

WHY DOESN'T SHE LEAVE?

The means and motives for domestic violence

by **BYRON JOHNSON and HEATHER MOSS**
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I first remember seeing my father hurt my mother when I was about four. The sound of screaming and breaking glass woke me up. I ran into my parents' room and saw my mother with blood on her face. My father was smashing her head against the iron bed rail and yelling, "Why don't you listen to me? Why can't you ever do anything right?" Bobby and I stood in the bedroom door screaming and crying, holding on to each other while my father ordered us to stay away. I looked at my mother to see what she wanted us to do. Her face was red and swollen, and she looked like she was badly hurt. "Go back, go back," she cried.

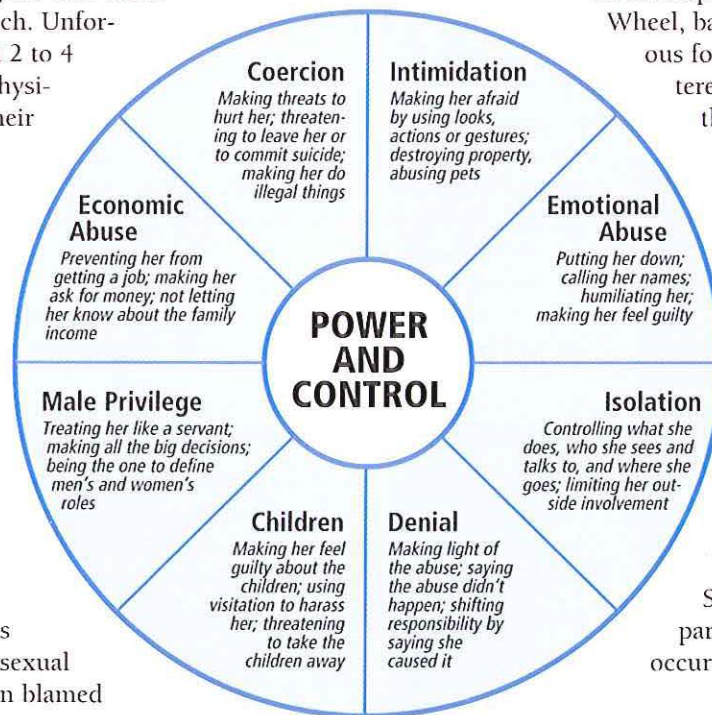
For some, the above excerpt from Susan Murphy-Milano's book, *Defending Our Lives*, may read like fiction, a scene too horrible and upsetting to be real: a husband severely beating and terrorizing his wife while their children stand by and watch. Unfortunately each year an estimated 2 to 4 million American women are physically or sexually assaulted by their spouse or partner.

Domestic violence is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, aimed at gaining power and control within a relationship. Domestic violence is a unique crime because it involves two people who are, or were formerly, involved in an intimate relationship and typically takes place in the privacy of the home. This private-sphere violence is also unique because it is one of the only crimes, besides sexual assault, where the victim is often blamed

for the violence. Instead of asking the question, "Why does he hit her?" people commonly ask, "Why doesn't she just leave?"

Minnesota Program Development, Inc. decided to ask battered women why they stayed, and through these conversations, the Power and Control Wheel (shown below) was developed. At the center of the wheel, and central to the violence that battered women experience, is power and control. The concept of power and control is deeply rooted in a patriarchal culture which perpetuates the idea that women are inferior to men. Historically, women were the property of the men they married and it was a husband's legal right to physically punish his wife. Although domestic violence is no longer legal, many of our values today still support the idea that women are subordinate to men, and that *men have certain privileges*. Batterers use physical, sexual, and emotional violence against women simply to get what they want, or believe they deserve. In contrast to what many people think, men who batter are not angry or out of control. In fact, batterers use violence and other methods of abuse to control their partners.

In developing the Power and Control Wheel, battered women identified the various forms of abuse used by their batterers to control them and to coerce them into staying in the relationship. The most obvious form of abuse is *physical violence*. Battered women stay in violent relationships because they fear for their lives or the lives of other family members. One of the most common myths is that a woman will be safe if she leaves. In reality, a woman is in more danger of physical violence once she separates from her batterer. Forty-two percent of women murdered in the United States are killed by their intimate partners, and 75% of these murders occur either in the process of leaving,



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Why doesn't she leave? *continued from page 1*

or once she has left. For this reason, it is critically important that domestic violence victims use safety planning *before* they leave (see box below).

Once the batterer has established that he will use physical violence, he can use the threat of past violence to control and intimidate his partner. A woman once told the story of how her husband brutally beat her and hit her in the face so hard that he broke her nose. The next time he wanted something, he simply looked at her and touched his nose. The threat of another brutal beating was enough to control her.

Economic abuse is also a common obstacle to women leaving their batterers. Batterers may prevent their partners from getting a job or restrict their access to money. If a woman relies on her batterer for income, especially if she has children, it is particularly difficult to

leave. Battered women will often endure physical violence in order to ensure that their children will be clothed and fed.

A batterer will also use the *children* to control his partner. He may threaten to hurt the children or sue for custody if she leaves him. A batterer may coerce her into staying by making her feel guilty for taking the children away from their father. While many people believe that women who stay are jeopardizing the lives and well-being of their children, many battered women stay in order to protect their children.

Battered women also identified *emotional abuse* as a form of control. A batterer may use verbal insults and name-calling to undermine her self-confidence and convince her that she can't leave. A batterer may destroy personal property that is significant to his partner, for example, ripping up family photographs or harming the family pet.

Another tactic used by batterers to control their partners is to *isolate* them from friends, family, and resources. A batterer may tell his partner that she cannot associate with her friends or family. He may limit her access to any person or activity outside the home.

"He would remove all of the telephones and take all of the car keys with him when he left for work," one domestic violence survivor recalls. "He also had all of our mail transferred to a post office box and would not allow me to have a key."

Isolation is an even bigger barrier for women living in rural communities who may not have access to transportation or a telephone. Some women report that their batterers monitor the odometer on the car to make sure they have not driven anywhere.



BYRON JOHNSON




HEATHER MOSS

About the Authors

Byron Johnson is director and Heather Moss is research coordinator at the VIPPS Center for Crime and Justice Policy. The center has several ongoing projects to study domestic homicides and police efforts to prevent them.

Although many battered women identify these common forms of control, it is important to remember that each woman's situation is unique. Each woman faces different barriers to leaving. Immigrant women may be threatened with deportation if they leave or report their batterer. Disabled women may not be able to access appropriate services. Women of certain religious faiths may feel that they are obligated to stay with their husbands.

It is critical that we listen to the voices of battered women without blame or judgment. Legal and punitive remedies alone will not stop domestic violence. We must determine how to change a culture that supports violence against women and perpetuates inequality among genders and races. We must focus on changing behaviors that support male privilege and entitlement and work to create a culture that values equality for both sexes and supports each individual's right to live a life free from violence. 

Another victim . . .

This issue of *Women's VU* is dedicated to the memory of Teresa Barksdale, a Nashville woman who died last month, apparently a victim of domestic violence. Barksdale's boyfriend was arrested after her burned body was found in a dumpster. Barksdale was a cousin of Gladys Holt, office manager of the Women's Center.



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Planning a safe escape from domestic violence

- ◆ Think about and make a list of safe people to contact.
- ◆ Keep change with you at all times for emergency telephone calls.
- ◆ Establish a code word or sign so that family or friends know when to call for help.
- ◆ Make copies of important documents like birth certificates and social security cards.
- ◆ Get extra copies of credit cards and leave cash with a friend.
- ◆ Call local agencies like these for assistance: YWCA Domestic Violence Program and Shelter (297-8833) or Metro Police Domestic Violence Division (880-3000).

THE LANGUAGE OF HEALING

Must cancer patients go to war?

By **SUSAN KUNER, Ed.D.**

During Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October 1996, my annual mammogram came back "suspicious." A few weeks later, I heard those dreaded words, "You have cancer." The tumor was detected at an early stage and my treatment, in clinical terms, was successful.

Though my prognosis was excellent, I plunged into an emotional world of terror and loss. I reflected on my situation, drawing on spiritual practice and feminist thought. I knew this was an initiation, a step into the unknown. Initiations, those events that can lead to a deeper level of realization, are always accompanied by misery and confusion.

I remembered attending a colloquium at the Women's Center several years ago, at which we discussed the classical story of *The Odyssey*. We saw Penelope, the weaver drawing the threads of experience into a tapestry, as a better model for our lives than her husband Ulysses, who went out into the world as a conquering hero. I sought to weave this illness into my life so I could learn from it. I did not want to rush. I wanted to sit with my sorrow, metabolize the experiences, be non-judgmental about my process, and let meaning unfold at its own pace. I did not want to be a "cancer patient." I just wanted to be me.

Much to my surprise, in contrast to my inner thoughts, I found myself inducted into a war. The public language of cancer rests on the masculine terminology of battle. We are bid to fight for our lives and to conquer our disease. If we die, our obituaries say "she lost her battle with cancer" and if we live, people hail us as courageous survivors. Improved treatments are

hailed as victories in the war on cancer.

For some, the war metaphor is energizing and useful. However, this language seemed wrong to me, even harmful. Feeling at odds with this polarizing view, I nodded politely and kept my thoughts to myself.

In a difficult turn of events, my good friend Carol Orsborn was diagnosed



Susan Kuner is one of four co-authors of the newly published book, *Speak the Language of Healing: Living with Breast Cancer without Going to War*. Carol Orsborn, who has written widely on spirituality in the workplace; Linda Quigley, a reporter for *The Tennessean*; and Karen Stroup, an adjunct professor at Vanderbilt Divinity School, will join Kuner to discuss their book and their

experiences with cancer at a breakfast for faculty and staff Thursday, Oct. 7 from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. at the University Club. A book-signing will follow the breakfast program.

with breast cancer three months after I was. Already companions on the spiritual path, we became sisters in cancer. We talked about the contrast between an integrative approach to life-threatening illness and the "vanquish the enemy" battlefield mode. We grew up with the generation that chanted, "Make Love, Not War!" Our spiritual practices, though of different traditions, bid us to see the inter-relatedness of sadness and joy, of illness and health, of death and life.

As Carol went through surgery and chemotherapy, she met other women who felt the same way. At the time, each of us assumed that we were alone in this perspective. Karen Stroup, who graduated from Vanderbilt Divinity School a few years before Carol, was living with metastatic breast cancer. Linda Quigley of *The Tennessean*, chronicled her own breast cancer experiences in an article nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

Carol, author of many books, had an idea. Why didn't the four of us join together and write about a new language of healing? We came from four different spiritual traditions and had four different stages of cancer, but our wishes were the same. We wanted to change the consciousness about living with cancer, to bring it in tune with the feminine perspective, the expression of our inner voices. Surely, there were other women who shared this orientation, but were silenced by the drum-banging of the cancer wars.

Our book, *Speak the Language of Healing: Living With Breast Cancer without Going to War* has just been published by Conari Press. The chapters are organized around the questions anyone with cancer may ask herself: Did I create this? Does death mean I

lose? Should I trust the medical establishment or put my faith in alternative healing? Shall I hold on or shall I let go? What have I learned?

Paula Arai, a Vanderbilt professor who studies healing in other cultures, says that in the Japanese language, the word for facing serious illness is to *interact* with it. Interaction is the essence of the language of healing, for it suggests community instead of war, wholeness instead of separation. We wrote our book, not as experts, but as sisters and friends.

We will donate a portion of the proceeds of our book to breast cancer research, supporting the discovery of prevention and cure. Meanwhile, we can all speak the language of healing, replacing the barren landscape of battle with the rich fullness of life.

Susan Kuner, Ed.D., directs the Vanderbilt Virtual School and is a lecturer at Peabody.

Students for Women's Concerns plans fall activities

by **BRONWEN BLASS**
SWC President

With an enthusiastic group of officers, several new members, and plenty of ideas for upcoming events, Students for Women's Concerns (SWC) is off to a great start for the school year.

SWC, which is one of 60 member groups of the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance, seeks to achieve two main goals. The first is to provide an open forum on campus for both the discussion of gender issues and efforts to create a more equal society. In doing this, we hope to create a place for Vanderbilt feminists to both express and act upon their ideals. Secondly, SWC brings a much-needed feminist student voice to issues of gender equality at Vanderbilt.

We work to achieve these objectives through weekly meetings, discussions, speakers, community service projects, and a wide array of events aimed at raising awareness of women's issues. A special focus is placed on issues pertinent to Vanderbilt women. A recent example was our participation in the National Organization for Women's "Love Your Body" campaign. SWC members sponsored a table on the Wall, encouraging students to question the unrealistic body images portrayed by the media and to appreciate, instead of perpetually critiquing, their own bodies. We hope to highlight another issue which should be of concern to both Vanderbilt women and men, with the second annual "Take Back the Night" march Oct. 18 to protest sexual assault and domestic violence.

Several social events will also be held to give members an opportunity to get to know one another in a more relaxed atmosphere. One of the first such events is SWC Night at the Movies Oct. 16 at 7 p.m. We will also be having End-of-the-Month Lunches the last Wednesday of every month from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Women's Center.

SWC meets every Tuesday at 7:15 p.m. at the Women's Center. All are welcome. For more information, call Bronwen Blass at 421-3645.

Photographic technique captures 'impressionistic' quality on film

Photographer Mary Ann Pickard has found a way to accomplish with camera and film what others do with canvas and paint brush.

Pickard gives her photographs an impressionistic look, using a secret technique she learned from a mentor several years ago.

"When they first see my photographs, many people think they are paintings," says Pickard, one of only a few photographers in the country to use the process. She will say only that it involves a manual manipulation of the image after the photograph is taken.

"I love the impressionist artists, but I can't paint," Pickard says, so she uses the secret process to give her photographs a "painterly" look.

An exhibit of Pickard's photographs will be on display at the Women's Center from Oct. 25 to Dec. 17 in a show she has titled "Beauty Surrounds Us."

"It is easy to take for granted the awesome beauty that surrounds us in our daily lives," Pickard explains in an artist's statement. "Slow down, really look around, and see the world in a new, appreciative way."

Her subjects range from architectural details to flowers and landscapes. A Brentwood resident, Pickard moved to Tennessee two years ago and says she is captivated by the beauty of the area's wooded hillsides. One of her photographs focuses on an old tractor tire surrounded by flowers. Another shows a bicycle incongruously propped in a field of bright red poppies.

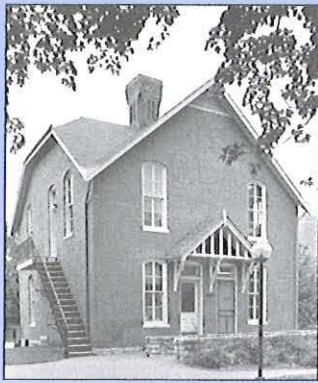
A reception to mark the opening of the exhibit will be held Oct. 28 from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. Visitors are welcome to view Pickard's photographs during the center's normal hours, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



MARY ANN PICKARD



A front-porch country scene is captured in "Red, White & Blue," one of the photographs by Mary Ann Pickard to be on exhibit at the Women's Center.



OCTOBER

Monday, October 4

Writing a Woman's Life. Writer Karen Essex leads a 10-week creative writing workshop. 7:00 p.m. Also meets Oct. 11, 18 & 25.

Tuesday, October 5

Creative Life Planning Group meets over lunch every Tuesday to share problem-solving information and provide support for life changes. New members welcome. Noon to 1:00 p.m. Also meets Oct. 12, 19, and 26.

Thursday, October 7

Speak the Language of Healing: Living with Breast Cancer without Going to War. A breakfast for staff and faculty featuring the four co-authors of a book that takes a new look at the cancer culture and presents a feminine, spiritual approach to living with the disease. A book-signing will follow the breakfast program. 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. University Club. Cost is \$5. To register contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu. See article, page 3.

Monday, October 11

Book Group meets to discuss *Charming Billy* by Alice McDermott. 5:15 p.m.

Wednesday, October 13

Brown Bag Lunch for Lesbian and Bisexual Women. A monthly meeting for faculty, staff, and graduate students who identify as lesbian or bisexual. 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Any questions, contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu.

Thursday, October 14

Dissertation Writers Group for Women. Darlene Panvini, assistant director of the Center for Teaching, facilitates this group. Noon to 2:00 p.m. Also meets Oct. 28.

Friday, October 15

Students with Kids meets the third Friday of each month to discuss the challenge of balancing family and graduate school. 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Contact Linda Knieps at knieps@harpo.tnstate.edu.

Monday, October 18

Take Back the Night. A march to protest violence against women will stretch from Belmont University to the Vanderbilt campus. The event will include speeches by survivors of violence, an open mike session, and information from local agencies. Activities will begin at 7:00 p.m. near the Bell Tower on the Belmont campus and end on the Peabody campus in Magnolia Circle. Everyone is welcome to participate.

Thursday, October 21

Reading Sisters, a book group that focuses on works by black women, meets to discuss *Sisters & Lovers* by Connie Briscoe. Noon to 1:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

Thursday, October 28

Artist's Reception for Mary Ann Pickard, whose photography will be on exhibit at the Women's Center from Oct. 25 to Dec. 17. 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. See article, page 4.

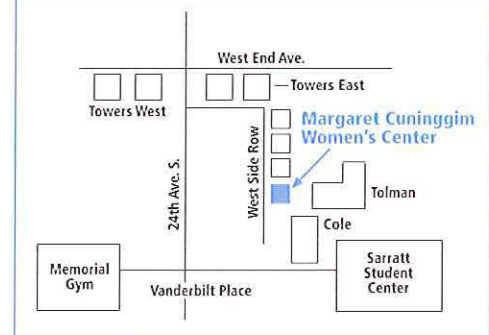
Margaret
Cuninggim
Women's Center

Calendar of Events

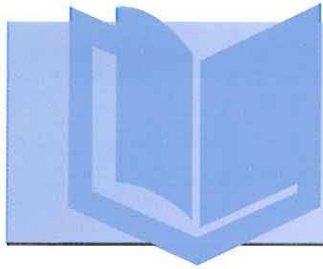
PLEASE SAVE AND POST.

Unless otherwise stated, all programs are held at the Cuninggim Center, Franklin Building, 316 West Side Row. For more information on the events listed, call 322-4843.

How to find us . . .

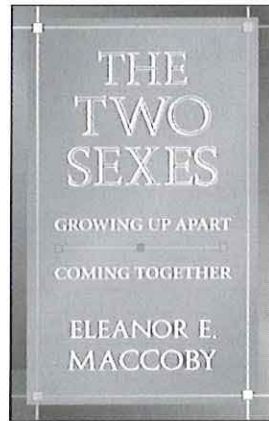


The Cuninggim Center is located in the Franklin Building at 316 West Side Row.



Childhood play groups reveal gender differences

Eleanor E. Maccoby's *The Two Sexes: Growing Up Apart, Coming Together* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998) "is concerned with the way people interact with people of their own sex and people of the other sex at different points of the life cycle and in different contexts." The writer, a professor emerita of psychology at Stanford University, shows that children become aware of their gender identity during their third year of life and that most soon show a strong preference for playing with children of their own sex when they are in peer-group settings outside the family. Maccoby details the different cultures of the same-sex groups and demonstrates how children segregate themselves voluntarily or because of peer pressure and not because they feel that adults expect it of them.



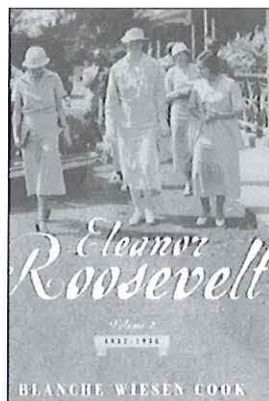
The researcher illustrates the strong influences of these childhood groups as youngsters pass through different stages of their lives. Maccoby discusses the effects on adults of three major features of childhood groups: gender segregation, interaction styles and the balance of power. If society can work to achieve equal-status interactions between girls and boys, according to the writer, it will help to equalize their relationships as adults.

Well-known feminist Germaine Greer has been writing about the status of women for many years and *The Whole Woman* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1999) is likely to be one of her most controversial books. Though she concedes that

in some ways women have come a long way in the past 30 years, she declares that in other ways life is worse than ever for females.

The Australian-born and British-based Greer comes across as quite fiery, negative, anti-male and pessimistic; many of her generalizations might be questioned by readers. She feels that women have been duped by feminists who think that gender equity has almost been achieved and who are too complacent about the current state of women's lives. The writer asserts that "even if it had been real, equality would have been a poor substitute for liberation; fake equality is leading women into double jeopardy. . . . It's time to get angry again."

Historian Blanche Wiesen Cook's excellent portrait of a remarkable and controversial woman continues with *Eleanor Roosevelt, Volume Two, 1933-1938* (Viking, 1999). This comprehensive volume covers the first six years the Roosevelts spent in the White House, where the eyes of the nation were focused on them.

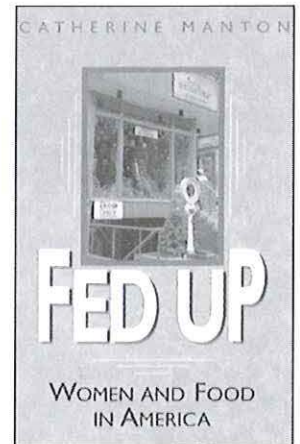


Eleanor was an energetic feminist and an activist who aimed to better the lives of women,

minorities and the poor. She worked for improvements in health, education, civil rights and conditions for working women, and she did not particularly care whether her efforts and opinions made her popular. She was the only presidential wife who dared to criticize her husband's policies in print.

Cook also discusses in detail the complicated personal and family life of this strong and complex leader.

Catherine Manton's *Fed Up: Women and Food in America* (Bergin & Garvey, 1999) is a study of the intricate relationship between women and food. The writer, an associate professor of women's studies at the University of Massachusetts, discusses how cooking and attitudes toward food have evolved over time, how ideal body size has changed and why this has led to increases in dieting and eating disorders. Preparing food was traditionally an important way for women to nurture others, but in recent decades women's relationship with food has been disrupted.



Manton is a clinical psychologist who believes that it is important to reconstruct women's relationship with food and that women with eating disturbances can learn to heal themselves through feminist-oriented programs such as Appetite for Change.

Mitochondria: extra bit of DNA comes straight from Mom

By JESSICA FIELD

You inherit half of your genetic material from your mother and the other half from your father, right? No, in fact, our mothers provide more than half of our DNA, due to maternally inherited mitochondria.

Mitochondria are oblong-shaped structures that reside in each of our cells and produce energy for our bodies. While most human DNA is stored in the nucleus of the cell, the mitochondria is the only part of a cell with its own separate DNA. Mitochondria are inherited maternally because the egg destroys the sperm's mitochondria during fertilization. Therefore, a mother is the only source of mitochondria for both her male and female children.

Maternal inheritance of mitochondrial DNA has several interesting implications:

1. Mutations in mitochondrial DNA are maternally inherited and can cause disease. For example, mitochondrial encephalomyopathy lactic acidosis due to mutations in mitochondrial DNA causes strokes, headaches, and other neurological problems. This disease and other diseases due to mitochondrial DNA mutations may be passed from mother to child. You can find more information on mitochondrial diseases at the United Mitochondrial Disease



Foundation (www.umdf.org).

2. Scientists have compared mitochondrial DNA sequences among present-day people of diverse races and geographic locations, to track down the "Mitochondrial Eve." The Mitochondrial Eve is a hypothetical mother from whom all humans descend. Because mutations in mitochondrial DNA accu-



An electron microscope view of a mitochondria.

multate over time, differences in mitochondrial DNA sequences were used to determine when and where the Mitochondrial Eve lived. For example, if the mitochondrial DNA sequences of two persons are exactly the same, they share a common ancestor more recently than two persons with several differences in their mitochondrial DNA sequence. Using this logic, a controversial paper was published in 1987 which proposed that the Mitochondrial Eve lived in Africa 200,000 years ago.

3. During Augusto Pinochet's reign of terror in Chile, mothers of missing children tracked down their orphaned grandchildren with the aid of mitochondrial DNA. A child's mitochondrial DNA sequence should be an exact match to his or her maternal grandmother's. A comparison of the mitochondrial DNA of the grandmothers and possible grandchildren led to the reunification of many families.

4. You can track the source of your own mitochondrial DNA. Simply identify your mother's mother, her mother, her mother, and so on.

Field is a doctoral student at the Harvard School of Public Health. She is studying the mitochondria of *Entamoeba histolytica*, the agent that causes amoebic dysentery.

Planning ahead is crucial for long-term health care

Many baby boomers, particularly women, are facing difficult decisions in the years ahead about long-term care for their elderly relatives. Unfortunately, they are often forced to make these choices during a medical crisis, without the knowledge or preparation they need.

"It's difficult to make sound decisions when you're in crisis mode," says Glenda Copeland, a long-term care specialist with John Hancock. "You don't want to make a major decision that will affect the lives of you and your loved ones when you are standing in the emergency room of a hospital."

Copeland will lead a breakfast seminar at Vanderbilt Nov. 3 on the issues

involved in choosing and planning for long-term care. The session will include a panel discussion with several local experts in the field and a question and answer session with the audience.

✓ **MARK YOUR CALENDAR . . .**
for the Women's Center breakfast program on long-term care
Wednesday, November 3
7:30 to 9:00 a.m.
at the University Club

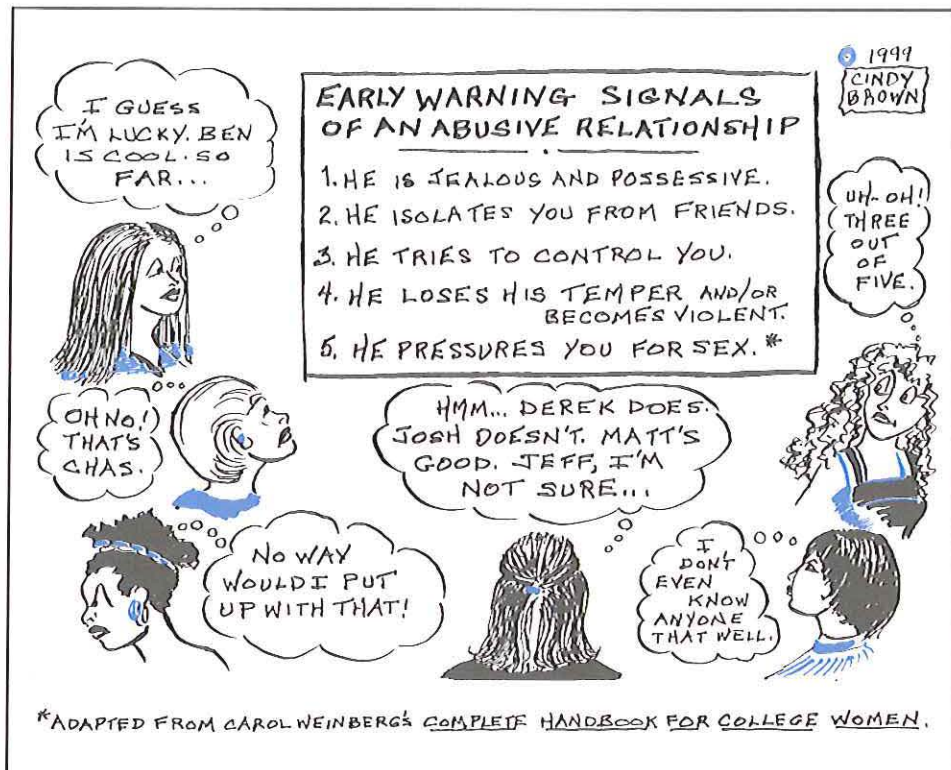
Copeland points out that women are most often the caregivers when parents or other relatives can no longer take

care of themselves without assistance. "The average American women of today will spend more years caring for elderly family members that she will in raising her own children," Copeland says, so it is vital that she learn all she can about the options available for long-term care and how to pay for it.

Medicare, Medicare supplements and major medical insurance do not cover the cost of long-term care, which includes assisted living facilities and nursing homes. Copeland notes that a year of long-term care in the Nashville area can cost from \$35,000 to \$45,000 dollars. Preparing for that cost will be among the topics of the seminar.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Registration forms are available at the Women's Center for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's **Race for the Cure**. The event will be held Sunday, Nov. 7 at Cool Springs Galleria. A one-mile fun run/walk begins at 8:40 a.m. and a 5K run/walk at 9:00 a.m. The Women's Center is coordinating shuttle service to and from the event. If you have questions, contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu.
- Vanderbilt University Medical Center needs **bilingual volunteers** to work with patients during their clinic appointments. Volunteer interpreters who speak Spanish, African or Middle Eastern languages are most needed. If you are interested in being on the Patient Affairs Language Bank, please call Debra Jane Chadwick at 322-6154.



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