

# Women's VU

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October 1988  
Vanderbilt University

Margaret  
Cuninggim  
Women's Center

## Election '88: What Do Women Want?

Lauri Wright

The conventions, which give a whole new meaning to the phrase "political party," are over, the platform planks have been nailed down, and the veep selections have been both lauded and criticized.

As the candidates and their advisors plot campaign strategy, there is one block of voters that they must always keep in mind: women.

The gender gap is a popular media term. It's catchy - sounds good, looks good. But the power of the gender gap is not its verbal appeal. It's votes. Ten million votes!

Ten million more women than men will be eligible to vote on November 8. Women did not vote differently from men until 1980, when more women than men voted against Ronald Reagan. Since then, the distance between the way men vote and women vote has widened with each election. The most recent election, 1986, demonstrated the real power that women have at the polls: the previously Republican Senate was handed to the Democrats, by women.

The other difference is turnout. In 1984, 7.1 million more women than men voted in the presidential election.

The trend of more women who actually vote in presidential elections than men began twenty years ago. 1984 was no fluke.

Women vote on the issues, not straight party line, not for their husbands' candidate, and not because of a candidate's looks or gender.

Issues that concern women the most include not only the expected issues: child care, the ERA, and abortion rights, but also nuclear disarmament, the federal deficit and other economic matters, the environment, AIDS, and the poor and homeless.

Diane Shulman, president of the Nashville Women's Political Caucus, is encouraged that day care is a real issue is this campaign. "The fact that day care is no longer just a women's issue but an important political issue demonstrates the political clout that women have attained. We are no longer separated from the mainstream."

Because women tend to favor Dukakis's

record on issues that are important to them, Bush has had to make an effort to increase his appeal toward women. He is trying to convert women to his side by tackling issues such as child care and education and by playing up his image as a family man.

Both candidates made sure that women gave important prime time speeches and had prominent positions at their conventions. Susan Estrich, a Harvard law professor, is campaign director for Dukakis. He asked convention planners to find a woman to give the keynote address at the Democratic convention, and they produced Ann Richards, the Texas State Treasurer. Dukakis has a reputation for being comfortable working with women.

Bush tapped Sheila Tate, Nancy Reagan's Press Secretary, to handle the press for his campaign. Women's names were divulged on his list of final twelve possibilities for the selection of his running mate.

### VU students plan political careers.

Undergraduate women at Vanderbilt are involved in the 1988 presidential election. Judy Herrman (A&S 4) spent her summer as

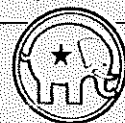
a paid intern for the Tennessee Democratic Party which included working at the convention in Atlanta. This experience cemented her plans to pursue a political career. One of the deciding factors was the number of women she saw working in politics and the jobs they held. "It's incredible that so many women are there. Any position you look at, somewhere, there is a woman with that title."

Jennifer Oldham (A&S 4), president of the Vanderbilt chapter of College Republicans, worked at the Republican Convention in New Orleans. A Political Science and Communications major, Oldham is planning a career in politics as a lobbyist and "if I'm in the right place, a candidate for elective office." Oldham sees politics opening up for women. "Even though the majority of the people I deal with are men, women are not limited. As more women become involved it will be easier for women to enter politics." Oldham sees a dramatic change from a generation ago. "In my parents' generation, the last thing my mother would have become involved in was a political group," she said. "Now, look at me." ■

Lauri Wright is the librarian at the Women's Center, a former journalism teacher, and newspaper feature writer.

### Excerpts from platforms:

	Democratic party
Abortion	"The fundamental right of reproductive choice should be guaranteed regardless of ability to pay."
Child Care	"Adequately funded, universally available, comprehensive child care program that will provide affordable, safe, quality day care for the children of working mothers utilizing both public and private resources."
AIDS	"The HIV/AIDS epidemic requires increased support for accelerated research on, and expedited FDA approval of, treatments and vaccines, comprehensive education and prevention, ...confidential and voluntary testing and counseling and protection of the civil rights of those suffering from AIDS, ..."
Budget	"Investing in America and reducing the deficit requires that the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share and we restrain Pentagon spending."
ERA	Passing the ERA is a "top priority."



	Republican party
Abortion	"The unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed."
Child Care	"Establish a toddler tax credit for preschool children available to all families of modest means."
AIDS	"We must not only marshal our scientific resources against AIDS, but also protect those who do not have the disease. AIDS education should emphasize that abstinence from drug abuse and sexual activity outside of marriage is the safest way to avoid infection."
Budget	"We call for a flexible freeze on current government spending...and a balanced budget amendment to the constitution."
ERA	No specific mention of the ERA

# It's your health

Margaret Nofziger

Women of the eighties want control over their own lives, and that includes family planning. While most women of childbearing age are attracted to efficient, medical means of birth control such as oral contraceptives, the recent trend, particularly among single women, has been to revert to barrier methods with disease-protective features.

Other women opt for the natural family planning method, a natural holistic alternative because of their personal beliefs or an aversion to our "hi-tech" world. Used to either plan or prevent pregnancy, it consists of observing and charting specific bodily signs and symptoms in order to establish the time of ovulation. By estimating fertility, one may increase her chances of pregnancy if her intention is to conceive or avoid unprotected intercourse during those days if she wants to prevent pregnancy.

The primary natural sign of fertility is a change in the basal temperature. Before ovulation, when the body is under the influence of the hormone estrogen, the waking temperature is low, usually around 97.5 to 98.5 degrees. When ovulation takes place, a different hormone, progesterone, is released from the ovary, causing the basal temperature to rise to the range of 98 or 99 degrees. When plotted on a graph-like chart, this temperature rise is quite apparent.

In addition, the change from estrogen to progesterone influence causes obvious changes in a woman's cervical mucus and in the cervix itself. With rising estrogen, the cervical mucus, observed as a vaginal discharge, changes from scant opaque and sticky to profuse, clear and slippery. At the height of estrogen production, this mucus often appears like raw egg white and can be stretched in a shimmering thread. As soon as ovulation takes place and progesterone is released from the ovary, the mucus abruptly disappears or reverts to scant and opaque.

Other signs of fertility include cervical position, mid-cycle pain, breast tenderness, and changes in mood and libido. While in a program of instruction, these signs can be understood and used.

Some couples incorporate periodic abstinence into their relationship and often report that it enhances their appreciation of intercourse. Others prefer to use barrier methods at this time. Certainly, women who are not in a stable, monogamous relationship should not choose this approach as they need the health protection of condoms and spermicide. And as with any method of contraception, however, there are risks. Temperature method of Natural Family Planning does have about an 8 percent failure rate.

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## New look of Women's VU

Notice our new look? Thanks to Gary Gore, University Designer, the newsletter has a classy new masthead. That accounts for part of the change. The other innovation may be less obvious. *Women's VU* is now typeset and laid out on my own computer.

Is there anyone who hasn't heard how incredibly simple it is to use desktop publishing? Pick up any magazine, and there is some reference to this new software. They make it sound so easy! Well, let me say that it takes a while to learn enough about desktop publishing to produce four pages.

A year ago when I walked into my new office at the Women's Center, I first laid eyes on *PageMaker* by Aldus installed on my new Hewlett Packard Vectra. I can't say it was love at first sight. Before the day was over I was calling Roy Newsom at Administrative Systems to find out how to get the program running. As the year progressed, I enrolled in Administrative Systems' *PageMaker* course and progressed to designing one page flyers for our programs.

By August, I gritted by teeth and used *PageMaker* to lay out the September *Women's VU*. It took trial and error, resetting in numerous typefaces, and much support from family and co-workers to get it completed. David Schaefer at the Desktop Publishing Center was a great help, showing me how to make use of PostScript fonts and get a camera ready printout. This issue is refined with larger typeface, less bold print, and ragged right style.

Desktop Publishing is not as simple as the advertisers make it sound, but rewards do exist. The short turnaround time on typesetting and layout will allow *Women's VU* to be more current. Also, it's easy to try out layout designs in the comfort of my own office and avoid paying extra costs.

Professional-looking flyers with camera ready copy can be turned out in an afternoon with the help of desktop publishing and a laser printer. Above all, the satisfaction of successfully working through a difficult project has been its own reward. ■

Judith T. Helfer, Editor

(continued from column one)

Natural family planning takes more time and direct involvement than other methods of birth control, but it can be a very interesting and educational personal study that many women find quite worth the effort.

Margaret Nofziger is the author of *Signs of Fertility: The Personal Science of Natural Birth Control*. For more information, contact MND Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 21083, Nashville, TN 37221. ■



## Mary Nell Bryan: Mouthpiece for the Student Body

Shelley Neill, A&S 2

Mary Nell Bryan has come a long way since her first semester at Vanderbilt. "When I came here I certainly didn't think I was going to be student government president. In fact, I wasn't involved in any organization my first semester," admits the A&S senior. "My mother told me to devote most of my time to my studies. That was my unhappiest semester because I like to be very active and involved."

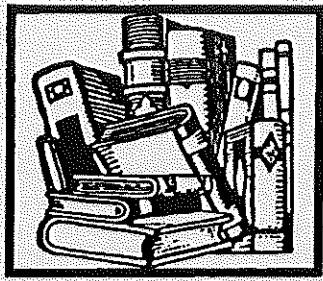
And involved she indeed has been. A student senator since her sophomore year, Bryan's primary focus has been security. She lobbied successfully for blue light emergency phones; presently there are twenty-one, with another five expected this year. Another project has been installation of a crosswalk and light on 24th Avenue. As a compromise, a light has been installed on 25th Avenue.

Bryan, however, refuses to give up. "Nashville is computerizing its light system in 1990, and we're hoping to have the lights on 23rd and 25th synchronized so that they'll be red at the same time and students can cross (24th Avenue) safely," she said.

Another issue in Bryan's crusade for better security is campus lighting. This includes eliminating dark or otherwise threatening areas such as a large shrub (since removed) near the Barnard Hall entrance. "We're one of the most protected campuses because we have better, more even lighting," she said. Nevertheless, there is continuing concern about the Peabody campus.

Although security is a principal interest, Bryan is involved in other aspects of campus life as well. SGA is working with the admissions office out of concern for Vanderbilt's image. "Students can supply valuable input because we recently chose this school over others," she said. Many perceive Vanderbilt as a school for "white, Southern, conservative, wealthy people," but with diversification, this image will change.

Believing herself a student mouthpiece, Bryan said that her student government experience "has taught me to be at ease when speaking in front of both receptive and somewhat hostile crowds." In addition, she has learned to organize her time effectively and delegate responsibility. "Being SGA president is like having a very full-time job. I devote more hours to it than studying," she said. ■



## In the library

Lauri Wright  
Women's Center Librarian

From date rape to mental health, child abuse to politics, information on today's hot topics can be found at the Women's Center Library. Our quarters are small, but we have a variety of magazines, books, audio and video cassette tapes — all of which relate to women's issues.

Information for student papers, personal research, or to answer a nagging question can be found in our extensive vertical files.

These files include newspaper and magazine clippings, brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, bibliographies, essays, and other items that won't stand up on a shelf.

All vertical file items are arranged by subject. Subjects covered include international women, politics, contraception, health, financial aid, sexual harassment, re-entry women, child care, women in literature, and education. Information on a particular topic is easy for users to find.

### Of Political Interest.

If you need to do some research before you vote in November, try some political newsletters and newspapers:

The *Eleanor Smeal Report* is a weekly newsletter that gives a brief roundup of current events of interest to women.

*Women's Times* is a news summary of current legislation, court cases, and other D.C. news of interest to women.

*The Women's Political Times*, published by the National Women's Political Caucus, gives more in-depth coverage to women political candidates, reviews of books of interest to women, and other political news.

Our cassette tape collection contains speeches and reports that also shed light on political issues such as the ERA and the gender gap.

A new reference source in the library is the *National Directory of Woman Officials*, published by the National Women's Political Caucus. This directory includes statistics on women in both state legislatures and the U.S. Congress. The meat of the book names former congresswomen, provides biographical sketches and portraits of women in the 100th Congress, and lists women holding elected offices within each state. It also includes women members of the Democratic

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(In the library continued)

and Republican National Committees.

Autobiography fans can check out books by two former first ladies: *First Lady from Plains* by Rosalyn Carter and *On My Own* by Eleanor Roosevelt. Carter's autobiography begins with Jimmy and Rosalyn's romance and concludes with the end of their White House years. Roosevelt's book is an account of her life after FDR's death. ■

**Call for Papers.** Calls for papers have been received at the women's center with mid-October deadlines:

October 14 National Women's Studies Assoc.

October 15 Southeastern Women's Studies Assoc.

Call the women's center at 322-4843 for complete information. ■



...it's about time!

"ERA...Or Else". The National Organization for Women (NOW), which gave members of Congress its ERA citizen petitions June 30, adopted a tough resolution on the ERA at its June convention. NOW President Molly Yard has made it clear to both political parties that the NOW bumper stickers with the "ERA...Or Else" message mean exactly what they imply in '88. She notes that a recent Gallup poll showed 75% of the American public favor equal rights for women, and NOW members and others will be working to ensure there is another ERA ratification process in the states. The '88 elections are key to that. ■

*Women's Times*, July 12, 1988

## Women's Center programs

Call 322-4843 for further information on the programs listed below.

**Book Group** will meet Monday, October 10, 5:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. at the women's center to discuss *The Mists of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer Bradley. This magical legend of King Arthur is retold through the eyes and lives of the women who wielded power from behind the throne. Margaret Meggs will lead the discussion. Light refreshments.

**Dissertation Writers Group** will meet Wednesday, October 12, 4:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. at the women's center. Women of all schools and disciplines are invited.

**Lunchtime Seminar** on October 13 will have as its speaker Sallie McFague, Professor of Theology, Divinity School. Her talk will focus on "Doing Constructive Feminist Theology: Notes on Avoiding Pitfalls". Dr. McFague's focus will be on methodological considerations central to her recent book *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age*. The seminar at 12:15 p.m. will be held at the women's center. Hot and cold drinks will be provided.

**New Employees Brown Bag Lunch** will be held on Tuesday, October 18 from noon until 1:30 p.m. All recently hired VU employees are invited. Anyone who would like to learn more about the services available at the women's center and meet other new employees is welcome. Bring your lunch. Hot and cold drinks will be provided.

**Issues for Academic Women: A Colloquium for Graduate Students** will be held on October 20 at 5:00 p.m. in Sarratt 118. A panel of Vanderbilt faculty and administrators will discuss their careers for women in the Graduate School who are preparing for an academic career. The panel members are: Francille Bergquist, Associate Dean of Arts and Science; Sharon Flucker, Assistant Dean of Admissions of the Graduate School; Ann P. Kaiser, Professor of Special Education, Psychology and Human Development at Peabody College; and Jean Bethke Elshain, Political Science Department. Following a presentation by each speaker the audience may participate in a question and answer period.

**Lunchtime Book Review** will have Susan Ford Wiltshire, Associate Professor Classical Studies, to review *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* by Russell Jacoby. This diagnosis of academia should provide good discussion. The program will be held on Tuesday, October 25, 12:15 p.m. in Sarratt 118. Soft drinks provided.

**Symposium for Women Undergraduate Leaders** will hear Nancy-Ann Min, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Human Services, speak on October 26, 5:00 p.m., at the former Peabody President's home. Min, formerly an Associate with the law firm of Bass, Berry and Sims, has varied political experience including a stint as a Carter administration staff assistant. A light supper will precede Min's talk on women in leadership. Interested women please call 322-4843 for a reservation by October 21. ■

# Announcements et cetera

The YWCA, in conjunction with the League of Women Voters and The Women's Political Caucus, is offering several classes to educate women about government and the upcoming election.

A three-part discussion of the role of black Nashvillians in local politics, will be held on three Tuesdays beginning October 11, 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Fee \$28. Instructor: Yolette Jones, Volunteer State Community College.

"The Women Who Have Gone Before" will include bits of information regarding women's history, Monday, October 24, 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Fee \$10. Instructor: Dr. Anita Goodstein, Head of History Department, University of the South.

For a complete listing or to register for any of the above, please call the YWCA at 269-9922.

"Women's Studies: Selected List of Acquisitions Received During the Month By the Central Library" (including some titles received in other campus libraries) is issued by Marillyn Craig, Central Library women's studies bibliographer, in cooperation with the Vanderbilt Women's Studies Committee. To be placed on the mailing list, write her at the Central Library or call 322-6285.

CABLE, a Nashville-based professional women's networking group, hosts Ellen Goodman, Pulitzer-prize winner syndicated columnist, on Tuesday, October 25 at the Stouffer Nashville Hotel. A light supper will be served at 5:30 p.m. Tickets (which include supper) are available at the Women's Center and from any CABLE member for \$30 or at the door for \$35.

Vanderbilt Women's Athletics is hosting a Cross Country Invitational at Percy Warner Park on October 22. Several teams from the area will participate. The women will run at 10:00 a.m. and the men at 10:45 a.m.

Planned Parenthood Association of Nashville is offering sexuality training for anyone working with teens and preteens. Classes to be held October 27 and 28, 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Staff, Sandra Milliken and Jim Taylor. Cost \$50.00. Call 327-1097 for information.

Appleworks, Vanderbilt Employee Wellness Program offers aerobics after work, body work over the lunch hour, after school children's aerobics, yoga, and tri-fitness. Call Joan at 322-3222 for details and costs.

The Nashville chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) will hold their October 17 meeting on campus at the women's center, 7:00 p.m. Betty Nixon, Manager of Sen. Jim Sasser's campaign, and Wanda Mathis, NOW National Board member, will speak.

New Women's Group. A study group on women as Jews and feminists will meet monthly beginning this fall. The focus is on feminist Jewish women, including women's roles as defined in both traditional and modern Jewish life. This is not a therapy group but discussions will include participants' individual experiences and roles in their families.

For further information contact Maxine Schaefer at 646-2476 or Marsha Willis-Fredman at 646-7931.

The Middle Tennessee Women's Studies Association (MTWSA) entered its third year in September. Open to anyone interested in studying feminist thought in any discipline, MTWSA meets six or seven times in the academic year at various locations in the mid-state. Dues are \$10.00 per year, with a student rate of \$5.00 per year. For more information, contact Vanderbilt's campus representative, Margaret L. Meggs, at the Opportunity Development Center, Box 1809-Station B, or 322-4705.

Vanderbilt Women's Political Caucus promotes the full participation of women in the life and work of the university. Membership is open to male and female students, faculty, and staff of the Vanderbilt community. Dr. Jean Bethke Elshain is advisor to the group. Meetings are held weekly, Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m. Place to be announced. Call Mary Lowe, president, at 322-2164 for more information. ■

Proper Bearings  
by Barbara Tuttle  
Electrical Engineer

Huddled over morning coffee, the men in my group were holding a lively discussion about cars. One fellow was soliciting opinions about how to repack the front wheel bearings. How difficult is the job? What equipment is required? Would it be better to do it himself and save a few bucks, or take it into a garage and save time?

Joining into the conversation, I said "Repacking the front wheel bearings? I've done that before." The questioner quickly made up his mind and grumbled, "Well, in that case, I better do it myself." ■

Savvy, January 1986

Edited by Judith T. Helfer

To receive each issue of *Women's VU* (published monthly except July and August), return the form below or call the Women's Center, 322-4843. Newsletters are sent free upon request to all students. Faculty and staff subscriptions are free to a campus address.

A yearly subscription to off-campus addresses (except students) is \$3.00. Please make checks payable to Vanderbilt University.

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