



Empowering women for over 28 years!

# Women's VU

The monthly newsletter of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

November 2007, Volume 30, Issue 3

Women's Issues in the News

## Maternal Profiling: A New Kind of Discrimination?

by Misa Culley, editor, Women's VU

### Did you know?

- A 2005 Cornell University study of employers found that 84 percent of participants said they would only hire a woman who had no children?
- Forty-seven percent said that they would hire a woman with an identical resume who had children, but offer her a lower starting salary?
- There are only 22 states (and Puerto Rico) that currently prohibit employers from inquiring about an applicant's marital status? What about the remaining 28 states?

Every year newly graduated students flood the job market in search of their dream jobs, but many women enter the job application process unaware of the kinds of questions that potential employers might ask. Years ago, it was not unheard of for a potential employer to ask about your marriage plans, your future childbearing plans, your sexual preference, even your childcare. Today there are federal laws aimed at protecting the job applicant from this kind of discrimination, but not all states follow these laws and, in some cases, employers find ways around asking directly.

### What exactly is maternal profiling, you might ask?

Moms Rising member and activist, Kiki Peppard, found out the hard way. Peppard was featured in the Moms Rising documentary, *The Motherhood Manifesto*, last year for her ongoing campaign to make it illegal for Pennsylvania employers to ask about an applicant's marital or familial status. Peppard and her family moved to Pennsylvania from New York twelve years ago in an attempt to bring down their living expenses. She was gainfully employed in New York for years and was never asked about her marital or family status in job interviews. In fact, she says, she assumed it was illegal to ask such questions, but not in Pennsylvania. As a single mom, she was asked time and again about her marital and family status and began to realize the economic impact on other mothers, single or partnered.

For twelve years now she has tried to publicize the need for changing the law in Pennsylvania, but last year the bill did not even make it to the state House and Senate floor for a vote. Throughout her campaign, Peppard has repeatedly pitched her story and the economic impact of maternal profiling to major media outlets, but to little avail. Local papers have sometimes covered the topic, but so far, her pleas to female news anchors and news shows, including "The View," "60 Minutes," "20/20," even "Oprah" have gone unanswered.

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## Houston A. Baker, Jr., Ph.D.: Scholar, Civil Rights Advocate, Friend

by Kacy Silverstein,  
associate director, Project Safe

*Houston A. Baker, Jr. came to Vanderbilt University from Duke, where he raised a dissident voice against the University's handling of accusations leveled against members of their men's lacrosse team. In one of the first articles written about Houston Baker since beginning his tenure at Vanderbilt, The Vanderbilt Torch questioned Houston's status as a leading intellectual and Vanderbilt's decision to hire him. We at the Women's Center are honored to have Dr. Houston Baker on campus and thought it a fitting time to share our view of Houston.*

I must admit that my first introduction to Houston A. Baker, Jr. was the opposite of everything I had expected. I was well aware of his standing near the top of the academy's professoriate and his reputation as an expert in African American Studies, a discipline that he helped found over 30 years ago. What I was not



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

## Houston A. Baker, Jr., Ph.D.: Scholar, Civil Rights Advocate, Friend

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prepared for at our first meeting was his wonderfully brilliant smile, his mischievous wit, and his disarmingly friendly demeanor. And did I mention his humility, which lends not even one clue to his overwhelming accomplishments as a scholar of American Literary and Cultural Studies.

Houston A. Baker, Jr. began his academic career as an expert in British Victorian Literature. But as Rafael Perez-Torres mentions in his introduction before awarding the Hubbell Medal for Lifetime Achievement from the Modern Language Association to Dr. Baker in 2003, "He made a significant and brave decision to shift his career and pursue the study of African American literatures and cultures" in the early 1970s. As a scholar of African-American literature, Dr. Baker has written masterful scholarly works that situate Black culture and literature at the forefront of our understanding of what it means to be an American. His writings have garnered much praise and much criticism, primarily because he pushes the bounds of the academy by converging popular culture and complex literary analysis in his teaching and his written work.

In examining African-American literature, Dr. Baker does not forget the intersection of race and gender, however. At the University of Pennsylvania, he taught the English Department's first course in Black Women's Writing and served on the Advisory Board for Women's Studies. He also wrote one of the first books published by a major academic publisher (the University of Chicago Press) to enter the emerging world of Black Women's Literary Theory. *Workings of the Spirit: The Poetics of Black Women's Writing* was a collaborative project, written with two women graduate students (Elizabeth Alexander and Patricia Redmond, contributors) and published in 1991.

Dr. Baker's attention to women and gender is not limited to the classroom. He is an ally and an activist, fighting for and with women in many different settings. He resigned his seat on the Editorial Advisory Board of *Black American Literature Forum* in order to place a woman on the Board. He collaborated and consulted with WOAR (Women Organized Against Rape) in Philadelphia. Within months of arriving at Vanderbilt University, he graciously consented to presenting the keynote address, along with his wife Charlotte Pierce-Baker, also a Vanderbilt professor, for the *Healing Journey Symposium* co-sponsored by Women's and Gender Studies, VUPD, and Project Safe of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center. The more than seventy people who attended were spellbound by the brilliant and moving interweaving of voices and hearts presented that morning. When his wife and partner Charlotte heard I was writing this profile of Houston, she sent me her own loving thoughts on his contribution to her book, *Surviving the Silence*: "the book that seems to be so helpful to other women rape survivors could not have been completed without the help of Houston Baker. His moral support as well as his editing abilities were incredible; I tried to write him into every space of the manuscript—because he deserved to be there. Houston was an unparalleled supporter of me, after rape. A better advocate I could not have hoped for. I wish every man facing the horrors of loved ones raped could listen to Houston for even a brief time."

So, I end this profile by returning to Houston's smile and the first time I met him. I knew he was a great scholar before that day but I had no idea what an incredible ally he was for all women, especially survivors of violence. When I think of Houston these days and all that he has done and all that he continues to do for women, the only word that comes to my mind is gratitude. Thank you Houston, for teaching us both within the classroom and outside it, for walking with us in this struggle to end violence against women, and for offering your heart and your soul to this work. I hope every person reading this article has a chance to meet Houston Baker one day. Just look for that wonderful smile.

**Women's VU** is published monthly August through May at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.

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

### **H**as your voice been silenced by the violence in your life?

Project Safe offers safe and confidential support groups for female students impacted by: Dating/domestic violence, Sexual assault, or Stalking

**Start Date:** Tuesday, September 4th

**Time:** 8:00–9:30 pm

**Location:** Confidential; Groups will be held every Tuesday

For more information and group location, please contact: Vicky Basra 322-1333 or Kacy Silverstein 322-3774

## Maternal profiling

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### **Maternal profiling and the changing nature of work**

The model one-wage earner family is now believed to be an obsolete one. For most families, the one-wage earner model doesn't begin to make ends meet. Women are increasingly entering the workforce in greater numbers borne out of economic necessity. For those employers who embrace family-friendly policies such as flexibility, telecommuting, bankable leave time, and backup childcare reimbursement, the payoffs include happier, more productive and loyal employees. Studies show that companies that offer family-friendly policies see an increase in company morale as well as increased retention of talented employees.

One never really knows what their company is willing to offer if the policies aren't written in the company employee handbook, but it usually doesn't hurt to ask. The downside of asking for flexibility is the impression that it is granted by special request only and some workers will be loathe to ask for it, for fear of being seen as lazy or not committed to the job.

Many may wonder why a potential employer would discriminate against mothers, but the perception persists that health benefits for a family will cost the employer more, or that mothers are less productive. Productivity is generally not a problem for most mothers; juggling several balls in the air at the same time is a no-brainer. Mothers are generally natural multi-taskers and who else would be more committed to her job and productivity than a mother trying to make a living to support her family?

### **What is family responsibilities discrimination (FRD)?**

U.S. Law prohibits discrimination based on family responsibilities and gender stereotyping, but courts are now recognizing the need to clarify and extend these laws to include the assumptions that are made about how workers are treated in the workplace due to family caregiving responsibilities. Employees usually become aware of family responsibilities discrimination (FRD) when caregiving responsibilities change, such as caring for ill family members, when mothers hit the "maternal wall" at work, or when parents try to share childcare duties. Since most caregiving falls to women, women feel the effects of FRD more often.

### **Examples of FRD include:**

- questions about childbearing plans;
- the refusal to hire or promote workers who are pregnant or mothers of school-aged children even if women and men with no children are hired or promoted;
- assigning mothers to "mommy track" jobs that offer lower pay, worse hours, and little or no possibility of advancement;
- treating workers harshly or giving critical performance evaluations after they announce they are pregnant;

interfering with a worker's right to take maternity, paternity or family leave;

- terminating workers who become pregnant.

In a brief issued by the WorkLife Law Center, motherhood is identified as "one of the key triggers for gender stereotyping." An example of gender stereotyping is when an employer assumes that a worker will behave in a certain way because of his or her gender. The U.S. Supreme Court has held that these assumptions based on gender stereotyping amount to sex discrimination. Mothers, however, bear the brunt of most gender stereotyping because of the assumptions made about them in

the workplace. Employers may believe that mothers might not be as dedicated to work as others, and require them to prove their competence again and again. Some employers may believe that a woman cannot be a good employee or a good mother at the same time. These outdated beliefs die hard. In fact, the WorkLife Law Center reports

that the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has tracked the number of pregnancy discrimination complaints over the past decade and the increase is staggering--nearly 400% more complaints filed than in the previous decade. The WorkLife Law issue brief states, "Where employers once discriminated blatantly against women, they now do so against mothers. Family responsibilities discrimination is the new face of sex discrimination at work."

*"Where employers once discriminated blatantly against women, they now do so against mothers. Family responsibilities discrimination is the new face of sex discrimination at work."*

—Center for WorkLife Law

For more information on maternal profiling, family responsibilities discrimination (FRD), or employment laws, please refer to the your state government website or state human rights commission.

### **Other websites that discuss maternal profiling include:**

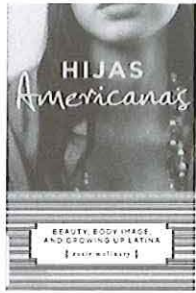
[www.worklifelaw.org](http://www.worklifelaw.org)  
[www.MomsRising.org](http://www.MomsRising.org)  
[www.mothersmovementonline.org](http://www.mothersmovementonline.org)  
[www.mothersandmore.org](http://www.mothersandmore.org)  
[www.womensenews.org](http://www.womensenews.org)

*Misa Culley has been editor of Women's VU since January 2003 and frequently writes on motherhood issues, women and politics, and cultural issues. She is currently pursuing an M.S. in mass communication at MTSU and writing a thesis on Hillary Clinton and the framing of feminism in election politics. She is co-founder of Vandy Moms, a support network for working mothers, that is a part of the Women's Center's Gender Matters programming.*

**m**

## Hijas Americanas; Women's Work in the Garment Industry

*In the Library*



Latinas growing up in the United States face a complex and unique set of issues, adjustments and problems. Rosie Molinary, who was born into a Puerto Rican family and who moved to the United States at the age of two, explores these challenging issues in *Hijas Americanas: Beauty, Body Image, and Growing Up Latina* (Seal Press, 2007).

Molinary grew up in Columbia, South Carolina and knew of no other Puerto Rican families in the area. For this book she and two assistants developed a Growing Up Latina Survey featuring 157 questions about coming of age in the U.S. This was completed online by 521 Latinas between the ages of 18 and 40. Molinary and her assistants also interviewed over 80 young Latinas either in person or by phone. The questions in the surveys pertained to racial and ethnic stereotypes; prejudice; beauty; body image; religion; sexuality; education; women's roles; the influence of family; and the difficulties of fitting into two worlds.

Young Latinas face conflicting sets of expectations, values and ideals, as their families' values and attitudes usually differ greatly from those of the dominant culture. The writer hopes that the volume will provide "an opportunity to reflect on whether you want to break out of limiting patterns and help our young Latinas grow into secure, confident women—not in spite of their race and ethnicity and body, but because of those very things."

First-person experiences of the women interviewed are interspersed with the writer's experiences of growing up as a Puerto Rican who had no friends from the same background and who did not necessarily look Hispanic. She discusses what it felt like to be made to feel that she was not Puerto Rican enough or even at all. Sometimes she was considered

Latina enough to fill almost every quota yet on other occasions she was not seen as a minority at all. From the time she was a young woman she looked forward to a world where no-one would want to pass as white and where everyone could feel comfortable with their particular heritage.

Despite the difficulties of living in two differing worlds, the Latinas were happy that they had grown up in this country. All realized that this meant that they were more privileged than they would have been had their families stayed in their homelands.

In recent decades there has been considerable media attention paid to the international garment industry. During this period many manufacturers moved their factories to Third World countries to take advantage of the very low production costs there. In *Unraveling the Garment Industry: Transnational Organizing and Women's Work* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007) Ethel C. Brooks examines international labor rights, labor violations and the connections between American consumerism and the antisweatshop movement.

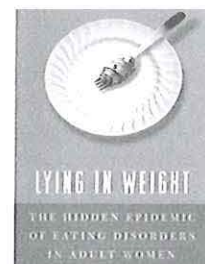
Brooks, an assistant professor of women's and gender studies and sociology at Rutgers University, feels that "the tactics of transnational campaigns increasingly work to affect a product's image and the way it is marketed and consumed; furthermore, antisweatshop campaigns themselves employ third world women garment workers—their bodies, labor, representations, and testimonies—in the production of transnational protest." In this scholarly work Brooks focuses on abusive treatment of child laborers in Bangladesh, the conditions in Gap factories in El Salvador, and sweatshops using immigrant labor in New York City. Workers in garment manufacturing are overwhelmingly women and girls, who

are considered to be more nimble with their fingers, to be more docile and to be more willing to work for low pay. Many of the garments produced by these workers are destined for major retailers such as Wal-Mart.

In some cases protests intended to improve working conditions have had unintended consequences, sometimes involving the firing of the only worker in an impoverished family. There is some debate over whether it is preferable for a child to have a job where she is exploited and paid a pittance rather than for her family to have no income at all. The antisweatshop movement on the whole has improved working conditions and pay and has brought increased awareness of the connection between low prices and unfair labor practices to many Western consumers.



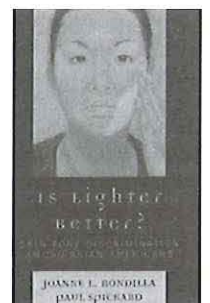
Barbara Clarke  
Women's Center  
Librarian



TRISHA GURA

Other new acquisitions include: *Lying in Weight: The Hidden Epidemic of Eating Disorders in Adult Women* by Trisha Gura; *Black Women and Music: More Than the Blues*

edited by Eileen M. Hayes & Linda F. Williams; *The Best-Kept Secret: Women, Corporate Lobbyists, Policy, and Power in the United States* by Denise Benoit; and *Is Lighter Better? Skin-Tone Discrimination Among Asian Americans* by Joanne L. Rondilla & Paul Spickard.



m

denotes Project Safe programming



# November 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 <i>Making Connections</i> 5:30pm-6:30pm  <i>IMAGE group, 4pm,</i> <i>Sarratt, Rm 110</i>	2	3  <i>Race for the Cure,</i> <i>Bicentennial Mall</i>
4	5	6  <i>Creative Life</i> <i>Planning Group,</i> <i>11:30am-1:00pm</i>  <i>Support Group,</i> <i>8-9pm</i>	7  <i>Vandy Feminists,</i> <i>7pm</i>  <i>Peer Educators,</i> <i>8-9pm</i>	8  <i>Vandy Moms,</i> <i>11:30am-12:30pm</i>  <i>IMAGE group, 4pm,</i> <i>Sarratt, Rm 110</i>  <i>Making Connections</i> <i>5:30pm-6:30pm</i>	9  <i>Hand in Hand</i> <i>training</i>  <i>Women in Academe:</i> <i>Engaging your</i> <i>Network, 12:10pm</i>	10  <i>Hand in Hand</i> <i>training</i>
11  <i>Hand in Hand</i> <i>training</i>	12  <i>Book Group,</i> <i>5:15pm-6:15pm</i>  <i>MPAS, 7:30-8:30pm</i>	13  <i>Creative Life</i> <i>Planning Group,</i> <i>11:30am-1:00pm</i>  <i>Support Group,</i> <i>8-9pm</i>	14  <i>Vandy Feminists,</i> <i>7pm</i>  <i>Peer Educators,</i> <i>8-9pm</i>	15  <i>IMAGE group, 4pm,</i> <i>Sarratt, Rm 110</i>  <i>Making Connections</i> <i>5:30pm-6:30pm</i>	16	17
International Education Week						
18	19	20  <i>Creative Life</i> <i>Planning Group,</i> <i>11:30am-1:00pm</i>	21	22  <i>Happy</i> <i>Thanksgiving!</i>	23	24
Thanksgiving Break						
25	26	27  <i>Creative Life</i> <i>Planning Group,</i> <i>11:30am-1:00pm</i>	28  <i>Vandy Feminists,</i> <i>7pm</i>  <i>Peer Educators,</i> <i>8-9pm</i>	29  <i>IMAGE group, 4pm,</i> <i>Sarratt, Rm 110</i>  <i>Making Connections</i> <i>5:30pm-6:30pm</i>	30	

For details and descriptions of each group, please refer to page 6.

### WOMEN IN ACADEME SERIES: ENGAGING YOUR NETWORK

This session will focus on giving tools and information to graduate level women on building/engaging a network to assist in navigating graduate school work, grants and career development. This is a brown bag event, so bring your lunch and join us. This series of workshops, co-sponsored by the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, the BRET Office of Career Development and the Warren Center for the Humanities explores issues pertinent to women in the academy and aims to foster dialogue between women in varying locations within the academy. Sessions are open to all Vanderbilt graduate students, professional students, and post-docs.

**Date:** November 9, 2007; 12:10-1:30 pm

**Location:** Warren Center for the Humanities; Vanderbilt University  
For more information, please contact [stacy.nunnally@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:stacy.nunnally@vanderbilt.edu).  
RSVPs are appreciated, but not required.

### HAND IN HAND TRAINING

Hand in Hand is a group of students, staff and faculty trained to help students make informed decisions about services and options available to them related to sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. We invite you to our volunteer training the weekend of November 9-12. Training lasts 16 hours and addresses violence against women on campus and in the Nashville Community. You will learn how to support and connect survivors to resources on and off-campus.

**Date:** November 9-12 Times: TBA

**Location:** TBA

For more information and to register email Amy-Lee at [Amy.l.gillard@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Amy.l.gillard@vanderbilt.edu)



# November Calendar of Events

## SPECIAL EVENTS, SERIES AND PROGRAMS

(Events are listed by dates and include any events, programs and series for which the women's center is solely responsible or for which we are a major sponsor or collaborator.)

### HAND IN HAND TRAINING

Hand in Hand is a group of students, staff and faculty trained to help students make informed decisions about services and options available to them related to sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. Please see details on page 5. For more information and to register email Amy-Lee at Amy.L.gillard@vanderbilt.edu

### RACE FOR THE CURE: NOVEMBER 3rd

The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Race for the Cure® Series raises significant funds and awareness for the fight against breast cancer, celebrates breast cancer survivorship, and honors those who have lost their battle with the disease. With funds raised by the Komen Race for the Cure® Series, the Komen Foundation with its Affiliate Network is able to fund breast cancer research grants, meritorious awards, and community outreach programs. Up to 75 percent of the net proceeds raised by the Greater Nashville Race for the Cure® stay in middle Tennessee to fund outreach programs and initiatives that address the specific unmet breast health needs of our community, and a minimum of 25 percent of net proceeds raised support the Komen Foundation Award and Research Grant Program. The Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center supports this event and the Vandy Feminists organizes a team each year to participate. Save the date on your calendar.

**Date and location:** November 3rd, Bicentennial Mall in Nashville. For more information visit the website at: <http://www.komen-nashville.org/race.htm> or contact co-chairs Dawn Barnes Davis and Julie Filson at [race@komen-nashville.org](mailto:race@komen-nashville.org).

### WOMEN IN ACADEME SERIES: ENGAGING YOUR NETWORK

This session will focus on giving tools and information to graduate level women on building/engaging a network to assist in navigating graduate school work, grants and career development. Please see details on page 5.

**Date and location:** November 9, 2007; 12:10 – 1:30 pm, Warren Center for the Humanities; Vanderbilt University. For more information, please contact [stacy.nunnally@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:stacy.nunnally@vanderbilt.edu). RSVPs are appreciated, but not required.

### INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK

International Education Week is an annual, international event initiated by the U.S. Department of State and Department of Education, and coordinated at Vanderbilt by the office of International Student and Scholar Services and The Vanderbilt International Office. The week promotes programs that prepare Americans for a global environment and attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences in the U.S. To learn more about International Week throughout the country, please visit: <http://iew.state.gov/>. To get more information on the International Education Week events on campus, please visit: [www.vanderbilt.edu/iss](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/iss).

**Date:** November 12th – 16th, various times

**Location:** Various locations; Vanderbilt University

For more information, please contact [sherif.barsoum@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:sherif.barsoum@vanderbilt.edu).

## REGULAR GROUPS AND MEETINGS

### Book Group

Meets the second Monday of each month; 5:15 – 6:15 p.m.

**What/Who:** The book group is open to new members at all times and is for anyone who loves to read. You can find a list books being read on our website ([www.vanderbilt.edu/womenscenter](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/womenscenter)). For more information, contact Jane Du Bose at [jdubose@bellsouth.net](mailto:jdubose@bellsouth.net) or Carmen Gherman at [cggherman@yahoo.com](mailto:cggherman@yahoo.com).

### Creative Life Planning Group

Meets every Tuesday; 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**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 Women's Center. For more information, call 322-4843.

### Dissertation Writers Group

This group will begin meeting in January 2008.

**Who/What:** 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. It is for women in any stage of the dissertation-writing process.

**Where:** The Gallery at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center; Vanderbilt University. For more information, contact [stacy.nunnally@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:stacy.nunnally@vanderbilt.edu).

### Image Group

Meets every Thursday at 4 p.m. (no mtg during Thanksgiving break)

**Who/What:** Free and open to any students interested in these issues. 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 Center, Rm. 110; For more information, contact [stephanie.l.rodgers@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:stephanie.l.rodgers@vanderbilt.edu) or [images@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:images@vanderbilt.edu).

### L.I.F.E. (Lessons Inspiring Female Empowerment)

Meets every week. (no mtg during Thanksgiving break)

**Who/What:** Free and open to any students interested in these issues. L.I.F.E is group dedicated to mentoring young girls and women on a variety of issues important to them. This group works with a group of teen girls in the Nashville community covering topics such as economic empowerment, girls' and women's health, self-esteem, leadership and more.

**Where:** The Women's Center. For more information, contact [ashley.walker@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:ashley.walker@vanderbilt.edu).

### Making Connections

Meets every Thursday, but is currently on hold. Please contact group facilitator below.

**Who/What:** Free and open to anyone with an interest in these issues. 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 and is completely confidential.

**Where:** The Women's Center. For more information, contact P. Tobi Fishel, Ph.D., at [tobi.fishel@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:tobi.fishel@vanderbilt.edu)

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## November Calendar of Events

Continued from page 6

### Men Promoting a Solution (MPAS)

Meets every other Monday from 7:30-8:30 p.m. (no mtg during Thanksgiving break)

**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; Vanderbilt University

For more information, contact [brian.adams@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:brian.adams@vanderbilt.edu).

### Peer Educators of Project Safe

Meets every Wednesday, 8-9 p.m. (no mtg during Thanksgiving break)

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

**Where:** Women's Center gallery; For more information, contact

[kathleen.e.adams@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:kathleen.e.adams@vanderbilt.edu).

### Support Group

Tuesdays at 8-9 p.m. (no mtg during Thanksgiving break)

**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 location; all information shared is kept confidential. For more information, contact [kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu) or 322-3774.

### Vanderbilt Feminists

Meets Wednesday of each week, 7 p.m.

**Who/What:** Open to all students of any gender, this group is concerned about women's issues on campus, and promoting equality between genders.

**Where:** Women's Center; For more information, contact [ali.sevilla@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:ali.sevilla@vanderbilt.edu) or [erica.d.santiago@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:erica.d.santiago@vanderbilt.edu).

### Vandy Moms

Meets the 2nd & 4th Thursday of each month; 11:30am-12:30p.m.

**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. It also provides programming to inform, empower and enrich.

**Where:** The Women's Center; For more information, contact [misa.culley@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:misa.culley@vanderbilt.edu)

### L.I.F.E. (Lessons Inspiring Female Empowerment)

Gender Matters is proud to introduce one of our newer groups meeting regularly at the Women's Center.

L.I.F.E is group dedicated to mentoring young girls and women on a variety of issues important to them.

This group works with a group of teen girls in the Nashville community covering topics such as economic empowerment, girls' and women's health, self-esteem, leadership and more. Free and open to any students interested in these issues.

Meets every week.

**Where:** The Women's Center. For more information, contact [ashley.walker@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:ashley.walker@vanderbilt.edu).



## Women's Issues in the News

### Product Safety: *Would you like lead with that?*

**Lead in Toys** - In these last few months, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has recalled over 20 million toys manufactured in China due to lead found in paint. The list of recalled items is extensive. For more information, or to view a complete list of recalled items, please refer to [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

**Tainted lipstick** - This October, a U.S. consumer rights group found that several popular brands of red lipstick contain high levels of lead. The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics said tests on 33 brand-name red lipsticks, tested by the Bodycote Testing Group in Sante Fe Spring, California, found over half had detectable lead levels, from 0.03 to 0.65 parts per million (ppm). Among these brands were Cover Girl, L'Oreal, and Christian Dior. The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, a coalition of public health, environmental and women's groups, has stated that the FDA has not set a limit for lead in lipstick. This is troubling to many because lipstick, like candy, is often digested, and the FDA does have a limit on the amount of lead that is contained in candy--0.1 ppm--a standard that was set to protect children from ingesting lead. One third of the lipsticks tested exceeded this amount according to the Bodycote Testing Group. Thirty-nine percent of the lipsticks tested had no discernable lead levels.

Studies have shown that the ingestion of high levels of lead can contribute to learning, language and behavioral problems as well as being linked to infertility and miscarriage. Studies show that lead builds up in the body over time and can add up to significant exposure levels. Lipstick that is applied several times over the course of a day, every day, can eventually mean significant exposure.

For more information on this issue and a list of the lipstick brands tested, please refer to [www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org)

**Women in Space** - This past October, NASA astronaut *Peggy Whitson* became the first woman to command a space station. This is Whitson's second six-month rotation aboard the Space Station. According to NASA, she previously served as a flight engineer on Expedition 5 in 2002, as NASA's first station science officer. During that tenure, she conducted 21 investigations in human and life sciences, helped repair the station's robotic arm and performed a spacewalk to make necessary repairs to the station. When Whitson returns to Earth in April 2008, she will make history again, having spent more time in space than any other woman.

Space shuttle Discovery Commander *Pam Melroy*, will reach another milestone in late October when she and her crew arrive at the space station. It will mark the first time two women have led space missions at the same time.

To read more about these extraordinary women, please refer to [www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)



# ANNOUNCEMENTS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**NASHVILLE NOW (NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN)** meets the 4th Monday of the month at the Nashville Peace and Justice Center behind Scarritt Bennett at 7 p.m. This meeting is open to members, friends and those seeking more information. For more information, contact CynthiaNashNOW@aol.com or 269-7141.

**Nashville CABLE** meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 11:30 a.m. -1:00 p.m. For more information, contact nashvillecable.org

**The New Parents/Returning to Work Support Group** has a new meeting date & location. Please invite any parent (pregnant, planning return to work, young or older child) to come join us! The group will now meet on the 1st Monday of each month at 12:00pm, Children's Hospital room 8009. (When you get off the MAIN elevators in Children's, the hallway directly in front of you will have double doors through which you will need to gain access. There will be a buzzer that you press and state that you have a meeting in the room. They will let you in.) Lunches and babies are welcome. For more information, please contact Kate Cropp at kate.cropp@vanderbilt.edu

### Free viewing of Ricki Lake's *The Business of Birth*

The School of Nursing at Vanderbilt is pleased to have been given rights for a special screening of Ricki Lake's documentary *The Business of Birth*. The movie examines, and importantly, questions the way women in America have babies. Birth stories, historical, political and scientific information are shared, as well as shocking statistics about our current maternity care system. If you are a woman, a sister, a mother—you won't want to miss this documentary!

**Date and location:** Friday November 30th, 5 pm at the Doubletree Hotel in Nashville, 315 4th Ave North, FREE. Parking is available by valet at the hotel, and there is a public lot across the street from the hotel. For more information, please contact Michelle Collins at michelle.r.collins@vanderbilt.edu

### Save the dates! Upcoming Conferences

The 2008 Michigan Women's Studies Association Conference is March 14-15, 2008. This year's theme is *Raising our Voices: Power, Politics, and Gender*. The personal is political and this year's conference theme refers to women's continuing participation and leadership in all aspects of political life. There is a call for papers this November.

Conference Coordinator: Linda Pritchard, Ph.D. For more information, please contact Elizabeth Comer at ecomer@emich.edu

**SEWSA 2008** (Southeastern Women's Studies Association) annual conference will be April 3-5, 2008. The theme this year is *Frontiers of Feminism at Home and Abroad*. Featured speakers include bell hooks, Anne Fausto-Sterling, Cynthia Enloe, and Rosie Tong. The call for papers is November 2. For more information, please refer to the website: <http://womensstudies.uncc.edu/sewsa/registration.htm>



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