

The Difference: Women and Lung Cancer

Lung cancer kills more women every year than breast and ovarian cancers combined.

Lung cancer deaths have increased alarmingly for women over the last fifty years, up 600%.

The chance of developing lung cancer has increased 150% for women over the last twenty years—compared with an increase of only 20% for men.

These are quite unexpected and surprising statistics, considering that cancers of the reproductive organs—breast, cervical, and ovarian—are usually those that concern women the most. Very recent research in the field of lung cancer has indicated that perhaps women should be more aware of their risk of lung cancer and, additionally, that they may be at an increased risk of developing cancer from exposure to tobacco smoke. This newest research indicates that lung cancer—and smoking—may be more dangerous for women than for men.

THE ESTROGEN LINK
Preliminary findings by Dr. Jill Siegfried at the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute have shown that the higher levels of estrogen found in the female body may

play a part. According to Dr. Siegfried's research, most common lung cancer cells express a specific protein, called an estrogen receptor, which is not found in normal lung cells. It appears that this protein interacts with estrogen thereby initiating a growth response in the abnormal lung cancer cells, causing them to multiply. Further, when Dr. Siegfried compared tumors from two females and two males, she found that there are twice as many "estrogen receptors" on female lung cancer cells as on male. The implication seems to be that increased amounts of estrogen present in the body may correlate with an increased risk for developing lung cancer and also for more rapid progression of the disease.

GRPR RECEPTOR

Other current research by Dr. Jill Siegfried has identified another recep-

tor that influences abnormal cell growth in lung cancer: GRPR (gastrin-releasing peptide receptor). This receptor is stimulated directly by nicotine, resulting again in lung cancer cell proliferation. Interestingly, GRPR is found in the normal lung cells of 20% of non-smoking women, but not in nonsmoking men at all. For smokers, GRPR is found in 55% of women compared with 20% of men. Researchers attribute this large difference to the fact that GRPR is found on the X chromosome. Since women have two X chromosomes, and, therefore, two copies of the GRPR gene, it is thought that this may increase their risk for developing, and dying from, lung cancer.

There is a message to take home from this new information: exposure to nicotine may be far more dangerous, specifically to women, than has been thought

in the past. Frighteningly, the only population group for which the incidence of smoking is actually increasing is young women. Women who are smokers should reconsider the implications of smoking in light of this new evidence. For more information regarding lung cancer and prevention, check out the following websites: www.cancer.org www.lungcancer.org.



The Great American Smokeout is November 17th

Missing In History - Barbara Harris



Born June 12, 1930, Barbara Harris became the first black female bishop in the Anglican Church community. Religiously active from the beginning, as a young woman Harris began an adolescent church group in Philadelphia that rapidly became the largest one in the city. She continued her interest in religion throughout her life, and in 1968 with a group of other women, petitioned the Union of the Black Clergy (later to be renamed the Union of Black Episcopalians) for membership. The women were successful. When the church began allowing women to enter the clergy, Harris began to study for ordination. After acquiring positions in the church that included priest and executive director of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, Harris was eventually elected to bishop in September 1988. Objections were raised, mainly because of Harris' divorced status and her social activism. They were overridden and Harris assumed her role in history as the first black female Anglican bishop.

Reader's Forum

I was somewhat dismayed by the cartoon on the front page of the October issue. While I understand that it was probably designed to let women know that multiple factors influence a woman's ideal body weight, suggesting that 138 pounds is the ideal weight for a 5'10" frame seemed somewhat unrealistic to me. This seems to be another example of media that perpetuates unrealistic expectations. Clearly, there may be 5'10" women who maintain a healthy weight of 138 pounds, however, this has not been the experience of most tall women I know. Thank you for listening to my comments! I think *Women's VU* does a good job of consistently offering interesting and informative articles.

-Abbey Coady, International Student Advisor, Vanderbilt

Ms. Coady has a good point. According to traditional height-weight charts, we might expect a woman of 5'10" to weigh closer to 150 pounds, and given that most women in our culture struggle with feeling larger than the media-prescribed "ideal," perhaps we should have made our cartoon woman weigh in a little heavier. Our cartoonist, Cindy Brown, and I discussed the issue, and I believe that her intention was to show that all individuals, all bodies, are different and unique. Additionally, Michele Patterson, the therapist who provided the facts for last month's article on body image and eating disorders, tells me that height-weight charts and body mass index (BMI) guides are too structured and prescriptive in terms of defining "ideal" body weight or size and that she and her colleagues do not use them. It is a complicated issue, and one that I contemplate on a near-daily basis. Here's to the hope that women will one day be liberated from feeling so wholly represented by the number of pounds that they weigh. Thank you, Abbey, for your comments and input. -MD

Welcome to Erika Callaway

The Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center welcomes Erika Callaway to the staff. Erika, who is in her third and final year of study for the MA at the Vanderbilt Divinity School, will serve as the Center's Divinity Intern. In her own words, her role will be "to provide a liaison between the Center and the Divinity School."



Women's issues are a primary area of concern for Callaway, who also co-directs the Office of Women's Concerns at the Divinity School. She worked last year at the Women's Center. This year she will work in an expanded position here with the Project Safe initiative to promote awareness of violence against women—specifically, she will spend some time researching and "providing the theological piece of Project Safe training for ministers or religious leaders." Callaway will also assist Linda Manning, Director of the MCWC, with the Advisory Board, and she will help with programming.

"My passion is to help others, especially those who have found some of the theology of the Christian church harmful, to create their own healing theologies." Included in her list of professional interests are pastoral care and counseling and nonprofit social justice work.

Erika also facilitates the Living with Loss lunch group at the Center every third Friday of the month for students dealing with the loss of a loved one. For more information on this group, you can contact Erika at erika.o.callaway@vanderbilt.edu.

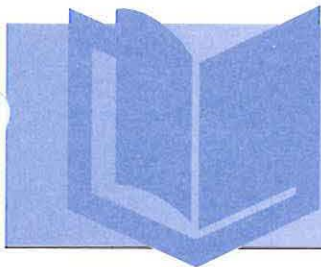


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Campus address: Franklin Building, 316 West Side Row.
Mailing address: Box 351513, Station B, Nashville, TN 37235. Phone: (615) 322-4843. Fax: (615) 343-0940.
E-mail address: womenctr@vanderbilt.edu.

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Linda Manning, director
Hilary Forbes, assistant director for programs
Sandra Harrell, coordinator for outreach and services
Barbara Clarke, librarian
Gladys Holt, office manager
Maureen Duffy, editor (direct dial 343-4367)
Cindy Brown, cartoonist

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IN THE LIBRARY

BARBARA CLARKE
Women's Center librarian



New Exposé on Women and Low-Paying Jobs

Following federally-mandated welfare reforms, it was estimated that four million women would be forced into the workplace, where most would be earning \$6 or \$7 an hour. Most were single mothers. Feminist author and journalist Barbara Ehrenreich

decided to discover for herself how women manage on such low incomes. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* (Metropolitan, 2001) is her fascinating

account of how she tried to survive on minimum-wage jobs in three cities between August 1998 and the summer of 2000.

Posing as a divorced woman moving into the workplace after years as a homemaker, Ehrenreich worked as a waitress, motel housekeeper, house cleaner, nursing home aide, and Walmart retail clerk. The writer, a late middle-aged, middle-class mother with a Ph.D. in biology, carried out her experiments in Key West; Portland, Maine; and Indianapolis. In each area she had a car (leased from Rent-a-Wreck in two cities) for which payments were not coming out of her wages; she also had access to emergency cash and credit cards. These were not options for many of her struggling co-workers.

The writer found it almost impossible to survive on her earnings of about \$7 an hour, even though she was a single person in good health. The main problem was finding affordable decent housing and Ehrenreich describes graphically some of the

deplorable places in which she lived and in which many low-income families spend their lives. Some of her co-workers were forced to live in their cars or vans, despite working full-time. They were unable to save the deposit needed for an apartment or trailer. Ehrenreich had to take second jobs to pay her bills. Many of her co-workers could not afford health care and some lacked sufficient food. The author explains why these workers stay in low-paid jobs and the psychological effects of the demeaning treatment they receive from employers and supervisors.

It is evident, she avers, that wages are too low and rents are too high. The working poor could be considered anonymous donors who subsidize others. "They neglect their own children so that the children of others will be cared for; they live in substandard housing so that other homes will be shiny and perfect; they endure privation so that inflation will be low and stock prices high."

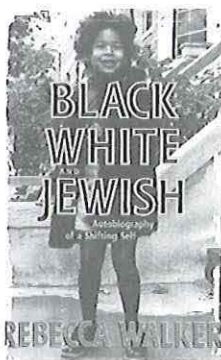
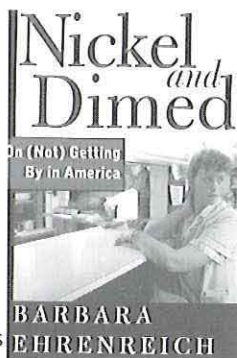
While in her twenties Rebecca Walker made a name for herself as a feminist, activist, and founder of the Third Wave Foundation, which provides grants for young women activists. Walker, the daughter of Alice Walker and Jewish civil rights lawyer, Mel Leventhal, chronicles her unusual life in *Black, White, and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Shelf* (Riverhead, 2001). She was born Rebecca Grant Walker Leventhal in

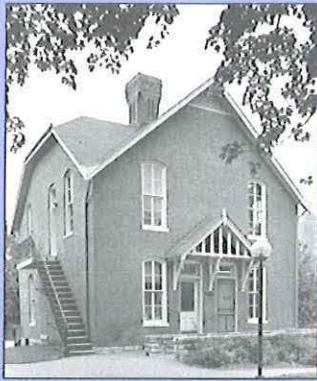
1969 in Jackson, Mississippi, where her parents' interracial marriage was illegal. The family moved to Brooklyn when she was a child and her parents separated when she was eight. Shortly afterwards her father married a white Jewish woman and they eventually had two children.

Walker was always on the move as her parents had decided that she should live alternately with each of them for two years. Her mother moved to San Francisco while her father lived in several cities on the east coast. Rebecca attended eight schools. She was rootless and lonely and seemed to belong nowhere. "I hate all this moving and losing and trying to find home and saying goodbye." She stresses how she never felt fully accepted in either the black or white worlds in a society obsessed with race; it usually seemed "as if some part of me is alien to the others."

Walker was allowed a great deal of freedom, especially when living with her mother; she became rebellious and experimented early with drugs, alcohol, and sex. While in junior high school and living with her father and his second family in the all-white town of Larchmont, New York, she was often mistaken for a nanny or maid when she was out with her young sister and brother. At the age of 17, when she was again living with her mother and feeling more affinity with her blackness and the matrilineal line, she legally changed her name to Rebecca Leventhal Walker.

She was not protected or coddled and was encouraged to be independent. "I was watered, fed, admired, stroked, and expected to grow. I was mostly left alone to discover the world and my place in it."





**Margaret
Cuninggim
Women's Center**

*Calendar
of Events*

November

Sunday, November 4, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

Race for the Cure. The Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center and Alpha Kappa Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta, and Zeta Phi Beta sororities, and VSMAC are registering students, staff, and faculty to participate in this annual fundraiser and awareness campaign for the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Team registration is \$15. The event will take place at the MetroCenter Business Park. Walkers and runners are welcome to join us. Contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu if you have any questions.

Tuesday, November 6, 13, 20 & 27, 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm

Creative Life Planning Group. Topic to be determined.

Wednesday, November 7, 4:00 pm

Amina Wadud in 114 Furman Hall. Dr. Amina Wadud from Virginia Commonwealth University will give a public lecture about women and Islam. Co-sponsored by the Women's Studies Program, the Women's Center, and International Student and Scholar Services.

Thursday, November 8, 4:00 pm

The Art of Grant Writing. Shirley Hercules (Science and Research Communications) and Elizabeth Rapisarda (Corporate and Foundation Relations) will lead a program for graduate students in the humanities and sciences about writing grant proposals. This program will include information about where to look for funding and the basic information necessary to begin the grant writing process. This program is co-sponsored by OBGAPS (Organization for Black Graduate and Professional Students) and will take place in 189 Sarratt.

Friday - Sunday, November 9 - 11

Hand in Hand Training. Hand in Hand is a trained volunteer group of students, staff, and faculty who help students make informed decisions about services and options available to them related to dating/domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If you would like to join this group, please contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu to learn more.

Monday, November 12, 5:15 pm

Book Group. *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant will be facilitated by Judy Helfer.

Tuesday, November 13, 4:30 - 6:00 pm

Artist Reception Please join us for the opening reception, a tea party, for Doris Wasserman's exhibit *Teacup as Metaphor*.

Wednesday, November 14, 5:15 pm

Women, Spirit, and Poetry will read poetry written by Maxine Kumin and Elizabeth Hahn will facilitate the discussion.

Wednesday, November 14, 7:00 pm

Gloria Steinem in Langford Auditorium. The Women's Center is co-sponsoring this Speaker's Committee event.

Thursday, November 15, 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm

Reading Sisters. The group is reading *What You Owe Me* by Bebe Moore Campbell. Everyone is welcome to participate. Contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu with any questions.

November 16, Friday, 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm

Living with Loss Lunch Group. All students (women, men, graduate, undergraduate) living with the loss of a close family member or friend are welcome to this monthly lunch group. Take this time to share your thoughts and feelings with each other. You are not alone. Lunch will be provided. Please contact Erika Callaway at erika.o.callaway@vanderbilt.edu if you are interested in attending.

How to find us . . .



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

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.

Calendar of Events continued on page 5

Are YOU a feminist?

I am definitely proud to call myself a feminist. I learn more each day about what that means, because the definition keeps evolving for me. I really started considering feminism when I saw and liked a quote from Rebecca West on my college professor's door: "I, myself, have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is. I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat." Fabulous! I now understand feminism to be more than political, social, or economic equality for women. It extends to include abolishing all forms of systemic oppression.

Erika Callaway,
Graduate Student

I DO consider myself a feminist, however, as a woman who is currently not working outside of the home and who is breast-feeding, that means something different to me than it did when I was in college and planning to have a big career and maybe never have children. What I discovered is that work is highly overrated and that having a child—simply BEING there for my child—is much, much more fulfilling. I find myself more and more not agreeing with the NOW political agenda, but I don't consider myself any less of a feminist. In fact, I consider myself more of a feminist in that I do value the contribution that I am making right now to society, even though it is different than contributions made by most men.

Scarlett Martin
Mother and Reader

Teacup as Metaphor

The Cuninggim Women's Center will host its second artist for the 2001-2002 year. Doris Wasserman exhibits in the center November 6th through December 21st. As she describes it, her exhibit titled "Teacup as Metaphor" centers around the concept that teacups as "vessels...that hold precious memories, hopes and dreams. They symbolize sacred moments in our lives and connect us with the past and hold promises for the future." Please join us for the opening reception, which will be held Tuesday, November 13th at 4:30 pm. Free and open to the public.

Asian Pacific American Heritage 2001, themed "Up the Volume," will take place on the Vanderbilt campus throughout the month of November. A plethora of activities is planned to promote awareness and cultural sharing, such as an Asian feast, film festival, and a multicultural semi-formal, to name a few. Vickie Nam, editor of *YELLO-Oh Girls!* will speak. There are many more events scheduled during the month; contact Julia Jinwon Park at julia.j.park@vanderbilt.edu for a complete schedule.

UP THE VOLUME!

Calendar of Events, continued from page 4

Monday, November 26, 7:30 pm

Tough Guise: Violence, Media & the Crisis In Masculinity. Jackson Katz, a former all-star football player and founder of MVP Strategies, narrates this documentary that examines the relationship between images of popular culture and the social construction of masculine identities in the U. S. Mark Justad, Assistant to the Chancellor and Senior Lecturer in Religion and Society, will facilitate a conversation following the film. The Athletic Department and Project Safe (p.s.) are co-sponsoring this event. This showing will take place in the Sarratt Cinema and is free and open to the public.

Wednesday, November 28, 7:30 pm

YELLO-Oh Girls! In recognition of Asian Pacific Heritage Month, the Women's Center and the Asian-American Student Association are co-sponsoring a speech by Vickie Nam, editor of *YELLO-Oh Girls!*, a collection of personal empowerment stories written by Asian-American young women. The event will take place in the Sarratt Cinema and is free and open to the public.

A N N O U N C E M E N T S

Race for the Cure

It's not too late, but the day is nearly upon us. The Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure will take place Sunday, November 4. Come out, enjoy a walk in the brisk autumn weather, and join the fight against breast cancer. Contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu for more information.

Great American Smokeout

This annual event is on November 17. The premise is to encourage all smokers to give up smoking for the day and perhaps, forever. For more information regarding lung cancer and smoking, please see our feature health article in this issue. To find out how you can commit yourself to the Smokeout and for tips on how to quit smoking, check out the American Cancer Society's website at www.cancer.org.

Auditions for *The Vagina Monologues*

Friday, November 9 from 5:00 pm - 10:00 pm and Saturday, November 10 from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. Those auditioning should come prepared to tell a personal narrative, three minutes or less in length, about a "first time" experience. There is no reading from a script. If you auditioned last year, please prepare another story. Performance dates will be February 13 and 14, 2002. Contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu to schedule an audition time.



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

Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

Vanderbilt University
316 West Side Row
Box 351513, Station B
Nashville, TN 37235

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