

Women's VU

Margaret
Cunningim
Women's Center

V A N D E R B I L T U N I V E R S I T Y

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RECOGNIZE SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

Finding our voices and speaking out against sexual violence

by Sandra Harrell, Project Safe Coordinator

The movement to end sexual violence in this country began in the early 1970s as survivors came together to speak out at activities and rallies in attempts to raise public awareness and support. As the movement increased in cohesiveness and strength, it became a major force for change in our society. Today we can measure the progress of the movement by the increased awareness about sexual assault, the increased availability of rape crisis centers, the existence of investigative units dedicated to the prosecution of sex crimes, and the changes to laws that persecuted the victim while exonerating the rapist. With the passage of the Violence Against Women Act in 1994 and its renewal in 2000, the federal government acknowledged its commitment to ending sexual violence by providing landmark legislation creating criminal sanctions and civil protections to victims of sexual assault, domestic violence and related gender-biased crimes. After over 20 years of grassroots organizing, the voices of survivors and advocates reached the federal level and resulted in a multi-faceted and comprehensive plan.

There is still much work to be done. The silence and shame surrounding sexual violence continue as the high incidence of sexual assault persists. A study

recently conducted by Brown University revealed that two of every five women will experience some type of sexual violence in their lifetimes. According to the FBI's most recent National Crime Bureau Report, every three minutes five adult women are forcibly raped. Yet, according to the Department of Justice, reports of sexual violence result in fewer arrests and in fewer convictions than other felonies, even though the misreporting rate is no higher than those for murder, armed robbery or arson. Typically, even when assailants are convicted, the punishment is equivalent to a slap on the wrist. A report by the majority staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee in 1993 found that only one percent of convicted rapists are sentenced to more than one year in prison.

You Know Me...

*I am the girl who always smiles,
graduated cum laude,
trusting of others,
values family and friends.*

*I can't forget, so I try and remember,
It was not my fault,
I was not to blame,
He had no right.*

*I am taking back my power
by making choices:
Breaking the silence with
voice and words,
Allowing invisible scars to heal,
Believing in myself,*

Choosing to be a survivor.

by an anonymous rape survivor

Almost one quarter are not sentenced to prison at all, but are instead released on probation. These statistics serve to remind us of the persistent influence of rape myths and victim-blaming on our society's response to sexual violence.

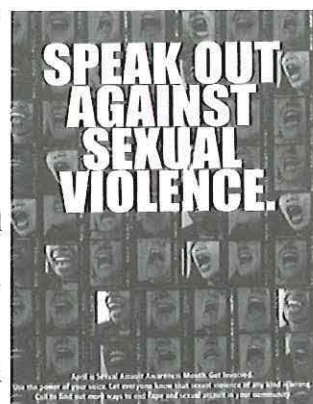
In an attempt to combat the pervasive but erroneous beliefs surrounding sexual violence, state coalitions against sexual violence began setting aside a special period of time for the express purpose of providing education, outreach and activities designed to raise social consciousness about sexual violence. Eventually, the month of April

was designated as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Early efforts lacked nationwide consistency and coordination, but there is a growing movement to maintain a national theme. This year's theme, "Speak Out Against Sexual Violence," pays homage to the grassroots speak-outs of the '70s while acknowledging the continuing need to unify our voices and actions to end the silence about sexual violence in our communities. Project Safe at the Margaret Cuningim

Women's Center gladly joins this national effort to observe April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and is planning activities in collaboration with the Rape and Sexual Abuse Center and You Have the Power.

Sexual violence is not a necessary evil that we must learn to accept. It does not "just happen." It does not only happen to other people. It is not only perpetrated by the mythical, ne'er do well, caveman type who pounces on the unsuspecting victim as she walks alone down a dark street. Sexual violence continues partly because it can: it is nourished by the silence, the victim-blaming and the myths. Sexual Assault Awareness Month is an opportunity for us to raise our voices in unison to shatter that silence and to challenge those myths. Please join our efforts by calling 322-4843 or contacting sandra.harrell@vanderbilt.edu. Let your voice be heard.

Together, we can make a difference.



Missing In History - Mary Ann Shadd Cary (1823-1893)



Mary Ann Shadd was born in Wilmington, Delaware, the eldest of 13 children, in a free black family. Her abolitionist roots were planted as a child, when her family provided shelter to escaped slave refugees. She attended Quaker school until age 16 when she opened her own school.

In 1850, the Fugitive Slave Law was passed (an attempt to capture free Northern blacks and escaped slaves) and Cary's family relocated to Toronto. Once in Canada, Cary met her husband and founded another school which educated white and black pupils together. She published "The Provincial Freeman," a weekly newspaper for black Americans living in Canada which ran for five years.

Following the death of Cary's husband, she returned to the United States where she initially worked to recruit blacks to fight in the Union Army. After the Civil War, she taught and/or established public schools for blacks in Wilmington, DE; Detroit, MI; West Chester, NY; Morristown, NJ; and Washington, D.C. She was the first woman to speak to a national Negro convention. She also spoke at the Annual Convention of the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1878. At the age of 60, she was the first woman to graduate from Howard University's Law School and the second black woman to earn a law degree in North America.

The last chapter in her life was spent working with women like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton for women's suffrage. She testified before the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives for women's suffrage and was the first black woman to vote in a national election. At the age of 70, Mary Ann Shadd Cary died. She is remembered as a pioneering abolitionist and feminist who worked to make life better for women and men, black and white.

IDEAS FOR ACTIVISM

www.feminist.org

This website managed by the Feminist Majority Foundation provides late-breaking news relevant to women, highlights the activities of the U.S. Congress that impact women's lives, supports an online chat group for like-minded individuals, and gives you ideas for activism..

Are you good at helping other people get organized?

The YWCA Domestic Violence Program is looking for volunteers to organize their donations closet on a weekly basis. Please contact Kat Callari at 242-1070 to learn more about this opportunity and others.

Men Making A Difference

Men Promoting A Solution (MPAS), a new student peer education group on campus, is organizing a white ribbon campaign in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The white ribbon was first used in 1994 to symbolize men's commitment to ending violence against women. To learn more, contact Justin Montenegro at justin.s.montenegro@vanderbilt.edu or visit <http://www.whiteribbon.ca>.

Assistance to Vanderbilt staff and faculty

The U.S. Department of Justice grant program, Project Safe (p.s.), to combat violent crimes against women on campus, provided Vanderbilt with funding to hire a specialist to work within the Employee Assistance Program to address this issue for staff and faculty. Brenda Shinabarger-Howe, MA, CEAP, is a part-time Outreach Coordinator who provides educational programming, advocacy, and therapeutic services to Medical Center and University personnel. In order to better serve everyone at Vanderbilt, Shinabarger-Howe splits her time between the EAP office in the Medical Arts Building on the Medical Center campus and the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center on the University campus.

Although the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) has always addressed the issues of domestic violence and stalking, Shinabarger-Howe is working to raise awareness about dating and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking within the Vanderbilt community. "Often the first step toward getting help for a victim of assault is a referral to the EAP by an employee's supervisor or co-worker. Once the initial referral is made to the EAP, I will provide counseling and advocacy to ensure that the victim gets the services that she needs," Shinabarger-Howe said.

Supervisors who are interested in learning how to help someone who may be a victim of violence are welcome to contact Shinabarger-Howe who will come to your office to provide training. You may reach her at 322-3774 (the Women's Center) or 936-1327 (EAP Office) or brenda.shinabarger-howe@mcmail.vanderbilt.edu. Employees who have questions for themselves or friends are also invited to contact Shinabarger-Howe to find answers.



Women's VU is published monthly September through June at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.
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www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter/womenctr.htm

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Center for Teaching's Darlene Panvini named

Dr. Darlene Panvini, Assistant Director of the Center For Teaching, is this year's deserving recipient of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center Mentoring Award. In multiple letters of nomination, Dr. Panvini's students and colleagues describe her as a person who "works tirelessly and enthusiastically to foster professional and intellectual development" and whose efforts have had "a particularly striking impact on Vanderbilt women."

Dr. Panvini's support extends to both graduate and undergraduate students, and includes her work in the International Teaching Assistants Program (ITAP), her work with the Master Teaching Fellows, and her multi-year leadership of the Dissertation Writers' Group, which meets at the Women's Center. Her particular passion is to help those who do not have a voice in the dominant culture surrounding them.

She brings energy and creativity to her work as a mentor. Just this year, Dr. Panvini pioneered the Future Faculty Preparation Program, which already boasts a graduate student membership of 100. Her ITAP program offers a nationally recognized model focusing on language, culture and teaching and includes her innovative pairing of undergraduate consultants with ITAs.

Dr. Panvini works to create a supportive atmosphere with her students where there is mutual engagement and connection. As a mentor, she encourages egalitarian exchange where she is not the "expert" speaking down to the "apprentice." Rather, the two are colleagues sharing knowledge with one another. Her students have been surprised to learn how important their ideas are to her and that she expects them to carry them through. In turn, they have gained valuable skills and self-assurance. Julie Black (BA 2000) says, "Dr. Panvini leaves everyone with whom she comes in contact stronger, both professionally and personally. She is adept at bringing out the best in people and showing them all that they have to offer."

Michael Kimmel returns to Vanderbilt

by Pamela Williams, Peabody College, Class of 2004

"They say we come from different planets "women from Venus, men from Mars." They say we have different brain chemistries, different brain organization, different hormones. Different bodies, different selves. They say we have different ways of knowing, listen to different moral voices, have different ways of speaking and hearing each other. Yet here we all are, together, in the same classes, eating in the same dining halls, walking on the same campus, reading the same books, being subjected to the same criteria for grading. What gives?"

On Tuesday, April 10, at 5:00 pm in Wilson Hall, room 103, Professor Michael S. Kimmel of the State University of New York at Stony Brook, will address the Vanderbilt community in a talk entitled, "Mars and Venus, or Planet Earth."

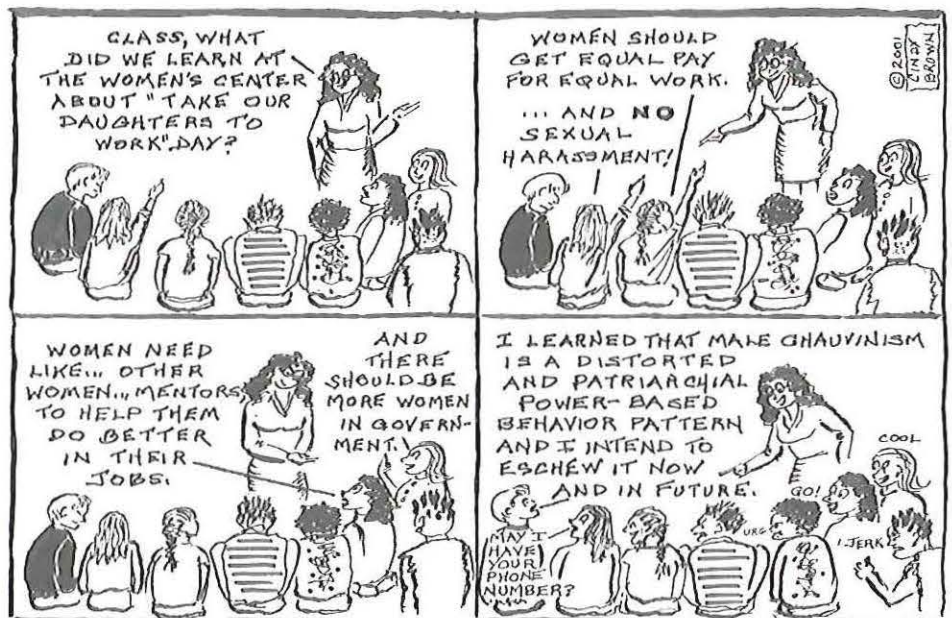
Dr. Kimmel specializes in what he calls "pro-feminist" and masculine studies. His prolific academic career is demonstrated by the host of books, articles and lecture series that focus on gender issues. His work centers around the role of men in the women's movement, as well as current social problems of great debate such as domestic violence, sexual assault, discrimination and racism.

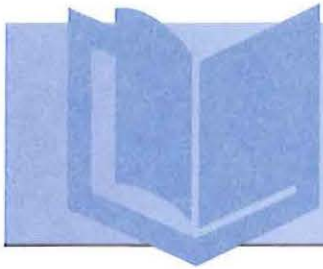
By confronting stereotypes and giving voice to men in support of social change and women's concerns, Dr. Kimmel provides a much-needed role model in the quest for equality for all people.

Dr. Kimmel currently serves as a national spokesperson for the National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS), as well as the co-chair of the Men's Studies Association, a division of the NOMAS organization. Dr. Kimmel and the organizations with which he allies himself fight against the injustices faced by people on the basis of race, class, gender, age and sexual orientation. His latest book, *The Gendered Society* has been well received and sparked more discussion about gender issues in American culture and history.

Dr. Kimmel spoke last at Vanderbilt in 1997. His return visit promises to be an insightful and thought-provoking evening.

For more information, please contact Hilary Forbes at the Margaret Cuninggim Womens Center at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu.





IN THE LIBRARY

BARBARA CLARKE
Women's Center librarian



Struggles within professional and personal lives

Law professor, columnist and political insider Susan Estrich analyzes the reasons for women's comparative lack of power in *Sex and Power* (Riverhead Books, 2000). In politics, medicine, law, entertainment, business and academe few women

have reached the very top levels, although many women appear to be qualified and overt discrimination is illegal.



Susan Estrich

The writer illustrates the far-reaching effects of subtle bias on women's careers. The workplace is still unfriendly to mothers, and men tend to be more comfortable working with other men. Estrich, who was the first woman to run a presidential campaign (for Michael Dukakis), believes that women at the top of their field should work together more to help other women succeed.

It is often believed that younger women today lack the ambition of the professional women of the previous generation; many do, as they feel that the sacrifice and stress involved in getting to the top and staying there are simply not worth the effort. Women who do not aim for powerful positions themselves can help other women to advance and can bring about changes in society. Women have tremendous power as voters and consumers and when they work together for a common goal. Although females have achieved legal equality, more changes are needed for this equality to become reality.

Estrich feels that the feminist revolution isn't yet finished and that women need not just legal equality but "change. The only way to free the individual woman to become all that she can is for women to act as women, to wield power as women, so that as individuals we can be free."

The American Woman, 2001-2002: Getting to the Top (Norton, 2001) is the eighth volume in the series chronicling the status of American women. It is edited by Cynthia B. Costello and Anne J. Stone for the Women's Research and Education Institute, and includes chapters on women and leadership in higher education, in the corporate world, in politics, unions and in the military. One section summarizes the progress of women's issues in the 105th Congress (1997-1998) while another consists of biographies and photographs of all the women in the 106th Congress.

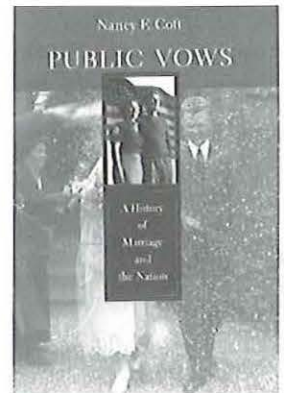
About half of the volume is devoted to statistics on American women's health, employment, demographics, education, income, and military and political participation. The sources of this data include the Bureau of the Census, the National Center for Education Statistics and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Historian Nancy F. Cott's latest book, *Public Vows: A History of Marriage and the Nation* (Harvard Univer-

sity Press, 2000), is a comprehensive study of the evolution of marriage from colonial days to the present. Marriage is not only a private contract but also a public institution. While the husband and wife consent to the marriage, its terms, privileges, rights and responsibilities have always been governed by law, usually by state law.

Marriage is central to community life and it involves property and inheritance rights. From the days of the first settlers marriage was based on Christian concepts of monogamy and fidelity, with a male head of household and a dependent wife. Women lost their identity upon marriage and were represented outside the home by the husband, who as head of a family was qualified to represent the family in the political sphere.

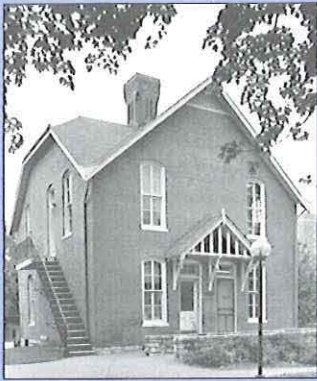
Cott, a professor of history and American studies at Yale University, discusses both legal and informal marriage among the early settlers; how Native Americans were encouraged to adopt Christian forms of marriage and family life; marriage and the family among slaves and slave owners; and the nineteenth-century reforms allowing married women to retain their own property and later their own paychecks. Other topics include polygamy among Mormon settlers in Utah; laws barring interracial and same-sex marriage; divorce laws; and the introduction of laws concerning marital rape.



THE AMERICAN WOMAN 2001-2002

GETTING TO THE TOP

EDITED BY
CYNTHIA B. COSTELLO
AND ANNE J. STONE
FOR THE WOMEN'S RESEARCH
AND EDUCATION INSTITUTE



April

Tuesday, April 3, 12:00 noon - 1:00 pm

Creative Life Planning Group - This group is free and open to women in the Vanderbilt and Nashville communities. Contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu to learn more. Group also meets April 10, 17 & 24.

Wednesday, April 4, 6:00 pm in North Hall's Terrazzo Lounge

ABCs of Car Maintenance - Pat Claybaker, co-owner of The Workshop, will offer tips on how to wisely care for your car. Registration is required. Contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu. *Cosponsored by North Hall's residential staff as part of the North E.A.C.E. series.*

Monday, April 9, 5:15 pm - 6:30 pm

Book Group reads *Ahab's Wife: The Star Gazer* by Sena Jeter Naslund. Discussion facilitated by Sara Walker. New readers are always welcome.

Tuesday, April 10, 5:00 pm in Wilson Hall, Room 103

Michael Kimmel speaks about women and men and gender construction in "Mars and Venus, or Planet Earth." *See article on page 3.*

Wednesday, April 11, 5:00 pm in the Bennett-Miller room at the Law School

Ramona Africa a participant in the MOVE organization and a victim in the Philadelphia Fire of 1985, will speak about "MOVE: Past and Present." A reception will follow this event. Both events are free and open to the public. *The Women's Center is cosponsoring this event organized by the Organization for Black Graduate and Professional Students.*

Wednesday, April 11, 5:15 pm

Women, Spirit and Poetry - Jan Rosemergy and Linda Manning will lead this discussion on "The Imperative of Intimacy" from "Cries of the Spirit: A Celebration of Women's Spirituality." This group is open to the public.

Thursday, April 12, 12:00 noon

Speak Out, in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Project Safe, You Have the Power, and the Rape and Sexual Abuse Center invite students, staff, faculty, and Nashville community members to participate in this event and to share how violence against women has impacted your life. For more information contact Sandra Harrell at 322-1333 or sandra.harrell@vanderbilt.edu.

Thursday, April 12, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Women Songwriters Support Group - Songwriters of all experience levels are welcome at this monthly group meeting. Dianne Eberhard will serve as the group facilitator. Contact her at dianne.eberhard@mcm.vanderbilt.edu with any questions.

Tuesday, April 17, 6:00 pm

Take Back the Night organizational meeting is scheduled to plan next year's event. Contact Hilary Forbes with ideas or questions at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu.

Thursday, April 19, 12:00 noon

Reading Sisters reads *The Wedding* by Dorothy West as our April selection. Contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu with any questions.

Friday, April 20, 12:00 noon

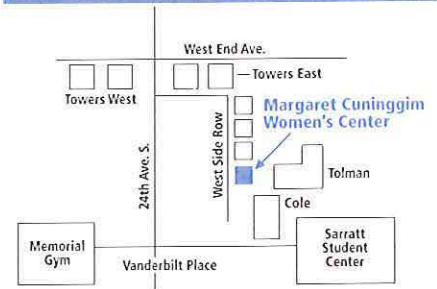
Living with Loss lunch group - All students (women/men/undergrad/grad) living with the loss of a loved one are welcome to this monthly lunch group. Lunch will be provided. Contact Hilary Forbes (322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu) to register.

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.



Yoga at Vanderbilt *part three of a series*

by LAURA MARJORIE MILLER, Senior Information Officer, Division of Public Affairs

Yoga has numerous benefits for women, both as a release from the stress we so often feel and as a particular boon to our reproductive health. Know that yoga is available to you as a non-pharmaceutical, non-surgical way of maintaining the health of your uterus and other female apparatus. It is a way of medicating yourself from the inside out. It is a way for you to maintain control of a body that occasionally may make you feel out of control.

I must note, though, before continuing, that poses are not "cure-alls," and that you cannot and should not expect any one posture to work in isolation. Asanas should be part of a continuing regular practice. They should be executed with careful attention to the breath and to the body. Also, testimony from one individual does not mean that yoga will have exactly the same result or effect for you as it did for her. Her body is quite different from yours, after all. Do not attempt to do the postures mentioned in this article independently of a continuing practice, or without proper instruction. Some of them might be temporarily beyond your level of skill, and need to be worked up to. But even after all that qualification, know that yoga is an effective preventative medicine. It is one means that you have for greater control over your own health and wellbeing.

"God has given Yoga as a priceless gift for women, and this you must reveal to the world," Geeta Iyengar's mother once told her, spurring her to write *Yoga: A Gem for Women* (1990: Timeless Books), the first book on yoga that specifically and exclusively addressed women's health concerns, their bodies, and the demands of their commitments and their schedules. "This book is written," proclaims Iyengar, "with my many years of experience and observation but with one objective - to meet the specific needs of women" (viii). Iyengar's book takes the form of a compassionate exercise.

Yoga is one of the branches of traditional Indian science, and as such has been a traditionally male realm. Many asanas are designed with a male physique in mind: a narrower set of hips that make balancing easier, for example. Iyengar's prose sometimes takes the form of an apologetic, and her writing acknowledges that some readers may be dubious. For instance, Iyengar includes the short chapter on Advanced Asanas "to show that even the most complicated and advanced postures are within the reach of women and can be performed by them without detracting from their femininity. Many a time it is claimed that complicated postures should not be done after marriage.... However, let me assure you that these postures have no ill effects whatsoever" (251). She includes a chapter on postures to do during pregnancy, some of which "ensure that the foetus is given maximum room for its free movement and growth in the mother's womb" (234). Iyengar's sister, Vanita Sridharan, is featured in some of the

photographs in the back of the book doing postures while significantly pregnant. Iyengar writes with the explicit purpose of giving women courage to overcome their doubts about their own abilities and bodily resiliency. She describes the poses with enormous compassion and consideration, giving modifications for people who have heavy bellies, large breasts, or big butts. For a Lotus Position in Shoulderstand, Iyengar advises: "If the buttocks are heavy, the thighs will remain loose. Therefore, tuck in the coccyx and the lumbar vertebrae and tighten the buttock muscles" (189). Yoga is a compassionate exercise, and can be modified to meet you exactly where you are.

Yoga asanas exist that can help women deal with menstrual disorders, premenstrual tension, menopause, post-partum, and other hormonal situations. Sequences have been designed that relax the muscles in the abdomen during one's period, and that unknot the tensions that arise during PMS. Sally Dadmun-Bixby points out all Yoga is good for women, but that the type of Yoga a woman chooses to do will depend upon "what she needs" at that time of her life. She mentions that the Iyengar school of Yoga that she teaches has spent much time developing Yoga's therapeutic aspects. "Very specific benefits to women's reproductive systems that come from the activity of the different poses on the internal organs," notes Zo Newell. She continues: "[Yoga] can be used very effectively for a whole gamut of reproductive concerns."

Women of childbearing age can do postures in the "Menstrual Sequence," a programme of poses that begins with "supta-" or reclined postures (Reclined Bound Angle Pose is an example) that open up the abdominal cavity by lifting the ribs off the pelvis and dropping the femur bones in their sockets, thereby repositioning the uterus and encouraging the menstrual flow out of the body. The sequence then moves into forward bends. Newell notes that for some women forward bends, Supported Child's Pose for example, help relieve cramps better than any other poses through the slight pressure on the belly and the widening of the sacrum. Nedra Lambert also mentions forward bends as being particularly soothing, as they keep the pelvis down. The Menstrual Sequence is useful for lower back pain and for cramps, and also has a psychologically calming effect. Poses also exist that prepare a woman's body for pregnancy and that help restore her normal functioning after her baby is born.

During menopause, a woman can do Yoga to regulate her energy levels and her hormonal functions. For "issues related to menopause," Newell states that Yoga is excellent for building bone strength and thereby reducing the risk of fractures. Many of Vanderbilt's yoga teachers also specifically recommend inverted poses for lowering blood pressure and for stimulating the thyroid gland, which regulates hormone production; an activity of particular benefit to perimenopausal

and postmenopausal women. "There aren't too many activities where you get upside down on a regular basis, and yoga does that!," exclaims Newell. Even if a woman is not experiencing a great life change, a regular practice, especially one that includes inverted poses like Shoulderstand and Headstand, will help regulate her hormonal function. When a woman becomes older, she will have a greater quality of life due to her regular practice of Yoga, due to the flexibility and strength of bone that she has developed. Nedra Lambert opines that Yoga helps us to resist the pull of gravity. It starts with the skeleton, she says, and with the posture, particularly with how the pelvic plate is tilted: "What is going to happen to [someone's] spine and their legs depends upon the pelvic tilt." The way you hold your pelvis, either forward or back, will influence the curvature of your spine over time. Lambert argues that Yoga can actually help fight disease by freeing the circulation in its work on posture: "When [curvature] starts in the spine like that, of course it is going to affect the muscles because that is what is gripping on the skeleton.... It's stretching those muscles that gravity is trying to condense. So obviously [in Yoga] you're strengthening your skeleton, you're lengthening and strengthening your muscles, so your bloodflow is better. Because those areas, all starting from the spine, start to drift because of gravity, start to close down, and aren't getting enough circulation." With increased circulation, the body's resistance to disease is bolstered.

Younger women can begin their practice early by doing weight-bearing postures like Downward Facing Dog, Chaturanga Dandasana, standing poses and arm balances to strengthen their bones, to prevent osteoporosis. Downward Dog allows a practitioner to equalize weight-bearing throughout her entire spine. Plank Pose is another good exercise, especially for developing the muscles in the upper body, an area in which women tend not to be as strong as men. Lee emphasizes pushing-up poses to develop arms and shoulders. In her book, Geeta Iyengar recommends Two-Footed Inverted Staff Pose as a confidence-building posture for adolescent women, "as [doing it independently] brings emotional stability and builds self-confidence by removing fear complexes" (223).

Dorinda Lee recommends standing postures and balancing postures to help those of us who are shier and less assertive build confidence, "to look [ourselves] in the mirror and face things straight on." "To stand in front of a mirror and balance and look yourself in the face means you can face anything out there," enthuses Lee. Standing postures such as the three Warrior poses are also useful for toning legs and thighs!

Lee also recommends chest-opening postures for students and employees who do a lot of work at desks and on computers. It is important to counterbalance the hunching-over that is so much a part of our information-technological lives. "I begin my classes a lot," she says, "intentionally with a gentle wide-arm swing to increase circulation in the chest and the breast area.... Hopefully by keeping the blood circulating you have the chance to keep these body parts a little healthier." Lee sees such a practice as a means of addressing some of the risks of breast cancer.

Yoga is a form of exercise that you cannot outgrow, that is adaptive to your limitations, needs, and abilities at any stage of

your life. With the use of props, you can continue the practice of Yoga well into your old age. Yoga has a fuller range of emphases than many other types of exercise, as it develops not only strength, endurance, and flexibility but also concentration and breath control. It differs from other forms of exercise in its emphasis on slowing down, on concentrating. A woman who has children and who works full time may not need the frenetic pace of an aerobics class, observes Dadmun-Bixby: "she may need more than anything else to learn how to cultivate silence in her life."

Yoga is not a religion, but it is a spiritual practice, says Dadmun-Bixby. Without a spiritual aspect, it is not Yoga. Dadmun-Bixby experiences Yoga as a metaphor for life: when you approach a wall, you do what you need to do to work through it, she says, and adds that yoga practice should never be solely the physical practice on the mat, but should extend to your spiritual and emotional approaches to everyday life. "There is a whole philosophy behind Yoga that was developed, some people say, over five thousand years ago, to help us cope," she continues.

"Life's tough," laughs Debbie Reale, noting that practicing Yoga taught her to be patient and to avoid letting her problems consume her. You are healed on an energetic level, she argues: if the body is weak, energy is low, and your spirit becomes low also. "Yoga gets the body lined up, both spiritually and physically," she continues. The goal, Reale says, is to teach students to practice on their own, to balance all aspects of their lives on their own: "Yoga is a personal practice." It does not have to do with outward appearance or disability; it involves a different kind of health.

Yoga does not have to do with the way your body looks, but with what your body can do. It concerns your body's abilities, its strength, its usefulness to you. You want your body to be healthy, strong, workable. "One of the main things I am constantly trying to emphasize with my students," says Dorinda Lee, "is to work to get beyond the idea that you have to have this perfect, little specialized body, to take the body that we have and to learn to be respectful and proud of it and to make it as strong and as healthy as we can, to try to let go of these images...." "Yoga can be a really powerful ally for women who are struggling with body image, or who are struggling to accept the changes in their bodies which might come with aging or illness, or even something like mastectomy," observes Zo Newell. "Ideally it is a way of becoming friends with your own body as it is."

Dorinda Lee remembers that one of the most moving experiences she ever had teaching Yoga occurred when a more middle-aged woman she was teaching came up to her and said, "I never thought that I could be in a room with a bunch of young college girls and stick my butt up in the air and not feel stupid, because I have absolutely no embarrassment now." "And just that," says Lee, "that's a big breakthrough, to feel that good about yourself." After a while, she states, the experience and the gift of Yoga is not even where

(continued on page 8)



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

(Yoga article continued from page 7)

you are in the pose, but where you are in your brain and in your heart and in your acceptance of your own person.

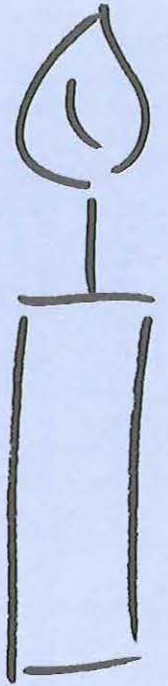
Zo Newell describes Yoga as a way for women to nourish themselves, a way for them to feel strong and confident. Ultimately the gift of physical Yoga lies in that joy of discovery. Yoga does not care what your body looks like. It does focus on what you can do with your body; with the body that is yours.



The Atlanta Bread Company at 535 Cool Springs Blvd. in Franklin is donating 15% of its sales' profits on April 21 and 22 to the Rape and Sexual Abuse Center to support their Safe Kids, Smart Kids community education program.

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

The Women's Center is hosting an organizational meeting for our annual Take Back the Night march held in October, in connection with the YWCA's Week Without Violence. Women and men, students, staff, and faculty are invited. We would like your feedback and thoughts about how to make this coming year's event even more meaningful and inclusive for all participants. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 17 at 6:00 pm at the Women's Center. Dinner will be provided. Please contact Hilary Forbes at 322-6518 or hilary.forbes@vanderbilt.edu if you plan to attend and/or if you have ideas to share.



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