

# WOMEN'S VU

The monthly newsletter of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

January 2005, Volume XXVII, Issue 5

## STALKING: Lurking in the background

### WHAT IS STALKING?

**Intrusive contact** is when someone intentionally contacts or tries to contact you when you have asked that there be no contact.

The contact can be personal, such as phoning or visiting, or can involve leaving messages or sending e-mails. Sometimes, intrusive contact is just as annoying (as when a person phones and then hangs up several times a day), but other times it can be frightening (as when a person appears at a bedroom window) or dangerous (as when a person physically hurts or threatens to hurt someone). Intrusive contact also includes:

- Insisting on talking with you when you do not want to talk;
- Making a scene outside your home or dorm room;
- Phoning or e-mailing repeatedly;
- Phoning at inappropriate times;
- Following you around;
- Waiting to meet you outside school, work or other activity.

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For more information, please see our website:

[www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter)

By Sameh Fahmy  
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November 23, 2004

There have been three stalker-related deaths in Middle Tennessee in the past five months. And research finds that about 20% of high school and college students have been victims of stalking. But, still, many people dismiss it as something that rarely happens or—if it does—happens only to celebrities.

“As a general attitude, I think people are amazed when they hear how frequent this kind of situation is,” says Linda Manning, director of the Margaret Cuninggim Women’s Center at Vanderbilt University. “So we (as a society) deny that it happens; we minimize its impact, and we sort of don’t want to know. And I think that’s the way in which we don’t do a very good job of addressing this.”

Most of the academic research on the problem has focused on celebrity stalkers, but research increasingly shows that it’s common among young people. A recent survey of nearly 800 students by Cornell University researchers found that 20% of high school and college students—men and women—have been stalked.

In most cases, the stalking lasted about two months. In those cases where the student was still experiencing stalking, the average length of time had been nearly half a year. But as the

story of one Nashville woman demonstrates, stalking can persist for years and leave its victims fearing for their safety indefinitely.

### It starts with a breakup

A recent Vanderbilt graduate broke up with her boyfriend two years ago and has been stalked by him ever since. She recalls that the relationship started innocently enough: He was charming, personable and all her friends loved him. Then, he sexually assaulted her and afterward began to act needy and controlling. She broke up with him, but he didn’t go away.

The woman (*The Tennessean* does not identify victims of sexual assault without their consent) walked out of her door shortly after the breakup to find her ex standing there, and instantly she knew something was wrong. “I pretty much realized he was a problem the first time he showed up outside my house,” she says. “It was just the look in his eye and the fact that from his perspective there was no understanding of why we had broken up.”

He’d call her 20 or 30 times a day. And every day, he’d show up outside her classes, at restaurants and pretty much everywhere she went. If she was alone, he’d try to convince her to get back with him, saying things like, “We were so good together.” If she tried to get away, he’d try to grab her.

She turned to a friend for *continued on page 2*

*It isn’t just celebrities who are followed; research finds a fifth of high school and college students have been victims of stalkers.*

## January is Stalking Awareness Month

## STALKING

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support but instead was made to feel like she was exaggerating. “She really didn’t believe me,” she says of her friend. “It was like, ‘He is so perfect, I don’t see why you’re acting like an idiot and breaking up with him.’”

Manning says it’s not uncommon for the friends of victims to dismiss stalking. Without an understanding of its persistent nature and how it can make the victim feel—like they’re constantly being watched and in danger—it may seem like they’re complaining about getting gifts or a few phone calls from an ex.

The stalker’s behavior escalated, and he had his friends follow her around and taunt her. He’d find out when her roommate would be out of town and bang on her window late at night.

### Know where to turn

Part of what stalkers aim to do is to isolate their victims, but help is available. Three months after the stalking began, the Vanderbilt grad got help through the university’s women’s center. They listened to her concerns and worked out a plan to keep her safe. The stalker would only approach her when he was alone, so the center’s staff walked her to classes and gave her rides when she needed them. She told a few of her professors about the problem, and they, too, offered to escort her.

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**Campus Address:** Franklin Building, 316 West Side Row

**Mailing address:** 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Box 351513, Station B, Nashville, TN 37235-1513

**Phone:** (615) 322-4843; **Fax:** (615) 343-0940.

**E-mail address:** [womenctr@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:womenctr@vanderbilt.edu)

**Visit our website at:**

[www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter)

Linda Manning, director

Jennifer Hackett, associate director

Sandra Harrell, co-director, Project Safe

Vicky Basra, co-director, Project Safe

Barbara Clarke, librarian

Robin Van Arman, office manager

Misa Culley, editor (direct line 343-4367)

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**Address changes:** Please contact our office manager, Robin Van Arman, at [robin.l.van.arman@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:robin.l.van.arman@vanderbilt.edu)

**Deadline for newsletter:** Submissions are due on the 1st of the month preceding publication.

Most victims, however, don’t seek help. “I think much of it is that they’re just not sure what to do,” says Jeffrey J. Haugaard, associate professor of human development at Cornell University. His study found that 15% of victims reported the stalking to a counselor, and 8% contacted police. Especially in cases where victims once had feelings for their stalker, they sometimes assume their stalker won’t hurt them. A Department of Justice study found that 10% of college-age stalking victims had their stalker attempt or force sexual contact. In 15% of cases, the stalker either threatened or attempted to hurt them.

In rare cases, stalking can turn deadly. In June, a Maury County man killed

his ex-wife and daughter after stalking them. This month, a doctor was killed in Columbia by a former patient who had stalked her for years. People without a history of violence can suddenly become violent, says Susan Trentham, director of the June Anderson Women’s Center at Middle Tennessee State University. She urges victims not to assume their stalker won’t hurt them. “You don’t know how it’s going to end,” she says. “you don’t know if they’re going to stop or if they’re going to get worse. And I guess I’d see it as it’s better to err on safety’s side than to assume it’s going to stop.”

Valerie Wynn, executive director of the Mary Parrish Center for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence, says that orders of protection—which prohibit stalkers from contacting their victims—are the first line of defense for victims. “They do work in 80% of cases,” she says. “They stop the behavior and they keep the victim safe.”

Counselors acknowledge that in some cases an order of protection can escalate the behavior and make violence more likely. This is why it’s important for victims to work with advocates who can help them decide what’s best for them.

Right now, stalking is a misdemeanor on its first offense, punishable by up to a year in jail. A second offense, if committed within seven years of the first offense, is a felony.

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## NORMAL...OR NOT?

Sometimes it can be difficult to know whether your ex’s attempts to contact you are just a normal part of relationships or whether they are wrong. The following behaviors are **always** wrong:

**Threats.** Your ex does not have the right to try to resume the relationship by threatening you, your family or your friends. Threatening even once is wrong.

**Hitting.** It is completely wrong for your ex to try to force you back into a relationship by hitting you or hurting you in any way.

**Breaking clear and reasonable limits.** If you tell your ex, clearly, not to contact you in certain ways, then he or she should not. If you say, “Do not come by my house” then he or she should not come by your house—not even once.

**Doing things that would not be right under any circumstance.** It is not right for your ex to contact you by doing things that would normally be wrong, for example, calling you very late at night, creating a disturbance outside your dorm room, or hiding in the back yard.

## *Pimp-Whore Parties: Exploration or Exploitation?*

by Cynthia Curtis

*"...darling, guess what, Una and Geoffrey are having a Tarts and Vicars party in the garden on the twenty-ninth of July. Don't you think that's fun? Tarts and Vicars! Imagine!"*  
—Bridget Jones's Diary

*"When you dress up as pimps and whores for a party, what are you really celebrating? I never chose to be a prostitute. I wouldn't wish my life as a prostitute on my worst enemy."*  
—Regina Mullins,  
Magdalene Outreach Coordinator and Graduate of the  
Magdalene Program

Popular culture's glamorizing of street prostitution matches a disturbing trend on university campuses: pimp-whore fraternity parties. Vanderbilt fraternities this year held "CEO and Office Hos" and "GI Joe-Barbie Hos" theme parties, but Vanderbilt isn't alone. A University of Florida fraternity held a "Vietnam soldier-Vietnam prostitute" party; the situation was so bad at Arkansas State that the Panhellenic Council ruled against women dressing up as prostitutes for "pimps and hookers" fraternity parties. At Auburn University, a freshman sorority pledge remarked, "When the fraternity insisted on our swap's theme being 'pimps and whores,' we agreed on the condition that we could be classy whores—you know, wear fishnet stockings and mid-length skirts. Everyone has whorish clothes now, so that was no problem."

Such parties have become a charged issue in Vanderbilt classes, *Hustler* articles, and campus-wide gatherings. The Women's Studies Program hosted a town hall meeting this fall for the Vanderbilt community to discuss the significance of these parties. At the meeting, many students who participated in these parties said that they see them as yet another form of harmless sexual exploration. Late adolescence is a time of unstable identity, and the university provides a setting where young adults engage in identity experimentation and construction. Many students perceive college as offering a freedom from social restrictions and adult obligations, especially in relation to sexuality. One woman student remarked that it is "fun" to dress up as a prostitute since "this is such a conservative school and we can't really do that...I can be something I'm not." A male student remarked, "We're just dressing up to a theme without any specific culture in mind...we don't mean to be condescending."

As I listened to students and faculty at the town hall meeting, I could not help but notice the irony: a project for former prostitutes has its headquarters on Vanderbilt's Greek Row, within steps of the pimp-whore parties. Magdalene, founded by Rev. Becca Stevens in 1997, is a residential program for former prostitutes recovering from drug addiction and sexual abuse. It seemed to me that a dialogue between Magdalene women and students could raise student awareness about the reality of prostitution and the eroticization of women's oppression at these

parties. Some participants in Vanderbilt's Women's Studies program were reluctant to follow up the town hall meeting; they feared the Magdalene women would find interaction with the students painful. But surely whether to participate in such a meeting should be the decision not of the faculty and students, but of the Magdalene women themselves. Thus, with the cooperation of the Divinity School's Carpenter Program in Religion, Gender, and Sexuality, the University Chaplain's office, and the Greek Office, I organized this meeting.

About a dozen graduate and undergraduate students came to Saint Augustine's Chapel on December 2 to talk with the

***Regina and the other women expressed curiosity about one thing: "If the purpose of a party is for celebrating, what are you all really celebrating when you dress up as pimps and whores?"***

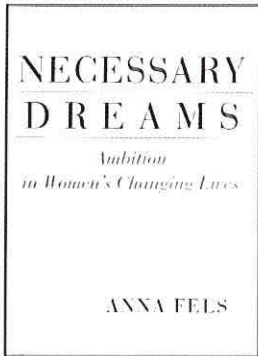
women in the Magdalene program. Alison Piepmeier, Associate Director of the Women's Studies Program and the event's faculty facilitator said, "I was really impressed with this event. The folks sharing a meal at St. Augustine's represented members of the Vanderbilt community who don't often come together." The evening began as Regina Mullins, Magdalene Arms director, shared her story of prostitution and drug addiction. She and other women from the Magdalene program expressed genuine incredulity that anyone would want to play at being something that is "just hell." One woman noted that her past had led her to contract AIDS. When the issue of a woman's choice to sell her body came up, Regina commented, "You have no clue what it is really like to be a whore. I didn't choose to be a prostitute. Sure, I wanted to believe I was in control. But who really would choose to sell her body for drugs and money, to have low self-esteem, and to be caught in violence?" Regina and the other women expressed curiosity about one thing: "If the purpose of a party is for celebrating, what are you all really celebrating when you dress up as pimps and whores?"

That evening, some students seemed to gain a new awareness of the connotations of "pimp" and "whore"; they began to understand what prostitution truly entails. Junior and sorority member, Julia Doolittle, said, "Hearing the Magdalene women share their stories has opened the issue of theme parties on this campus at a whole new level. I can't believe that these women are still willing to do their ministry here on campus, when we advertise parties that celebrate a lifestyle they wouldn't wish on their worst enemy. I appreciated the Magdalene women's openness and honesty." Senior and sorority member Adelaide Dunnan said, "I really wish that we could have more outreach sessions like this in order to inform the Greek students about the Magdalene women. If people stopped and thought about the fact that the Magdalene Project is literally right across the street, there would be more thought put into party themes. As Regina said, life as a prostitute

*continued on page 7*



## A Look at Women's Ambition; Body Image



New York psychiatrist Anna Fels sees many successful women in her Manhattan practice. Many talented women are quite happy with their work and family lives while others seem frustrated and unfulfilled and wonder if career success is worth the effort. In *Necessary Dreams: Ambition in Women's Changing Lives* (Pantheon, 2004) Fels examines the reasons behind these differences in outlook and how women cope with

achievement and ambition. Not only are many career women frustrated but homemakers often discover that they are unhappy with what they had anticipated they really wanted in life.

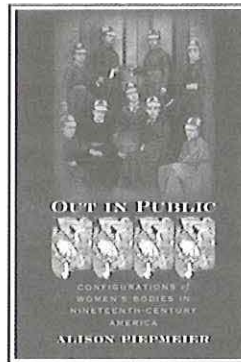
Fels believes that it is vital for girls and women to "imagine themselves into their future" for "without an imagined future we have a sense of helplessness and passivity about our fate." She hopes to help fill in the gaps in the literature about the process by which women formulate, revise and abandon their goals in life and how this differs for women and men. Because women today have so many more options and opportunities than did previous generations, there are no clear paths for women to follow.

According to the writer, there are two vital components of ambition. Individuals must be able to master particular skills or talents and must see recognition for these qualities. Recognition is vitally important for motivation and ambition, and as girls grow up they receive many harmful messages. As their accomplishments are subtly underrated in various ways many of them gradually lose confidence in their skills and abilities, and their goals are lowered or modified. When women's skills are not recognized and they do not receive the appreciation they need, they feel demoralized, unmotivated and unhappy.

It is clear that even many prominent and successful women try to deflect attention away from themselves. As men virtually never do this it is evident that women have some type of strong fear of success. Fels points out that women and girls are most successful and assertive in situations when men are not present. She feels that there are strong repercussions from the pressure on females to divert attention from themselves and to give recognition to males. Middle-class white women particularly feel that femininity requires them to do this. When women attempt to enter fields or obtain resources previously reserved for males, men often feel threatened and attack the women's

sexuality, labeling such women "sluts" or lesbians. This can be very effective in controlling women's behavior and in curbing their ambitions. Men feel threatened because they have been socialized to assume that they should get more than their share of society's attention and recognition.

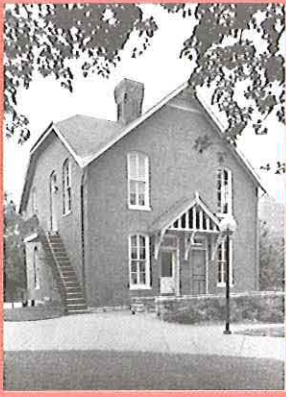
Research shows that women who identify with "masculine" qualities, whether or not they also have stereotypically "feminine" ones, are happier and more successful in their chosen careers than are women who espouse just "feminine" traits. Fels shows how women can behave in "feminine" ways and yet feel appreciated in their chosen fields. She believes that mothers will continue to be expected to sacrifice their careers and take on child care responsibilities unless there is more government support. For this to happen the government's priorities need to change and women must recognize that they have the power to influence national policies.



Alison Piepmeier's new book, *Out in Public: Configurations of Women's Bodies in Nineteenth-Century America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2004) analyses the ways in which women's bodies were constructed and presented by women from the 1830s to the 1890s. Her focus is on "the modalities of embodiment that make use of both public and private, that are neither fully victim nor agent, that – rather than being either appropriate or deviant – are multiple, transitional, strategic, playful, contested."

The writer, a senior lecturer in women's studies at Vanderbilt University, concentrates on five prominent women of diverse backgrounds: the author and actress, Anna Cora Mowatt; Mary Baker Eddy; Sojourner Truth; Ida B. Wells; and Sarah Josepha Hale, the editor of the popular "Godey's Lady's Book." Each of these women, in her writings or speeches, demonstrated different forms of public female embodiment. The writer also illustrates the range of meanings of the "outing" of women's bodies in an era in which women were very constrained in what their bodies could do and where they could go.

This volume is a revised version of Piepmeier's 1999 dissertation. She was the winner of the 2004 Mary Jane Werthan Award and the 2003 Mentoring Award, both presented by the Women's Center.



# January 2005 Calendar

PLEASE SAVE  
AND POST

Unless otherwise indicated, all groups are open to all people and are held at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center at 316 West Side Row on Vanderbilt University's Campus.

For directions, please consult the map at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter/contact.html>. For more information, please call 322-4843.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### **TUESDAY, JANUARY 18**

#### **Stalking Awareness Panel Discussion**

**What:** January is Stalking Awareness Month. The Peer Educators of Project Safe are teaming up with Men Promoting a Solution (MPAS) to bring a panel of experts to discuss this important issue. Panelists include *Andrew Atwood*, VUPD Director of Crime Prevention and *Sandra Harrell*, Co-Director of Project Safe. Resource info about stalking will be presented in addition to a discussion period about how stalking affects the VU community.  
**Who:** This program is free and open to everyone.

**When and Where:** 7:30pm, Sarratt 112

For more info, please contact [kasie.r.luttrell@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:kasie.r.luttrell@vanderbilt.edu) or [katie.protos@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:katie.protos@vanderbilt.edu)

## EVENTS

### **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19**

#### **MLK Highlighted Program:**

#### **BERNICE JOHNSON REAGON**

**What:** Composer, singer, scholar, music producer, author, public speaker and activist, her career stretches more than four decades and began with her participation in the Civil Rights Movement in Albany, GA. Reagon recently retired after 30 years from performing with *Sweet Honey In The Rock*, the internationally renowned *a cappella* ensemble she founded in 1973.

**Who:** This event is free and open to everyone.

**When and Where:** 5:00pm reception, 6:00pm presentation, Ingram Hall.

For more information, contact: [debra.j.flowers@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:debra.j.flowers@vanderbilt.edu)

### **THURSDAY, JANUARY 20**

#### **Women in Academe Series: The Posture of the Serious Graduate Student**

**What:** In this session we will discuss the Imposter Syndrome and its effects, as well as explore the survival strategies used as a means by which to navigate graduate school. We'll be discussing the answers to life's persistent questions: What's the right way of being a grad student? Where do images of the ideal graduate student originate? Do you feel or get messages that you are not OK --that you have to wear a mask?

Does your department have certain expectations of you as a grad student and how do your professors communicate these expectations?

**Who:** This program is free and open to everyone and is of special interest to women graduate

students, or those thinking of becoming one.

**When and Where:** 4:10-5:30p, Schulman Center, upstairs. For more information or to register, please go to [www.vanderbilt.edu/cf/gradstudents/f2p2/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/cf/gradstudents/f2p2/)

### **SATURDAY, JANUARY 22**

#### **Roe v Wade Anniversary Concert**

**What:** Roe v. Wade Anniversary Pro-Choice concert that will serve as a Planned Parenthood and NOW Fundraiser.

**When and Where:** 7:00pm, Unitarian Church on Woodmont Blvd. For more information, or to volunteer to help, please contact [JeannaE@ppmet.org](mailto:JeannaE@ppmet.org)

### **TUESDAY, JANUARY 25**

#### **Women in Islam Series presents:**

#### **Moolade, Movie and Panel Discussion**

**What:** Moolade, the 2004 winner of the Cannes Film Festival, is set in Africa, and portrays the revolt of women against the practice of female circumcision in one tiny village where many cling to the ancient tradition. Supported in their minds by religion, supporters of the practice come up against women no longer willing to expose daughters to the life-endangering practice. Panel discussion to follow.

**Who:** This film is open to everyone. It is \$3.50 with a Vanderbilt ID and \$7.25 without.

**When and Where:** 7:00pm, Belcourt Theatre  
For more information, contact [belcourt@belcourt.org](mailto:belcourt@belcourt.org)

## REGULAR GROUPS AND MEETINGS

**Sistahs Reading Sistahs will not be meeting in January due to break.** For more information on the group, please contact [nicole.l.mcdonald@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:nicole.l.mcdonald@vanderbilt.edu)

**T-BLAST (Transgendered women, Bi women, Lesbians, and Straight women Together)** will also not be meeting in January due to break. For more information, please contact [melinda.brown@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:melinda.brown@vanderbilt.edu), [patricia.k.gardner@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:patricia.k.gardner@vanderbilt.edu), or [jennifer.hackett@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:jennifer.hackett@vanderbilt.edu)

### **TUESDAYS, JANUARY 4, 11, 18 AND 25**

#### **Creative Life Planning Group**

**What:** A group for all dedicated to living life intentionally and creatively. Open to everyone in the community and is usually attended by women between 40 and 70 years of age.

**Who:** This group is free and open to everyone.

**When :** 11:30am-1:00

pm (Meets every

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## January Calendar

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Tuesday) For more information, call 322-4843.

### MONDAY, JANUARY 10

#### Book Group

**What/Who:** The book group is open to new members at all times and is for anyone who loves to read.

The January book is *Quality of Life Report* by Meghan Daum.

**When:** 5:15pm-6:15pm (meets the second Monday)

For more information, contact Jane Du Bose at [jdubose@bellsouth.net](mailto:jdubose@bellsouth.net) or Carmen Gherman at [cggherman@yahoo.com](mailto:cggherman@yahoo.com).

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 11

#### Creative Writing Group

**What:** The Creative Writing Group is open to new members! We look forward to hearing your piece. No writing experience necessary. You can bring a piece or create one at the group.

**Who:** This group is free and open to everyone. It is led by Anna Sir who will be doing some writing instruction as well as facilitation of the group.

**When:** 5:30-7:00pm (Meets the 2nd Tuesday) For more information, contact [annasir@bellsouth.net](mailto:annasir@bellsouth.net)

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12

#### Dissertation Writers Group

**What/Who:** This support group meets every three weeks to provide female Ph.D. candidates with objective reactions and fresh perspectives, as well as a place to unwind during the dissertation writing process. Mark your calendar for the Spring dates of 1/12, 2/2, 2/23, 3/16, 4/6, 4/27.

**When:** 3:45pm - 5:00pm (meets every three weeks) For more information, contact [rory.dicker@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:rory.dicker@vanderbilt.edu)

### WEDNESDAYS IN JANUARY 19, 26

#### Vanderbilt Feminists (Vandy Fems)

**Who/What:** An undergraduate student group concerned about women's issues on campus, and promoting equality between genders. Specifically for undergraduates (women and men), but open to all.

**When:** 5:00-6:00pm (meets every Wednesday)

Contact [emily.c.baunach@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:emily.c.baunach@vanderbilt.edu) or [katharyn.i.christian@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:katharyn.i.christian@vanderbilt.edu) Or just come to a meeting!

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 13 AND 27

#### Vandy Moms

**Who:** Moms of any age! Women who juggle! Superheroes! Open to all mothers, partnered or single. This is a support network that provides advocacy for moms in the Vanderbilt community and programming to inform, empower and enrich.

**What:** The January 13 meeting will be a discussion of the book, *Simplifying Your Life with Kids*. Come and share the examples that work for you!

**When and Where:** 11:30-12:30pm (Meets the second and fourth Thursdays) To RSVP, contact [misa.culley@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:misa.culley@vanderbilt.edu) or call 343-4367.



## Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Series January 17-27

### ALL EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

The Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center is honored to be a member of the MLK Events Committee. For a complete list of committee members and sponsors, please refer to the MLK website: [www.vanderbilt.edu/mlk](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/mlk)

### MONDAY, JANUARY 17 AT 7PM

Candlelight Vigil at Benton Chapel, Bishop Joseph W. Walker, Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Voices of Praise will sing.

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 18 AT 1PM

Averbuch Auditorium, "The Majesty of Dissent" honoring Dr. King and the magnificence of freedom. Owen Graduate School of Management.

### TUESDAY, JANUARY 18 AT 3:30PM

Judge Myron Thompson, U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Alabama, Flynn Auditorium, Law School - (informal reception following). Vanderbilt Law School

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2005 AT 6PM

**Keynote Lecture: Bernice Johnson Reagon**, The Martha Rivers Ingram Center for the Performing Arts, Vanderbilt University, Reception at 5pm in Ingram Lobby.

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 20 AT 12:30PM

**Race, Space and Scientific Education: Some Thoughts on the Political Economy of Urban Schooling: William Tate**, professor and chair of the Department of Education at Washington University in St. Louis, will speak at Peabody's annual Changing Lives Award Ceremony recognizing exceptional community service. Wyatt Center Rotunda, Peabody College. Reception to follow.

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 20 AT 4PM

**Improving the Lives of Low-Income Parents and Children with Prenatal and Infancy Home Visits by Nurses: David Olds**, Ph.D., Professor of Pediatrics, Psychiatry, and Preventative Medicine, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. Room 241 Vanderbilt Kennedy Center/MRL Building. For information, contact [stephanie.comer@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:stephanie.comer@vanderbilt.edu), 322-8240.

### WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26 AT 5PM

**Today's America and The Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Dr. James Forbes**, Senior Minister, The Riverside Church, NY. Belmont University, Massey Performing Arts Center (MPAC). Co-sponsored by Belmont University and Vanderbilt.

### THURSDAY, JANUARY 27 FROM NOON TO 1PM

**Dr. James Forbes**, Riverside Church, NY. Conversation with students and faculty, Vanderbilt Divinity School. Brown bag lunch.



## *Pimp-Whore Parties: Exploration or Exploitation?*

*continued from page 3*

is not to be glorified or celebrated and usually the women who become prostitutes do not have a choice. Vanderbilt women and men have a choice of whether or not to dress in a certain way and this insensitivity is truly offensive.” Senior and sorority woman Abby Larimer agrees: “Because our lives at

*“What is merely fun and fantasy to us is a terrible and very real memory for these women. I found the Magdalene women’s message to be quite compelling. Rather than complaining and demanding an apology, they asked us simply to consider our choices.”*

*--Alix James, sophomore, sorority member*

Vanderbilt are often so far removed from the hardships many people have to face, I think it is really easy for us to forget about how offensive some of these themes can be to others. When people make choices about how they want to represent themselves, I think it is important to take time and really think about what you are ‘celebrating.’ Most Vanderbilt students have no idea the horrific struggles these women have survived.” Alix James, sophomore and sorority member, commented, “Perhaps the neighborly thing to do is reconsider these themes. What is merely fun and fantasy to us is a terrible and very real memory for these women. I found the Magdalene women’s message to be quite compelling. Rather than complaining and demanding an apology, they asked us simply to consider our choices.”

It seems that more conversation between students and the Magdalene women could be fruitful, especially if more Vanderbilt men would enter into this dialogue. Rather than promoting a romanticized notion of prostitutes, it seems appropriate that Vanderbilt students – known for their generosity in service to the broader Nashville community – would take advantage of the opportunity to do meaningful work with a nonprofit organization within walking distance of all dorms and Greek houses. Dr. Piepmeyer is making a step in this direction by offering a Maymester service-learning course, “Sexual Stories,” in which students will work collaboratively with Magdalene women.

Rev. Stevens says that after ten years of working with prostitutes in Nashville, she has seen “women carrying scars of sexual abuse, manipulation, and terror, literally as old as Eden.” Perhaps if Vanderbilt students would stop dressing up as prostitutes and start working with the women from Magdalene and others who have experienced the horrors of life on the streets, this campus could become much more like the Garden of Eden as it was intended to be.

*Cynthia Curtis is from Nashville and is a student at the Vanderbilt Divinity School. She completed her Masters in Teaching at Vanderbilt in 1997 and taught secondary school English before returning to do graduate studies in theology. She has worked with the Magdalene program and Thistle Farms at Saint Augustine’s Chapel.*



## **STALKING**

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The recent murders have prompted Tennessee lawmakers to consider making stalking a felony on the first offense. Generally, felonies are punishable with a minimum sentence of a year or more. The Vanderbilt graduate decided not to pursue legal action out of a fear for her safety. “The one thing that he always said to me was, ‘I will kill you if you go to the police.’” she says.

### **‘Constant prey’**

After graduating, she changed her cell phone number and moved. Although she doesn’t see her stalker daily like she used to, he still shows up unexpectedly once or twice a week. She’s undergoing counseling to deal with the anxiety the experience causes, and she isn’t comfortable going out of town alone or out in public places without people she trusts. “You feel like you’re constant prey with this predator always lurking in the background,” she says. “Just in day-to-day living, it really wears on you.”

Researchers such as Haugaard hope to prevent stalking by creating educational materials that teach young people to appropriately deal with breakups. “We spend a lot of time talking with adolescents about sex these days,” he says. “But we don’t spend a whole lot of time talking about relationships and particularly talking about how to deal with the ending of a relationship—probably because we don’t have a lot of good advice to give.”

Manning says that society can make stalking less common by taking it seriously. “We want to hold men who do this accountable, and as a culture and as a society, not tolerate that type of behavior,” she says. “And as a society we don’t do a very good job of that.”

And until that happens, she and other advocates fear that victims such as the Vanderbilt graduate will continue to suffer. “I’m hoping that one day it might decrease and stop all together,” the Vanderbilt graduate says. “I’m also really realistic about it and I

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### **STALKING MYTHS**

**MYTH:** Only mean or sadistic people engage in intrusive contact with someone they used to date.

**What we know:** Some people who engage in intrusive contact are mean and sadistic; others are nice and are liked by others but cannot let go of the relationship.

**What we do not know:** We do not know who is likely to engage in intrusive contact and who is not. It seems as if almost anyone can engage in intrusive contact under certain circumstances.

**MYTH:** The best way to end intrusive contact is to ignore it.

**What we know:** Intrusive contact will sometimes end if ignored for a few days or a week. Other times, however, the intrusive contact may increase to the point that it cannot be ignored.

**What we do not know:** We do not know which cases will end if ignored and which may continue or get worse.

**Source:** **The Relationship Project, New York State College of Human Ecology, Cornell University**

## STALKING

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know that with stalking, it doesn't just go away."

*Sameh Fahmy covers consumer health for The Tennessean. Contact him at sfahmy@tennessean.com or 259-8072. This article is reprinted with permission by The Tennessean.*



## FINDING HELP

Several nonprofit organizations, university women's centers and police offer support and guidance for victims of stalking and their friends and family:

- The YWCA of Middle Tennessee, www.theYW.com, 242-1199 or 1-800-334-4628
- The Mary Parrish Center for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence, www.maryparrish.org, 256-5959
- The National Center for Victims of Crime, www.ncvc.org, 1-800-394-2255
- Rape and Sexual Abuse Center, www.rasac.org, 256-8526 or 1-800-879-1999
- Metro Nashville Police Department Domestic Violence Division, 880-3000
- Cornell University offers a website aimed at high school and college students with strategies to reduce stalking and other forms of intrusive contact, www.humec.cornell.edu/stalking/.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Nashville NOW** (National Organization for Women) will meet **Monday, January 24** at the Nashville Peace and Justice Center at 7:00pm. For more info, please contact CynthiaNashNOW@aol.com.

**Meharry Medical College is currently doing a few research trials** that will impact how Black women are treated for some gynecological health issues. The research trials/studies concern the following issues:

- A study of women determine how sex hormones effect ovarian function and bones;
  - A study of women age 18-48 who are still menstruating and have uterine fibroids;
  - A study of women who suffer from PCOS "Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome" (this is the only research trial that involves taking medicine);
  - A study of women who suffer from stress incontinence.
- For more information call 615-327-5699.

### SAVE THE DATE!

The **Vagina Monologues** are back! This dramatic student-run production will be presented on February 13 and 14, 7pm at Sarratt Cinema. Don't Miss It! For more information, please contact vicky.basra@vanderbilt.edu or call 322-1333.



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