



# Women's VU

The monthly newsletter of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

 VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

January 2007, Volume 29, Issue 6

## Cyberstalking: Understanding the Stalker's Virtual Frontier

by Kacy Silverstein,  
Associate Director, Project Safe

As we turn our attention once again to **Stalking Awareness Month**, a fairly new reality may lurk in a place you least expect it: your computer. We crossed into the new millennium with a rapidly growing information superhighway, improving our ability to connect with others at almost every corner of the globe. The internet is advancing our connection to friends and family, improving education, and promoting discussion and dialogue with people from across the street to across the world. Unfortunately, many of the attributes of this technology—low cost, ease of use, accessibility, anonymous nature, among others—make it an attractive medium for a new reality known as “cyberstalking.” Although there is no universally accepted definition of cyberstalking, the U.S. Department of Justice defines it as “the uses of internet, e-mail, and other electronic communications devices to stalk another person” (2005). While cyberstalking may not involve physical contact with the victim, unlike other types of stalking, it is fundamentally an extension of its

terrestrial cousin. Many stalkers, whether in virtual reality or physical reality, are motivated by a desire to exert control over the victims and engage in similar types of behavior to accomplish this end. As with other types of stalking, the majority of perpetrators are men and the majority of their victims are women, although there have been reported cases of women cyberstalking men and same-sex cyberstalking.

So, with the internet providing new avenues for stalkers to pursue victims by a few clicks of the mouse or keystrokes, how does this alter the physical and virtual landscape of stalking? Victim service providers report that the “Internet is rapidly becoming another weapon used by batterers against their victims. Just as in real life, abused women can be followed in cyberspace by their batterers, who may surreptitiously place their target under surveillance without her knowledge and use the information to threaten her or discredit her” ([www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov)). Cyberstalkers can take advantage of the impersonal, non-confrontational, and anonymous nature of the web, sending harassing or threatening messages by the simple push of a button. More

sophisticated cyber prowlers use programs to send messages to victims at regular or random intervals, even going so far as to post controversial messages in internet chat rooms or on “revenge” bulletin boards. With minimal effort and possibly total anonymity, cyberstalkers are navigating a whole new arena where intellect and tech-skills replace body and brawn to frighten and intimidate victims. While the majority of cyberstalkers reported to law enforcement and WHOA (Working to Halt Online Abuse) appear to know their victim either through past romantic or platonic relationships, stalkers with no prior connection to victims are taking advantage of emerging technologies. Jayne Hitchcock, President of Working to Halt Online Abuse explains, “for the cases where the victim knows their harasser, it’s usually revenge. For the stranger-on-stranger cases it’s most often what I call ‘Internet road rage.’ What is it that causes a person to chase someone down a highway offline? The same goes for the superhighway—it could be something as simple as the harasser not liking the victim’s username to a perceived injustice to not liking what someone posted” *continued on page 3*

### Tennessee Women's Theater Project Presents *Nickel and Dime: On (Not) Getting By in America*

*How do you make ends meet in a low-wage job?* As an investigative journalist, Barbara Ehrenreich went “undercover” in three different parts of the country, working as a waitress, a maid, and a big-box retail clerk to discover what it’s really like to live in low-wage America. Her best-selling book, *Nickel and Dime: On (Not) Getting By in America* is acclaimed as one of the most important works of social criticism of our time. Now Joan Holden has captured Ehrenreich’s provocative, funny, and often disturbing experiences in a new play that is as powerful as the extraordinary book on which it is based. In cooperation with Metro Parks, *Nickel and Dime* will open on January 12th for only ten performances at the Z. Alexander Looby Theatre (at the Looby Center Library), 2301 Metrocenter Blvd., Nashville, TN 37228; Evenings performances are at 7:30 pm January 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27; Matinee performances on January 14 and 21 at 2:30 pm. *Don't miss this important work!* For more info, please see [www.twtp.org](http://www.twtp.org)

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For more info, please see our website:  
[www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter)

## NIGHTMARE ON STALKER STREET: AMY HILLMAN'S STORY

Imagine that you are the character in *Nightmare on Elm Street*. It has been days since you've slept because you know that the moment you drift off, your most terrifying fear will become reality. Do you remember how you felt at that moment, just before Freddy Krueger sprung out of nowhere and viciously attacked his victim? Even though your mind told you it was just a movie your muscles ached from the tension, your heart raced, and your breath came in agitated spurts.

This is what it's like to be the object of a stalker's menacing pursuits. This is how you live every moment when your life is a *Nightmare on Stalker Street*. Only in your movie, the final minutes are missing where the evil character is subdued, the credits roll, and the fear and anxiety subside. This was Amy Hillman's life for two years.

You've probably never heard of Amy. She's not a famous public figure. She's just a regular woman, who moved to Nashville to pursue her dream of becoming an entertainer, working various jobs like most aspiring stars do to pay the bills. Amy didn't know her stalker. She never participated in "dangerous" activities that one would imagine might invite the attention of a twisted person. Her story, with a different roll of fate's dice, could easily have been *yours*.

Amy knows what it's like to cringe every time her phone rings, and when she answers it there's a stranger's voice on the other end that knows things; *Personal* things. She knows what it's like to return home and search every crevice of her apartment, acutely aware of any item slightly out-of-place because someone has *been* there. She knows what it's like to see a person every-

where she goes. Someone she doesn't know, but somehow always knows where *she* is.

Amy knows what it's like to go for weeks without sleep, her body in constant fatigue and pain, her state of mental health diminishing; Her work suffering; Her friends, although supportive, are helpless and after a while even *they* question her sanity.

And when she finally drifts off for a few moments, the lines between her reality and her dreams become blurred. She *knows* when she awakens, covered in bruises, that she has been violated. The feeling is so real that she visits her doctor only to find out that her injuries are self-inflicted from fighting off a would-be attacker in her suspended state of consciousness.

Like most people, you are probably saying to yourself, "Why didn't she go to the police? Why didn't she *do something* to stop this bastard!?" She did. She did everything you're supposed to do. But the system failed her. It fails all stalking victims.

When you become a stalker's target, your first instinct is to go to the police to get help. You might even find a detective that goes above and beyond the call of duty to help you. Amy did, but it still wasn't enough. Amy quickly became an expert on stalking laws and did everything she could to try and stop the madness according to the letter of the law. What she didn't count on was that her stalker also knew the laws, and he knew that they were riddled with loopholes through which he was able to infiltrate every ounce of privacy Amy had.

That was two years ago for Amy. Like most stalking victims, Amy's body, heart, and mind finally collapsed, forcing her to leave town for six months, leaving behind a fulfilling and lucrative job and burgeoning prospects in her singing career. She underwent extensive counseling and medical care. When she finally returned, she had to move to a new town and start all over again.

She did. Amy continues to heal today. As a part of her ongoing recovery from an experience that has changed her life forever and is indelibly etched in her very being, she sought counseling through group therapy. She quickly found that there are no programs designed specifically for stalking victims to join together and support each other through their healing processes. She's working to change that.

There are people in government that are beginning to recognize the shortfalls in stalking laws and want to change them. Amy is talking to them. She is making them aware of the horror that hides in the shadows and showing them where the laws are flawed. She will stop at nothing to prevent another person from experiencing her *Nightmare on Stalker Street*.

Oh, and Amy's stalker? He's still out there living his life, unscathed and unpunished. And he's loose in *your* community.



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

Amy Hillman Copyright 2006

# Cyberstalking

continued from page 1

online” ([www.haltabuse.org](http://www.haltabuse.org)). While cyberstalking continues to gain the attention of the media and technology experts, there is very little empirical evidence upon which to estimate its actual magnitude. It has been argued, however, that cyberstalking may actually be more common than more traditional forms of stalking. This is because the internet, as a medium of communication, allows cyberstalkers immense contact with potential victims. “We don’t see cyberstalking going away,” explains Jayne Hitchcock. “In fact, it is increasing every day. Currently there are over one billion people online worldwide—if one percent become victims, that’s ten million people” ([www.haltabuse.org](http://www.haltabuse.org)).

Now that many of us have made the internet a home within the home and cyberstalkers prowl anonymously and with ease, where does the law stand? At the current time, no uniform-federal laws exist regarding cyberstalking. Federal law does provide a number of important tools that are valuable to combat cyberstalking, including 18 U.S.C. 875(c) “making it a federal crime punishable by up to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000, to transmit any communication in interstate or foreign commerce containing a threat to injure the person or another” ([www.cyberguards.com](http://www.cyberguards.com)). Nonetheless, the absence of a clearly defined cyberstalking law at the federal level has forced some states to draft their own specific legislation. As a result, potential victims are often faced with a complicated maze of laws offering varying definitions, protections, and penalties. At last count, 45 states had laws expressly prohibiting harassing conduct through the internet, e-mail, or other electronic means. Tennessee state law regarding stalking was amended in 2002 to include “electronic communication, electronic email, or internet services” ([www.haltabuse.org](http://www.haltabuse.org)). As many state stalking laws have been adapted to either explicitly or implicitly include cyberstalking statutes, it is often difficult for law enforcement to get involved. Until a uniform federal standard exists, the best source for cyberstalking guidance is states with current legislation on the subject. In most cases, taking into account varying state and federal standards, the key to a successful cyberstalking prosecution is to preserve a full electronic trail of evidence. A growing number of law enforcement agencies are recognizing the serious nature and extent of cyberstalking and responding with aggressive action. In larger cities, such as New York and Los Angeles, specialized units have been developed to ensure that special sections of police departments and district attorney’s offices are available when cyberstalking cases arise. As the information superhighway continues to evolve, law enforcement at all levels must become more sensitive to cyberstalking and its nuances.

As cyberstalking is expected to increase as computers and the Internet become more popular and easily accessible, how do we combat this crime? A critical step in combating cyberstalking is an understanding of stalking in general. In many instances, “cyberstalking is simply another phase in an overall stalking pattern, or it is regular stalking behavior using new, high-technology tools” ([www.usdoj.gov](http://www.usdoj.gov)). Because cyberstalking is a relatively new criminal phenomenon complicated by Internet anonymity and lack of resources to address the crime, victims of online harassment and threats

have had to develop their own informal support networks and informational web sites. Victim service providers recommend that victims make copies of all electronic communications sent by the cyberstalker as evidence of his stalking and advise a victim to let the stalker know that she does not want any further contact with him. In addition, it is important that we all name the behavior as cyberstalking and validate that a crime is occurring when working with victims.

Similar to other forms of violence against women, cyberstalking is a serious crime that is often underreported and lacking public attention. Yet, computers and the Internet are now indispensable parts of American culture and it is not enough to just “turn off your computer.” We must all become more sensitive to the fear and frustration experienced by cyberstalking victims and aware that cyberstalking is in many ways simply an extension of other forms of violence against women. As you browse the Internet this January, catch up with old friends or even make new ones, take a moment to learn about cyberstalking and how it could impact you and yours.

**To learn more about cyberstalking, please visit the following websites:**

*The National Center of Victims of Crime, Stalking Resource Center;* [www.ncvc.org/src](http://www.ncvc.org/src)

*Working to Halt Online Abuse (Information available about Federal and State Laws);* [www.haltabuse.org](http://www.haltabuse.org)

*CyberStalking: A New Challenge for Law Enforcement and Industry;* [www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/cyberstalking.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/cyberstalking.htm)

*The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics;* [www.search.org](http://www.search.org)

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*Join Project Safe for these Discussions on Stalking*

*What: “Facebook in the Age of Cyberstalking,”*

*Open discussion facilitated by Project Safe*

*When: January 24th, 6:00 p.m.*

*Where: Gallery at Margaret Cuninggim Women’s Center*

*For more information contact [kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu)*

*What: “Nightmare on Stalking Street,” Lecture and*

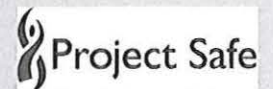
*discussion by Amy Hillman ([www.amyhillman.com](http://www.amyhillman.com))*

*When: January 30th, 7:00 p.m.*

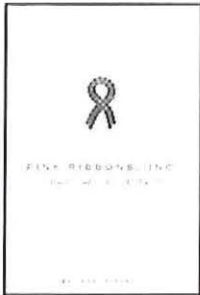
*Where: Wilson 126*

*For more information contact [kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu)*

*Also, check out Stalking Awareness Month posters and statistics around campus!!*



# Pink Ribbons and Bridal Showers



In *Pink Ribbons, Inc.: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006) Samantha King examines the philanthropic aspects of the fight against breast cancer and shows how and why many organizations have chosen to focus their efforts on this disease. The writer, an associate professor of physical and health education and women's studies at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, aims "to offer an alternative mapping of the history

of breast cancer and the multifaceted movement the disease has spawned, by showing how corporate marketing strategies, government policies, and the agendas of large nonprofits serve to reinforce one another in the social production of the disease."

Currently breast cancer afflicts one out of every seven women; about one percent of those diagnosed are male. The intense focus on the disease in recent decades has caused breast cancer to develop from a tragic private ailment to an almost fashionable disease with its own culture. In the 1970s the stigma decreased as numbers of well-known women announced that they had been diagnosed with the disease. Breast cancer survivors and activists tend to be pictured in the media as optimistic and cheerful white, middle-class professional women.

Many organizations and corporations, including pharmaceutical companies, today donate large sums to breast cancer research and sponsor fund-raising events, particularly the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's Race for the Cure runs. They donate more to this cause than to any other disease. More National Cancer Institute funding goes to breast cancer research than to any other type of cancer and there is extensive coverage of breast cancer in the media. There is even an industry devoted to producing, promoting and selling products with a breast cancer theme.

King discusses in detail how this focus on breast cancer research came about, examining the political background; the effects of prominent women, such as Berry Ford and Shirley Temple Black, announcing that they have breast cancer; the Komen Foundation and the annual fund-raising walks; how pink ribbons came to signify breast cancer; the breast cancer research stamp that first went on sale in 1998; overseas corporations and organizations and breast cancer fund-raising; and the culture of survivorship.

One of the writer's main concerns is that the death rate from breast cancer has decreased only slightly in recent years, despite all the publicity and the money raised to combat the disease. She feels that there is too much emphasis on detection and treatment and not enough on cause and prevention. She wonders if many of the big corporations raising large sums of money for breast cancer research are actually helping to increase the incidence of the disease by polluting the environment or producing products containing carcinogens. King feels that breast cancer research is too fragmented and privatized. Women would be better served by coordinated and publicly funded research into prevention and into environmental factors that contribute to cancer.



Sociologist Beth Montemurro focuses on two popular pre-wedding rituals in *Something Old, Something Bold: Bridal Showers and Bachelorette Parties* (Rutgers University Press, 2006). Bridal showers date back

several hundred years while bachelorette parties in their current form became popular only in the late 1980s or early 1990s.

Although women's roles have changed greatly in recent decades, bridal showers are still fairly formal old-fashioned affairs that reinforce traditional gender roles. Shower gifts are usually prettily-wrapped items that the young women will use in their homes for cooking or housekeeping. The games played at showers are typically dated and suggest virginal brides. Not infrequently women report being bored at showers yet they continue to attend and to host them. They generally prefer showers where there is a particular theme or which have some men in attendance. The average American bride has between two and three showers and more and more also have bachelorette parties, which are largely based on groom's bachelor parties.

While there are different types of bachelorette parties, the assumption is that the future bride is a sexually experienced woman who is having a final fling, as she is about to give up her freedom and become faithful to her husband. Her relationship with her female friends is also about to change. Bachelorette parties, which are usually hosted by bridesmaids, female friends or sisters, usually stress sexuality and efforts are made to embarrass the future bride as much as possible. She may be adorned with suggestive decorations such as condoms and items shaped like penises. These parties usually involve excessive consumption of alcohol and often trips to bars or clubs where there are male strippers. Many young women report that they enjoy these events more than their showers.

Both rituals stress to modern brides what they are gaining and what they are giving up by marrying. Women often feel ambivalent about marriage and brides-to-be enjoy showers more when there is less emphasis on the domestic aspects. The writer, an assistant professor of sociology at Pennsylvania State University at Abington, notes that "Bachelorette parties play with the idea of ambivalence as well, ambivalence about women's sexuality, marriage and gender roles in modern society."

Montemurro also discusses how pre-wedding rituals vary among different ethnic groups and in diverse areas of the western world. In this country conspicuous consumption and materialism have increased tremendously in recent decades and many couples start married life with an amazing array of expensive shower and wedding gifts.

## In the Library



Barbara Clarke  
Women's Center  
Librarian

# January 2007

denotes Project Safe programming



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 <i>Happy New Year!</i>	2	3	4 Making Connections 5:45pm-6:45pm	5	6
7	8 Book Club 5:15-6:15pm	9 Creative Life Planning Group, 11:30am-1:00pm Peer Ed, 7pm	10 Vandy Fems, 5-6pm	11 Vandy Moms: 11:30am-12:30pm IMAGE group 4pm-5:30pm Making Connections 5:45pm-6:45pm	12	13
14	15 MLK Series: Vigil at Benton Chapel, 6:30pm MPAS 8pm, Sarratt 114	16 Creative Life Planning Group, 11:30am-1:00pm Peer Ed, 7pm	17 Vandy Fems, 5-6pm	18 Making Connections 5:45pm-6:45pm	19 Women in Academe: 12:10-1:30pm WoMeNet Conference at TN Tech	20 WoMeNet Conference at TN Tech
21	22 <i>Roe v. Wade special event:</i> Dr. Rebekah Gee, 3:30pm	23 Creative Life Planning Group, 11:30am-1:00pm Peer Ed, 7pm	24 Vandy Fems, 5-6pm <i>Facebook in the Age of Cyberstalking,</i> 6pm 	25 Vandy Moms: 11:30am-12:30pm IMAGE group 4pm-5:30pm Making Connections 5:45pm-6:45pm	26	27
28	29 MPAS 8pm, Sarratt 114	30 Creative Life Planning Group, 11:30am-1:00pm Peer Ed, 7pm <i>Nightmare on Stalking Street,</i> 7pm 	31 Vandy Fems, 5-6pm	<p>For details and descriptions of each group, please refer to page 6. 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.</p>		

## Don't Miss These Upcoming Events!

### Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Series

Events include a keynote speech by Constance Rice, candlelight vigil, Harold Lowe Civil Rights Photograph display, lectures, a community-wide service project, essay contest and more. Series begins January 15th with the keynote speaker and vigil at Benton Chapel at 6:30pm. For more information: [www.vanderbilt.edu/mlk/index](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/mlk/index)

### "V-DAY: Until the Violence Stops"

February 6th, 6:00pm in Wilson 126

Join us for a viewing of the film followed by discussion. Come meet the 2007 *Vagina Monologues* Cast! For more information, contact [kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu).

### 2007 College Campaign Production of the Vagina Monologues

February 11, 13, & 14, 7:00pm in Sarratt Cinema

Tickets are \$12. For ticket info, contact [vicky.basra@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:vicky.basra@vanderbilt.edu)

### Women in Academe Series: Women Graduate Students and Their Male Advisors

Look for more information on this session in the February newsletter. RSVPs to attend are welcome, but not required. For more information, please contact [stacy.nunnally@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:stacy.nunnally@vanderbilt.edu).

**Date/Location:** February 16th; 12:10-1:30pm; Sarratt 112

### IMAGE Week

February 19-23, 2007

IMAGE, a student organization designed to address the issues of body image and self-image at Vanderbilt, presents a week-long series of events. Please look for more information about this series around campus and in our February newsletter. For more information or details, please contact [reagan.m.bush@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:reagan.m.bush@vanderbilt.edu).



# January 2007 Calendar of Events

## EVENTS, SERIES AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS (listed chronologically)

*January is National Stalking Awareness Month. Be sure to check out Project Safe's posters and statistics posted around campus as well as the special events listed on page 3.*

### Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Series

The Women's Center is a proud co-sponsor of these events.

**For more information:** [www.vanderbilt.edu/mlk/index](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/mlk/index)

### Women in Academe Series: Posture of the Serious Graduate Student

In this session we will discuss the Imposter Syndrome and its effects, as well as brainstorm survival strategies for navigating graduate school. We will explore the answers to life's persistent questions: What's the right way to be a graduate student? Where do images of the ideal graduate student originate? Do you ever get the message that you are not OK or that you have to wear a mask? What expectations does your department have of you as a graduate student, and how do your professors communicate these expectations to you? This session led by Vanessa Valdes. RSVPs to attend are welcome, but not required.

**Date/Location:** Friday, January 19th; 12:10–1:30pm, Sarratt 112

**For more information:** [stacy.nunnally@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:stacy.nunnally@vanderbilt.edu).

### WoMeNet Conference: Mentoring and Networking

The goal of WoMeNet is to build a coalition of faculty, students, and staff throughout Tennessee who are involved in women's history, women's studies, women's centers, female-led student groups, the Commission on the Status of Women, & WHET. The goal is to provide an arena for sharing information, strategies, and networking. Several representatives from Vanderbilt University will be presenting at the conference.

**Date/Location:** January 19th-20th, Tennessee Tech University

**For more information:** <http://www.ttuwomenet.com/>

### Roe v. Wade Anniversary Event: Dr. Rebekah Gee, M.D., M.P.H.

Dr. Gee is an obstetrician-gynecologist and a fellow in public policy and health care research at the University of Pennsylvania. She successfully challenged Wal-Mart pharmacists' refusal to prescribe Plan-B, and wrote about her experiences in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. This event is co-sponsored by Vanderbilt Medical Students for Choice, Women's and Gender Studies Department and the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center.

**Date/Location:** January 22nd; 3:30pm, Garland 220-H

**For more information:** [www.vanderbilt.edu/womens-studies](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/womens-studies)

## REGULAR GROUPS/MEETINGS (listed alphabetically)

### Book Group

**January 8th; 5:15pm–6:15pm** (Meets the 2nd Monday of the month)

**What/Who:** The book group is open to new members at all times and is for anyone who loves to read. In January, the group will be discussing *Maisie Dobbs* by Jacqueline Winspear. For more information, please contact Jane Du Bose at [jdubose@bellsouth.net](mailto:jdubose@bellsouth.net) or Carmen Gherman at [cgherman@yahoo.com](mailto:cgherman@yahoo.com).

### Creative Life Planning Group

**Tuesdays, January 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th; 11:30am–1:00pm** (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.

**Where:** The Gallery at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

### Dissertation Writers Group

Will resume meeting once a week in late January.

### IMAGE Group

**January 11th and 25th, 4:00–5:30pm** (Meets every other Thursday)

**Who/What:** IMAGE is an organization dedicated to supporting positive body and self-image issues in the Vanderbilt community. It provides a forum for interested community members to advocate the adoption of healthy body-image concepts and the reduction of eating disorders.

**Where:** Sarratt 110

For more information contact [reagan.m.bush@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:reagan.m.bush@vanderbilt.edu).

### Making Connections

**January 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th; 5:45–6:45pm** (Meets every Thursday)

**Who/What:** A discussion group to learn about making closer connections with others, your body, and most importantly, yourself. Topics may include body image, intimate relationships, self confidence, managing anxiety and stress and many others. The group is facilitated by Dr. Fishel-Ingram and is completely confidential.

**Where:** The Gallery at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center  
For more information contact [pamela.ingram@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:pamela.ingram@vanderbilt.edu) or 615-343-3561.

### Men Promoting a Solution

**January 15th and 29th; 8pm** (Meets every other Monday)

**Who/What:** A group of men dedicated to creating awareness about violent crimes against women and eliminating those crimes through social change.

**Where:** Sarratt 114

**For more information:** contact Tim Lonergan ([t.c.lonergan@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:t.c.lonergan@vanderbilt.edu)).

### Peer Educators of Project Safe

**January 16th, 23rd, 30th; 7pm** (Meets every Tuesday)

**Who/What:** Peer Educators are students trained to facilitate workshops that promote discussion and encourage understanding of violence against women. The Peer Educators facilitator training will be held on Sunday, January 21st. Please contact [reagan.m.bush@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:reagan.m.bush@vanderbilt.edu) for details about time and location.

**Where:** The Gallery at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center  
For more information, contact [reagan.m.bush@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:reagan.m.bush@vanderbilt.edu)

### Sistahs Reading Sistahs

No January meeting due to winter break.

### 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](mailto:kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu) or 322-3774.

### Vanderbilt Feminists (Vandy Fems)

**Wednesdays, January 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st; 5–6pm** (Meets every Wednesday)

**What/Where:** A student group concerned about women's issues on campus, and promoting equality between genders. Open to all students of any gender. Meets in the Gallery at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center. For more information, contact [sarah.c.dean@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:sarah.c.dean@vanderbilt.edu) or [taylor.l.davis@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:taylor.l.davis@vanderbilt.edu).

### Vandy Moms

**January 11th and 25th; 11:30am–12:30pm** (Meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month)

**What/Who:** Open to all mothers of any age, partnered or single. This is a fun support network that provides advocacy for moms in the Vanderbilt and larger communities as well as programming to inform, empower and enrich.

**Where:** The Gallery at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center  
For more information, contact [misa.culley@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:misa.culley@vanderbilt.edu) or call 343-4367.

## Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and Cervical Cancer: What you need to know

by Dineo Khabele, M.D.

**H**ow many of us know that there is a connection between human papillomavirus (HPV) and cervical cancer? How many of us know that HPV is a virus so common that as many as 8 out of 10 women may become infected with it? How many of us know that cervical cancer can be prevented with the HPV vaccine and by regular screening with Pap tests? **January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month** and a good time to educate ourselves about the HPV and cervical cancer.

Worldwide, mainly in developing countries, there are approximately 500,000 new cases of cervical cancer and 273,500 deaths per year. In the United States, mortality rates are relatively low and the survival rate is relatively high. In 2006, there were 10,370 new cases of cervical cancer and 3,710 deaths estimated by the American Cancer Society. However, there are disparities in mortality rates. According to age-adjusted mortality rates in the U.S., white women have the lowest mortality rate (2.4 per 100,000). The mortality rates for American Indian/Alaskan Native are 3.1 /100,000; Asian Pacific Islander, 2.9; Hispanic, 3.8; and black, not Hispanic, 5.7. Thus, the death rate from cervical cancer in blacks is more than twice the rate in whites. The estimated incidence of cervical cancer in the state of Tennessee is 7.1/100,000 for white women and 12/100,000 for black women and the estimated mortality rate is 1.7/100,000 for white women and 5.1/100,000 for black women.

Cervical cancer is preventable in part due to screening Pap smear tests, early detection, and early treatment interventions. Now with the advent of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, cervical cancer can be virtually eliminated. The development of cervical cancer is strongly linked to persistent infection with high risk types of HPV and about 10% of women infected with HPV develop persistent HPV infections. HPV is a virus that is sexually transmitted, so cervical cancer is seen more frequently in women with histories of early age sexual activity and multiple partners. Other risk factors for cervical cancer include exposure to cigarette smoke, older age and lower socioeconomic status.

The first approved HPV vaccine prevents infections with high risk HPV types (16 and 18) that cause approximately 70 percent of all cervical cancers. The vaccine also prevents infections with types 6 and 11 that cause approximately 90 percent of genital warts. In clinical trials of over 11,000 girls and women ages 9 to 26 years, who were not previously exposed to HPV, the vaccine was 100% effective in preventing precursors to cervical cancer. It had no serious side effects, with the main one being mild pain at the injection site. The cost of the vaccine is \$360 for the full series of 3 injections. Some insurance companies will pay for the vaccine. The federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program will provide free vaccines to children and adolescents under the age of 19 who

are uninsured, Medicaid-eligible and who meet other criteria set by the program ([www.cdc.gov/nip/vfc](http://www.cdc.gov/nip/vfc)).

The vaccine is less effective when administered to girls or women who are sexually active. However, it is reasonable to recommend it to all girls and women ages 9 to 26. In addition, there are studies underway to look at offering the vaccine to women up to age 50. Importantly, the vaccine should not replace other ways to prevent cervical cancer. Women still need to get regular screening with Pap tests and it is important to limit the number of sexual partners and use condoms. The vaccine does not protect against all subtypes of HPV that cause cervical cancer. There are other vaccines that are being developed. Another HPV vaccine, which is under review, protects against types 16 and 18. Treatment vaccines that prevent pre-cancer from developing into cancer in women who are infected with HPV are still being developed.

Improvements in the cervical cancer incidence and mortality rates in the U.S. are due in part to screening Pap smear tests, early detection, and early treatment. The advent of the HPV vaccine is expected to virtually eliminate cervical cancer in the U.S. by the year 2050. Importantly, the HPV vaccine has the potential to greatly impact one of the leading causes of cancer death in women worldwide. Despite this medical breakthrough, there are barriers that must be overcome, such as education, access and cost, to ensure that the vaccine reaches all women.

*Dineo Khabele, M.D., holds several appointments in the medical community, including Director, Gynecologic Oncology, Meharry Medical College; Assistant Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Meharry Medical College; Assistant Professor (secondary appointment), Cancer Biology, Vanderbilt University. She can be reached at [dkhabele@mmc.edu](mailto:dkhabele@mmc.edu)*

### RESOURCES

For more information about cervical cancer or about the HPV vaccine, please refer to these websites:

American Cancer Society	<a href="http://www.cancer.org">www.cancer.org</a>
Centers for Disease Control	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv">www.cdc.gov/std/hpv</a>
National Cancer Institute	<a href="http://www.cancer.gov">www.cancer.gov</a>
Women's Cancer Network	<a href="http://www.wcn.org">www.wcn.org</a>

## WORLD ON WEDNESDAYS SPECIAL SERIES

### World on Wednesdays and International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) presents, "Fifty Years of Foreign and Independent Films"

To start off the new year of World on Wednesdays, come celebrate 50 years of foreign and independent films! Belcourt Theatre will discuss the upcoming film festival commemorating 50 years of Janus foreign films. All are welcome, and refreshments will be provided.

**Date/Location:** Wednesday, January 17; 12:10-1:00pm, Student Life Center, Lower Level Meeting Rooms 1 and 2

**For more information:** [shavaun.e.evans@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:shavaun.e.evans@vanderbilt.edu)

### World on Wednesdays and ISSS presents, "Making Money and Making a Difference: Corporate Social Responsibility"

Student Stacy Tolos will discuss over a dozen dimensions of business and the impact they have on society and the environment. All are welcome; refreshments will be provided.

**Date:** Wednesday, January 24; 12:10-1:00pm

**Location:** Student Life Center, Lower Level Meeting Rooms 1 and 2

**For more information:** [shavaun.e.evans@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:shavaun.e.evans@vanderbilt.edu)

### World on Wednesdays and ISSS presents, "Clairvoyance from Canada: A Maple Leaf's Eye View of America"

Canadian social worker and public speaker, Ken Lori, presents on his assertion that the nation's transformation begins in public education. He suggests a new social curriculum that socializes the planet's most powerful to be informed, understanding, empathetic, critical thinking, and positive agents of change in the world. All are welcome and refreshments will be provided.

**Date:** Wednesday, January 31; 12:10-1:00pm

**Location:** Student Life Center, Lower Level Meeting Rooms 1 and 2

**For more information:** [shavaun.e.evans@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:shavaun.e.evans@vanderbilt.edu)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### WOMEN'S CENTER SEEKS MULIBRIETY PRIZE NOMINATIONS

The Muliebriety Prize honors an undergraduate student who demonstrates leadership in activities that contribute to the achievements, interests and goals of women and girls, or that promote equity. Self-nominations are encouraged, as well as nominations by faculty, staff, advisors, friends and peers. The award will be announced at the annual Magnolia Awards (formerly Kudos) Dinner, where the honoree will be presented with a cash award of \$100 and an honorary certificate. Nominations will be accepted via email, mail or in person. We hope to have an online version of the application available as well. Send nominations via email to [stacy.nunnally@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:stacy.nunnally@vanderbilt.edu). Send nominations via mail to: Box 351513, Station B, Nashville, TN 37235. Also, check our website at [www.vanderbilt.edu/womenscenter](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/womenscenter) for more information, to download the nomination form or to complete an online nomination.

### NASHVILLE NOW (NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN)

meets the 4th Monday of the month at the Nashville Peace and Justice Center behind Scarritt Bennett at 7pm. This meeting is open to members, friends and those seeking more information. For more information, contact [CynthiaNashNOW@aol.com](mailto:CynthiaNashNOW@aol.com) or 269-7141.



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Mail to the Women's Center, Vanderbilt University, Box 351513 Station B, Nashville, TN 37235

### Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

Vanderbilt University  
Box 351513, Station B  
2301 Vanderbilt Place  
Nashville, TN 37235

