Vanderbilt University Police Department

Stan & Sally Graham

Christine Jones

Vanderbilt Chaplain's Office

Women and Gender Studies, Vanderbilt

Office of Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug

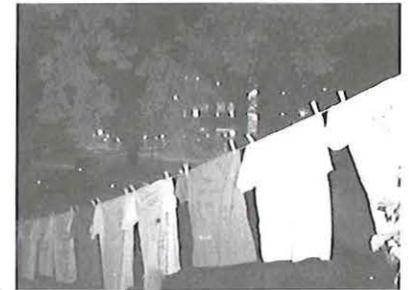
Prevention, Vanderbilt

Opportunity and Development Office

Program for African American Diaspora

Studies, Vanderbilt

Chi Omega



Clothesline Project



Keynote Speaker
Nicole Mason



Flirting with Disaster

A company called Freedom Tobacco International is offering celebrities

a lifetime supply of cigarettes to smoke the company's brand in public. (This is an eerie form of payola given the fact that smoking will shorten the celeb's lifetime by an average of 12 years.)

Tobacco advertising is like one of those viruses that keeps mutating, thus making it impossible for scientists to counter it with an effective vaccine. The use of celebrities being "caught" by paparazzi smoking a certain brand of cigarette and the plethora of smoking scenes in films these days are mutations that occurred after federal legislation banned cigarette advertising on television and radio and made it illegal to target children. But with a \$12 billion dollar annual advertising budget, they can afford to be creative. Twelve billion, enough to rebuild New Orleans a couple of times over.

It's hard to say exactly what effect cigarette advertising has on the smoking decisions of youth, but it does seem that smoking is enjoying a kind of renaissance among young people, including college students. A personal observation: When I first came to Vanderbilt in 1988, I could walk across campus without seeing a single student smoking a cigarette. Now, it's unusual to pass a group of students and not see one or more with a cigarette in hand. The apparent trend is all the more disturbing to me since the majority of smokers appear to be female. Granted, this is my impression and may be due to the fact that my radar is particularly attuned to female smokers.

As director of a health risk prevention program for adolescent girls, I'm concerned about the unique cancer risks female smokers face, how easy it is to get hooked, and how cigarette advertisers manage to stay one step ahead of the law in promoting what is essentially a deadly substance. To see an intelligent, well-educated young woman lighting up in spite of the risks, is a potent reminder that the perceived benefits of smoking have a powerful hold on girls' and women's imaginations. And I believe those perceptions are worked to the max by advertisers of tobacco products.

The president of a Vanderbilt sorority was so

concerned about the level of smoking among members that she asked an expert to come and speak to the group and to conduct an informal survey. Barbara Forbes, MSN, the director of Vanderbilt's Smoking Cessation Clinic, said about 38 percent of the women reported being smokers. "Most took up the habit as teenagers out of curiosity; few considered themselves addicted."

“Smoking became my bromide of choice for every stressful situation that came along, until I decided I had had enough. I was coughing all the time, it was expensive, and I could no longer ignore the litany of new and horrifying evidence that smoking causes heart disease, cancers of the throat, lungs, cervix, and breast, along with emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and gum disease. I wanted out.”

The most common reason the women gave for smoking was pleasurable relaxation, Forbes says. Other reasons were stress reduction, peer pressure, social prop, and craving. Interestingly, none cited weight loss, the number one reason teenage girls smoke, according to the American Cancer Society.

Not surprisingly, none mentioned covert advertising either, but such is the nature of being covert; we can be influenced without knowing it. For example, the number of films depicting tobacco use is increasing and is reinforcing the idea that smoking is widespread, socially desirable, and normal behavior, according to recent studies reported in the CDC's "Cigarettes, Cinema, & the Myth of Cool."

An article in the Sept. 21 issue of the *New York Times* takes it a step further pointing to evidence of a direct link between on-screen smoking and the onset of smoking in teenagers. Companies like Freedom Tobacco are banking that off-screen celebrity smoking will have the same effect.

In addition to photos of Mary Kate Olsen puffing on a Marlboro, the *Times* cited other big names recently depicted off-screen smoking as well. "Recent depictions have included Leonardo DiCaprio inhaling as he squints from a balcony (*People*), Kate Hudson contemplatively holding a butt at one of her husband's concerts (*US Weekly*) and Kevin Federline taking a drag while holding hands with his pregnant wife, Britney Spears (*In Touch*), who gave birth last week."

The perceived benefits to people in the entertainment industry can run the gamut from managing a stressful career in the public eye to trying to recast their image as a "bad boy" or "bad girl."

For the rest of us, smoking can be a social crutch, an appetite suppressant, or a best friend when we're feeling lonely. So what's the harm in relying on a cigarette now and then to ease one through the slings and arrows of life?

Forbes says, for one thing, we have to understand the progress of addiction, which she likens to titration, the lab experiment where you gradually add drops of a reactant to a solution until it changes color.

"You never know which cigarette will be the one to tip the scale; when your brain says 'I like this, and if you take it away, I'm going to give you withdrawal symptoms.'"

I know from personal experience how cigarette addiction can sneak up on you. I started smoking in college when I took

an acting class. The students had to get up on stage and improvise dialogue on the spot. The first time I did it, I must have looked like I was going to hyperventilate because when I sat down the boy sitting next to me shook out a Benson & Hedges and handed it to me. I grabbed hold of it as a drowning person grabs a life ring, and kept holding on for years to come. Smoking became my bromide of choice for every stressful situation that came along, until I decided I had had enough. I was coughing all the time, it was expensive, and I could no longer ignore the litany of new and horrifying evidence that smoking causes heart disease, cancers of the throat, lungs, cervix, and breast, along with emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and gum disease. I wanted out.

It was then that I learned a tough lesson about the perceived benefits of smoking — *every form of refuge has its price.*

When I found myself digging through the trash at midnight hunting down a butt too small to light and in desperation rolling and lighting a Lipton teabag, I gained a profound respect for the drug I had used so casually for so long. It took me two weeks of pure hell to quit, and since then I've learned to manage my stress in healthier ways with exercise and meditation. That was 21 years ago and I have remained smoke free ever since for the simple reason that I never want to go through that again. Ever.

Susan McDonald is founder and director of GirlForce, an outreach initiative of Vanderbilt Medical Center that promotes physical activity, healthy eating habits, positive body image, and smoking prevention.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE NOVEMBER CABLE PROGRAM WILL BE NOVEMBER 9 AT 11:30AM

at the Vanderbilt Stadium Club featuring Priscilla Partridge de Garcia, a nationally-renowned psychologist and CABLE member. Her speech is entitled, "Humor Heals;" and in it she will offer some solutions to coping with stress. It is a humorous but informative presentation. For reservations, call 255-9111 or visit www.nashvillecable.org

NASHVILLE NOW (NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN)

meets the **4th Monday of the Month (November 28)** at the Nashville Peace and Justice Center behind Scarritt Bennett at 7pm. This meeting is open to members, friends and those seeking more information.

The State Conference, Eve was Framed!: Women, Religion, and Politics has been changed from Oct. 7-9 and is now being held Nov. 17-20 at the Embassy Suites, 10 Century Blvd. For more info, contact CynthiaNashNOW@aol.com

ROCKRGRl MUSIC CONFERENCE 2005 will be held at the Madison Renaissance Hotel in downtown Seattle, November 10-12. This two-day music conference will include over 200 performing female artists in all musical styles, industry-oriented panels and an artist-friendly trade show. The conference planners hope that it will give female artists a chance to mingle with other artists and to attend many of the industry panels. Some of the topics to be covered include: *Women on Air: How to Get Endorsements*; *Life After Birth: Can you Be a Mom and a Musician, too*; *Financing your Music*; *Writing a Hit*; *Racism in Rock*; and many other topics. For more information or to register to attend, please visit www.rockrgri.com/conference

FLU SEASON IS UPON US!

The Occupational Health Clinic is pleased to announce the 2005-2006 Influenza Vaccine Program for all Vanderbilt faculty and staff. The vaccine will be provided at no charge. ID badge must be presented at time of vaccination. The on-sites will begin this year on 10/24/2005 depending on vaccine availability. At this time there is no anticipated shortage of vaccine. This year we will give injectable vaccine only. Flu vaccine is now available in the Occupational Health Clinic on a walk-in basis. Hours are 8am-5pm, M-F.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The National Association for Women in Catholic Higher Education, founded in 1992, is a vibrant and very active organization made up of faculty, administrators, staff and students from Catholic and Non-Catholic colleges and universities around the country. The organization's objectives are to facilitate support of one another as women; to create, organize, and disseminate work for justice in the academy; to provide a forum for members to speak out on issues relevant to women in the academy. In this context they hold a conference every two years to celebrate women, their work and their achievements. The next conference is entitled *Enacting Social Justice: The Status of Women in Catholic Higher Education* and will take place at Georgetown University in June of 2006. This conference will provide women from institutions all over the country with an unparalleled opportunity to network and present their work. www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/soc/nawche/conference/call.html



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