

WOMEN'S VU

April 1981

A publication of the Vanderbilt University Women's Center

III:6

WHET Meets in Nashville

Women in Higher Education in Tennessee (WHET) will hold their Spring Conference in Nashville at the Holiday Inn Vanderbilt April 24-25, 1981. Registration will begin 3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. on Friday and continue on Saturday morning 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

WHET President, Yvonne Ralston-Carroll will open the conference at 7:00 p.m. Friday. Ms. Louise Miller, Director of the Commission on the Status of Women, will speak on "Strategies for Building a Strong Organization" at a luncheon on Saturday.

The purpose of the conference is to set priorities and goals for the organization in '81-82. The registration fee is \$15.00 which includes the Saturday luncheon. Membership in WHET is open to all faculty, staff and graduate students in Tennessee. Annual membership dues are \$5.00

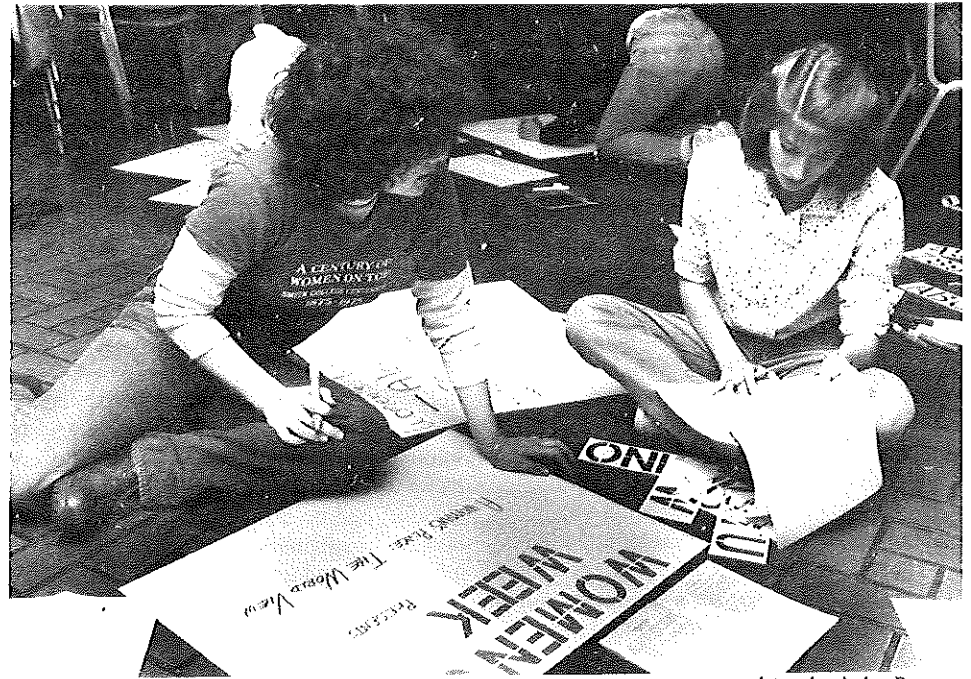
Please call Pat Pierce at (615) 322-4705 if you need additional information.

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Vanderbilt Policy on Sexual Harassment

The following statement was approved by the President and distributed to all offices and departments as University policy on sexual harassment, which has been defined as a form of sex discrimination and therefore falls under Vanderbilt's Affirmative Action Plan.

Last spring, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the federal agency which enforces Title VII's ban on sex discrimination in employment, amended its guidelines to include sexual harassment as a prohibited practice. The term is defined by that agency as follows: "Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and



picture by Ardon Brown

Women's Week 1981 is past; preparations for Women's Week 1982 have already begun. Students interested in planning Women's Week 1982 may call the Women's Center (ext. 4843) to sign up.

other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when 1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; 2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; 3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment."

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. To the extent that sexual harassment of a student interferes with his or her participating in or benefitting from the activities, courses, or programs provided or sponsored by the Un-

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Visiting lecturer Candace Pert will meet informally with students and faculty on Tuesday, April 28, from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. in 205 Sarratt to talk about women in academic settings; as graduate students, researchers, and faculty. Bring your lunch.



REMINDER! The Board of Trust meets on April 24-25. As in the past, the Women's Center will schedule a coffee hour for women trustees. Announcement of the date, time, and place, as well as the agenda will be made through the *Register* as soon as we have the information.

Stimpson Traces History of Women's Studies

Catherine Stimpson, Professor of English at Douglass College and founding editor of *Signs*, gave the keynote address for a conference sponsored by Georgia State in March, "A Fabric of Our Own Making: Southern Scholars on Women." Dr. Stimpson's topic was "Knowing Women: The State of the Art."

The promise derived from the study of women, Dr. Stimpson stated, was that "we would not simply learn about women, but we will also learn about the family and our sex-gender systems." She listed three tasks for scholars on women: 1) to correct errors in theories and "facts" about women; 2) to add new knowledge about women to the existing disciplines; and 3) to generate theory that enables us to reconceptualize history and rethink concepts like "progress".

The intellectual development of scholarship about women, beginning around 1968, falls into four stages, according to Dr. Stimpson. Initially the focus was on women's oppression, invisibility, and secondary status. Discrimination against women was emphasized and articles on the status of women in various academic disciplines were published widely.

Stage two was characterized by attention to the question of how to conceptualize the independent but interacting universes of women and men. Women's world was seen as the second world; men's world remained the first. Themes of separateness and togetherness shaped studies of women entering the male world ("How to Dress for Success"). Scholarly articles analyzed the dichotomy between the images of women as good or evil (Mary or Eve).

Attention to the differences in men's and women's experience generated studies of housework, of the 19th century suffrage movement, of lesbianism, of early women achievers. This scholarship permitted scholars to see women as knowers, especially of their own experience. Differences between the sexes and questions about the way we assess differences and similarities were popular research topics. At the same time, political aspects of gender relations were identified and articulated in studies of power struggles within the family and between the two worlds of women and men.

Women were described in new terms, as *more than* subordinate, weak, and powerless. The discovery of early women playwrights and authors, studies of black women's experience, and recognition of women's resistance to subordination emerged as dominant themes.

A challenge to the two-sphere approach characterizes the third stage in the evolution of scholarship about women, by shifting attention to differences between women. Scholars began to compare the status of women in different countries. Within American culture, differences between white women and black women became a central concern.

The most recent development in research on women reflects renewed interest in the debate about sex differences. Dr. Stimpson compared earlier "minimalist" views of sex differences with recent "maximalist" views: a shift from seeing sex differences as few and relatively insignificant to one that stresses the importance and centrality of these dif-

ferences. At the present time, the nature-culture debate is re-stated with greater weight for nature than in the earlier scholarship. Feminist scholars of the "maximalist" perspective see sex differences and social equality for the sexes as compatible.

Catherine's Stimpson's insights contribute to an understanding of the rich dynamic within an intellectual tradition. Women's Studies, like any body of knowledge, has a history of its own. Acknowledgement of the evolution in this new academic pursuit confirms its place in the traditions of scholarship. Dr. Stimpson's incisive analysis enlightens us about Women's Studies and the study of human experience.

-Nancy Ransom

RISK FACTORS IN BREAST CANCER

In the January 1981 issue of WOMEN'S VU, an article on breast cancer by Jo Ann Blankenship stressed the need of all women for breast self-examination and self-awareness. Jan Wooding responded to the article with an important question regarding women of higher risk: "But and this is an important but, the article did not elaborate on this percentage of women who are most susceptible. . . There are plenty of us potentially high risk women who would like to know more."

In 1976, in an effort to provide a better understanding of the woman who is more likely to develop breast cancer, the National Cancer Institute conducted at-home interviews with a number of women involved in the Breast Cancer Detection Demonstration Project. The computer-matched group included a woman with breast cancer, one with benign breast disease, and one who has thus far, had no breast problems. The questions concentrated on family history, gynecologic history, pregnancies, and disease and medication. Analyses are still being conducted and information concerning disease and medication will be published later this year.

The first analysis by Dr. Robert Hoover and Dr. Louise Brinton of the NCI covered family and gynecologic history only. They attempted to quantify the amount of increased risk for each factor. The following table was extracted from their publications.

	Increased Risk
Obese women	1.5
Sister with breast cancer	2
More than one breast biopsy	2
Began menstruating before age 12	2
First Birth after age 30	2
Menopause after age 55	2.17
Mother with breast cancer	4
Grandmother with breast cancer	5
Previous breast cancer themselves	8
Two sisters with breast cancer	9
Sister and mother with breast cancer	47

To interpret this table, it should be explained that a woman whose sister had breast cancer is twice as likely as the normal population to develop the disease.

The effort to identify risk factors is aimed at isolating the woman who should be watched more closely so that the cancer can be detected at an early, curable stage. The woman who has not had a child before age 30 should not be unduly alarmed. But she *should* be more diligent in practicing breast self-examination and in seeing her physician.

-Jo Ann Blankenship
Project Coordinator
Center for Breast Disease
Diagnosis

Wilderness Skills for Women

In an effort to encourage women's participation in outdoor activities and to promote women in outdoor leadership positions, Nashville-based POINT SOUTH, INC. offers wilderness skill courses exclusively for women. The spring weekend and week-long wilderness courses are designed for and led by women and will focus on the beginning skills of safe and responsible camping, climbing, rappelling, and whitewater canoeing.

According to Nance Pettit, Vanderbilt graduate student and coordinator of POINT SOUTH's women's activities, the weekend course scheduled for May 7-11 will include backpacking, camping and a day of beginning techniques of climbing and rappelling. The longer May 30-June 6 wilderness week follows a similar format and includes instruction in whitewater canoeing and a raft trip as well. As in other POINT SOUTH activities, all necessary equipment, food and transportation costs are included in the fee.



"For too long wilderness skills and experiences have been somewhat foreign to women. We want to change that. This is a chance for women to learn those skills and to share those experiences within a supportive group," said Ms. Pettit.

Information is available on these and other POINT SOUTH activities, open to men and women of high school and adult ages, at POINT SOUTH's office at 269-3665 or P.O. Box 120425, Nashville, TN 37212.

Contraception Threatened by Pending Abortion Legislation

Women in Tennessee need to be aware of the current threats locally and in Washington to legal abortion and access to birth control. The complacency that most pro-choice people (those who believe abortion is a personal choice) have enjoyed will have to end if we are to preserve individual freedoms.

In Nashville companion bills (HB 999/SB 1077) are coming before the state legislature with the intent to cut off federal and state family planning funds (Title X) to agencies which provide abortions. These bills would deny contraceptive services to over 20,000 women every year. Limiting these funds would increase the number of unintended pregnancies and increase the need for abortion.

Anti-abortion supporters of the bills claim that Planned Parenthood is using government funds to subsidize abortions. In fact, abortions are paid for privately. Thus, the bills are seen as a punitive move against Planned Parenthood of Nashville and Memphis.

Contacting members of the Tennessee House and Senate General Welfare Committees can help fight these repressive bills and any other threatening bills which may follow.

In Washington Senate hearings scheduled for late April by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) will be the first steps by a politically powerful minority to try to impose its moral beliefs on everyone through passage of a so-called "Human Life Amendment" to the U.S. Constitution.

Most forms of the HLA filed since January by conservative members of Congress such as Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Henry Hyde (R-IL) prohibit abortion, even those to save the life of the mother. Even abortion for pregnancies from rape or incest or those necessary to save the life or preserve the health of the mother would be forbidden.

The so-called Human Life Amendment is a fraud. Rather than protecting life, it threatens the lives of women and the well-being of their families. It means the end of legal abortion and, since the HLA gives the fertilized egg constitutional protection, it would prohibit birth control forms which prevent implantation. The IUD and some birth control pills will be targeted.

The Human Life Statute (S.158/H.R. 900) is a backdoor approach to amend the Constitution. It seeks to change federal law by enlarging the word "person" when it is used in the 14th amendment to include a

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Planned Parenthood is seeking students to volunteer for a few hours a week during the summer as counselors in women's health services and family planning. Volunteers will be trained for their work. Hours are flexible.

The volunteer service will assure Planned Parenthood's clients of adequate education and counseling about reproductive health. It will afford student volunteers an excellent opportunity for developing new skills and experience. For some students, volunteer service at Planned Parenthood might provide experiential learning for an independent studies program.

For information call Janice Sarver, 327-1094.

The National Women's Studies Association holds its third annual conference at the University of Connecticut at Storrs, May 31 through June 4, 1981. The first two annual conventions have demonstrated the strength, excitement, and growth of women's studies both nationally and internationally. One of the continuing concerns at these conventions has been racism and its divisive effects on women and the women's movement. Racism can be overt and covert, personal and institutional. We are committed through this convention to exploring these different forms of racism and to devising strategies to combat them. We will also celebrate the cultural diversity and strength of women.

Any inquiries about the convention program should be addressed to Norma Cobbs-Pat Miller, Women' Studies, Box U-181A, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06268. Phone (203) 486-4310.

YWCA announces new classes:

Calligraphy - April 30 to May 28, 7-9 p.m. at the YWCA, 1608 Woodmont Blvd. Registration fee is \$20.00 plus membership (\$10.00 per year).

Budgeting for the Single Person - April 23 to May 14, 7-8:30 p.m. at the YWCA. Fee is \$20.00 plus membership.

God Calling: Will Anyone Answer - led by Sister Maria Edwards, April 23 to May 14, 10-12:00 a.m. at YWCA. Fee is \$10.00 plus membership.

For further information and to register, contact the YWCA, 385-3952.

Sexual harassment policy

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iversity, it is possible that Title IX will be interpreted to include sexual harassment as a prohibited form of sex discrimination.

We have been contacted by women at Vanderbilt who report being subjected to conduct that would fit within the EEOC definition of sexual harassment. It is our hope that publicizing this information will serve as a deterrent to future incidents. The campus community should be an environment free from any implicit or explicit coercive sexual behavior which is used to control, influence or affect the career of any individual, whether faculty, staff or student.

Please advise the faculty and staff members of your organizational unit of this information. Any person who has a complaint regarding sexual harassment may contact the Women's Center or the Opportunity Development Center for further information (including information concerning availability of the faculty, staff, and student grievance procedures for review of the complaint).



SGA Committee Distributes Stickers

The SGA Security Committee will soon distribute 5000 phone stickers listing numbers to call for help in emergencies and a new extension to call for Security escorts. The stickers will be distributed among the dormitories and in academic and administrative buildings. This project is being co-sponsored by Student Government Association, the Security Department, the Department of Residential and Judicial Affairs, and the Women's Center.

-Karin Au

from SPOKESWOMAN, March 1981

SPOKESWOMAN OF THE MONTH:
Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD) commenting on Reagan's "support" of equal rights and opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment:

Can you imagine Lincoln saying, 'I'm all for emancipation, but we don't need a proclamation. We'll just do it plantation by plantation.'

Contraception

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fetus from the moment of conception. It would also forbid lower federal courts to rule on cases of state or local laws restricting abortion.

This bill is particularly dangerous since it needs only a 50% majority vote to pass in Congress—the HLA, as an amendment requires a 2/3 vote plus 3/4 of the states to ratify.

Outlawing abortion will *not* decrease the need, but will endanger women's health and their families because they had no other choice but to turn to the illegal abortionist. The invasion of government into the most private parts of our lives is unacceptable.

To help preserve basic rights to privacy and access to safe medical procedure, contact your legislators.

U.S. SENATE & HOUSE

Sen. Howard Baker (R)
4123 Dirksen Senate Bldg.
Washington 20510
(Nashville 251-5129)

Sen. Jim Sasser (D)
231 Russell State Office Bldg.
Washington 20500
(Nashville 251-7353)

Rep. Bill Boner (D)
Cannon Office Bldg.
Washington 20515
(Nashville 251-5296)

TENNESSEE SENATE AND HOUSE

Senate

Ch. John Ford, 317 War Mem., 741-336

House

Ch. Paul Starnes, 17 Leg. Plaza, 741-3796

-Andrea Kronenberg

The next issue of *Women's VU* will appear in July. Articles or announcements must be turned in by June 3.

Edited by Linda Karwedsky

If you have not returned a form this year, but continue to receive WOMEN'S VU, it indicates that your name has been held over from last year's list. We shall continue to mail the newsletter to you unless you ask to have your name taken off the list.

If you are not receiving a labeled copy of WOMEN'S VU, please return the form below or call the Women's Center, ext. 4843, to get your name on the list.

We regret that newsletters will be sent to off-campus addresses only for a \$2.00 fee. Please make checks out to the Vanderbilt Women's Center.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Student _____ (please give class and school)



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