



Women's VU

The monthly newsletter of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

V VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

February 2006, Volume 28, Issue 7

Don't Miss It!

Vagina Monologues

**Tuesday and Wednesday,
February 14 and 15
7:00 p.m., Ingram Hall
Open to all**

Writer and performer Eve Ensler created a one-woman show that speaks of women's bodies covering subjects often considered taboo, risqué, and threateningly empowering. This year, an all-Vanderbilt cast brings the amazing performance to you! Ticket sales are now available at the Sarratt Welcome Desk for \$12 per person.

For more information, please contact kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu. Additional information can be found at www.vanderbilt.edu/ProjectSafe



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For more info, please see our website: www.vanderbilt.edu/WomensCenter

Global V-Day Campaign Highlights Justice to "Comfort Women"

For those vagina-loving men and women who eagerly anticipate Vanderbilt's annual production of *The Vagina Monologues*, a new monologue will be gracing the stage this year. Accompanying the ever-popular chocolate vaginas and "I'm Your Bob" pins is Eve Ensler's newest monologue about 'Comfort Women.' This year V-DAY's Global campaign, including over 2500 productions of *The Vagina Monologues* on college campuses across the country, shines the spotlight on those women forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military between 1932 and 1945. The plight of these women has been ignored for far too long; in fact, Japan has yet to apologize for their abduction and slavery. Eve Ensler and the V-DAY campaign are bringing the story of these women along with many others to the stage this year. Come be part of this amazing, awe-inspiring, and entertaining experience. We hope to see you in February!

The following article is used with permission from the V-Day website (www.vday.org), copyright 2006.

GLOBAL V-DAY CAMPAIGN FOR JUSTICE TO 'COMFORT WOMEN': SURVIVORS OF JAPAN'S MILITARY SEXUAL SLAVERY

August 2005 marks the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII. However, for those women forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military between 1932 and 1945, there has been no escape from the war and no answer for its

harm. In South Korea, the elderly 'comfort women' survivors have held demonstrations in front of the Japanese embassy every Wednesday for 13 years, calling for justice and reparations for the unanswered war crimes.

In support of these efforts, V-Day has joined with organizations across East and Southeast Asia to launch the Global V-Day Campaign for Justice to 'Comfort Women.' Given the 21st century's escalating armed conflicts, the precedent of impunity for wartime sexual violence cannot be tolerated.

The History of the 'Comfort Women'

The euphemism 'comfort women' was coined by imperial Japan to refer to young females of various ethnic and national backgrounds who were forced to offer sexual services to the Japanese troops during the Asian/Pacific Wars between 1932 and 1945. Some were minors sold into 'comfort situations'; others were deceptively recruited by middlemen; still more were detained and forcibly abducted. Estimates of the number of 'comfort women' range from 50,000 to 200,000.

In the early 1990s, Korean victims of Japan's military sexual slavery broke their silence and came forward nearly half a century after WWII, followed by other survivors in China, Taiwan, North Korea, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Netherlands, and East Timor. As the aging survivors are dying off one by one, the Japanese government still denies legal responsibility. There have been no formal apologies, and

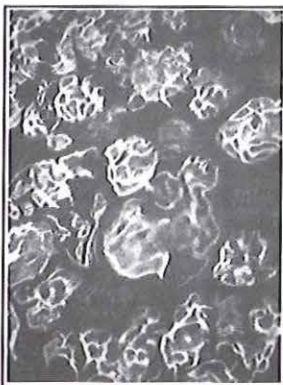
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Celebrate and Remember: February is Black History Month

Women's Center Newest Art Exhibit, *Seedpod Senescence*, Opens February 7th

The Women's Center is pleased to present *Seedpod Senescence*, a series of works by local artist, Patricia Jordan.

Please join us for the **opening reception on Tuesday, February 7**, from 5:00pm to 6:30pm. The reception is free and open to the public. The show runs February 6 through April 28. On other days, please call 322-4843 for viewing times and directions.



Patricia Jordan utilizes biological and metaphorical imagery in charcoal drawings, prints and collages to deal with the "change of life" for women in an exploration of the possibilities for this new life stage. We hope that you will stop by to view these gorgeous works of art.

Women's VU is published monthly August through May at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.

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Address changes: Please contact our office manager at robin.l.van.arman@vanderbilt.edu

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

Women's Center Seeks Nominations for Several Awards

The Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center is currently accepting nominations for several awards given annually to recognize achievements by and in support of women at Vanderbilt University.

The Muliebrity Prize honors an undergraduate student who demonstrates leadership in activities that contribute to the achievements, interests and goals of women and girls, or that promote equity. Self-nominations are encouraged, as well as nominations by faculty, staff, advisors, friends and peers. The award will be announced on April 5th, 2006 at the annual Magnolia Awards (formerly Kudos) Dinner, where the honoree will be presented with a cash award of \$100 and an honorary certificate.

Deadline: If you know someone who is deserving of this recognition, please submit your nomination by **Friday, February 3, 2006**. (Nominees will then fill out a form that is due by Friday, February 10, 2006.)

The Mentoring Award honors a member of the Vanderbilt University community who fosters the professional and intellectual development of Vanderbilt women. The award will be announced in April, when the honoree will be presented with a special gift and certificate.

Deadline: If you know someone who is deserving of this recognition, please submit your nomination by **Friday, March 17**. Nomination forms are available at the Sarratt desk or at the Women's Center. Curriculum vitae of the nominee are also welcomed as well as up to three additional letters of support for the nominee.

The Mary Jane Werthan Award is given annually to honor an individual who has contributed to the advancement of women at Vanderbilt on a systemic level. It is named in honor of Mary Jane Werthan, the first woman member of the Vanderbilt Board of Trust.

Deadline: Nominations should be sent in the form of a letter addressed to Linda Manning, Director, and any supporting materials should be included by **Friday, Feb. 24**. The award will be presented during the annual Margaret Cuninggim Lecture on March 28.

Past honorees have included Dr. Alison Piepmeier of the Women's Studies program (2004), Dr. Ronnie Steinberg of the Women's Studies program (2003), Gay Welch, University Chaplain (2001), Gary F. Jensen, Professor of Sociology (1997), Nina Gove, Professor of Slavic Languages & Literatures (1993), and William A. Jenkins, Vice Chancellor for Administration (1990).

Nominations may be submitted in the following ways: in person to the Women's Center in the Franklin Building at 316 West Side Row; by campus mail at Station B Box #351513; by US Mail at Station B Box #351513, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville TN 37235-1513; or by email at womenctr@vanderbilt.edu.

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Global V-Day Campaign Highlights Justice to “Comfort Women”

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as recently as May 2001, no mention of the imperial army’s system of sexual slavery during WWII has appeared in Japan’s history textbooks.

On the Campaign Trail

The Global V-Day Campaign for Justice to ‘Comfort Women’ launches in New York on February 28, 2005, during the landmark session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women reviewing 10 years since the UN’s World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. The V-Day Campaign culminated in a Global Day of Action on August 10, 2005, when simultaneous demonstrations were held in front of Japanese embassies around the world as part of the observance of the 60th anniversary of the end of WWII.

To draw a spotlight on the issue, the Campaign featured V-Day celebrity performances of *The Vagina Monologues* in Seoul, Korea, and Tokyo, Japan in July 2005. ‘Comfort women’s’ voices were featured in a monologue by playwright/V-Day founder Eve Ensler. In addition, each college performance of *The Vagina Monologues* in 2006 will feature a new monologue by Eve Ensler about the ‘comfort women’ and their fight for justice.

As patterns of systematic rape and sexual violence continue today in places of armed conflict such as Sudan, Congo, and Iraq, the importance of recognizing human rights atrocities

committed against women during WWII is paramount. The survivors’ common wish is to see an official apology and compensation from the Japanese government during their lifetime.



For more information about the ‘Comfort Women’ and their struggle for justice you can check out the following partner organizations in the Global V-Day Campaign:

The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (South Korea)

www.womenandwar.net/english/menu_01.php;

Japan V-Day Steering Committee (Japan)

www.jca.apc.org;

Asian Centre for Women’s Rights (Philippines)

ascent@csi.com.ph;

Taipei Women’s Rescue Foundation (Taiwan) www.twrf.org;

FOKUPERS—Communication Forum for East Timorese Women (Timor L’Este) fokupers@fokupers.minihub.org;

Indonesian Women’s Association for Justice (Indonesia)

www.lbh-apik.or.id/exsum-pemb.htm;

Stitching Japanese Ereschulden—Japanese Honorary Debt Foundation (The Netherlands) www.jesinfo.org

Eve Ensler’s V-Moment: A Primer on Worldwide Violence Against Women

Written on November 24, 2005 (Thanksgiving Day in the USA)

I spent my morning reading the World Health Organization (WHO) Multi-Country Study On Women’s Health and Domestic Violence against Women which interviewed 24,000 women in 10 countries. I was full of gratitude for this documentation – released on Thanksgiving Day, which is essential and long overdue.

The WHO report provides a statistical picture of the violence that is happening to women and its long-term impact on their health and well-being.

Unfortunately, this report mirrors my experience over the last decade. When I first started performing “The Vagina Monologues,” everywhere I went in the world women would line up after the show. At first I was thrilled, thinking I would hear mysterious and delicious stories of their great sex lives. There were some of those, but the majority of the women who lined up were there to tell me about how they’d been raped or slapped or beaten or incested, and how that experience had forever changed them.

Like most of those surveyed in the WHO report, these women had not told anyone their stories before. I had known of course that there was violence against women. I was not naive. I had survived terrible sexual and physical violence myself at the hands of my own father. What I did not know until that tour was the epidemic proportions of this violence. This realization gave birth to V-Day, a worldwide movement that has spread in 8 years to 81 countries and raised over \$30 million dollars for local groups working to stop violence against women. The work has since taken me to over forty countries. Whether I am on a college campus in the US listening to the story of a young girl who has been date raped, or in a shelter in Zagreb for women who were beaten by their husbands after the war, or in Juarez searching for the bones of a missing young poor woman, or in Islamabad where I sit with a woman whose melted face is the result of an acid burning by her husband, I am struck by the global and personal devastation of this violence.

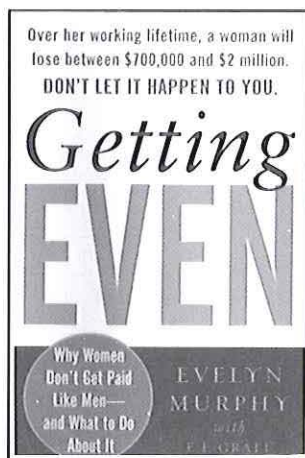
What is most troubling about the report is the normalization of this violence. How women and men have come to expect and accept this brutality as a

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A New Release Re-examines the Wage Gap



Barbara Clarke
Women's Center
Librarian



Evelyn F. Murphy has lengthy and broad experience in the field of gender-based wage discrimination. When she started working in the 1960s, with a doctorate in economics, she discovered that American women working full-time earned 59 cents for every dollar earned by men. She felt that the wage gap would surely close as more women pursued higher education and entered the workplace in great numbers. However, today that figure has increased to only 77 cents for every dollar earned by men,

which is the same as it was in 1993. Murphy has worked as an economist, public official, and corporate officer and she was the lieutenant governor of Massachusetts from 1987 to 1991.

In *Getting Even: Why Women Don't Get Paid Like Men—and What to Do About It* (Simon & Schuster, 2005) Murphy, writing with E. J. Graff, explains that her main concern is how discrimination in the workplace affects women financially. Over their working lives women earn between \$700,000 and \$2 million less than they would have if they were men working in the same fields. While this has more serious consequences for poorer women and their families, all women suffer from this injustice. They have less money to spend on important items and medical care, and less to live on in retirement. Murphy believes that there should be no wage gap at all for full-time workers and that the pay gap is the result of discrimination.

Over the years the writer heard many women complain of either blatant or insidious discrimination and of other issues like sexual harassment, noticing that only their male colleagues receive promotions, unspoken assumptions about women's roles and interests, and exclusion from the old boys' networks. Many themes came up again and again. Murphy decided that an examination of court cases would provide the best firm data about the issues behind the wage gap. About 200 pages are devoted to a study of court cases from the past ten years, as well as to the stories told by many women who were upset or angry but who did not sue their employers.

Murphy details some common types of discrimination that lead to reduced paychecks for female workers. These include "working while female"; the economic consequences of sexual harassment; male and female jobs; and the most financially harmful of all, the mommy penalty. Mothers who work full-time earn just 60 cents to a working father's dollar and 73 cents to the average male dollar.

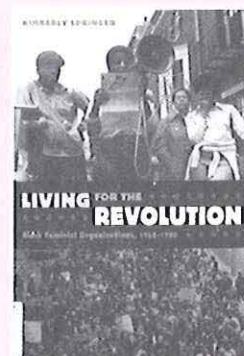
The writer feels that change in the workplace will not come about until actions are taken by workers. Even those employers who are aware of the bias within their businesses or organizations have little incentive to alter the way things have been done. It is up to women and sympathetic men, perhaps inspired or angered by the accounts in this volume, to bring about change. While the wage gap is not the fault of women and exists because of discrimination, Murphy feels that each woman does have a responsibility to do something to close the gap. The third section of the volume is devoted to suggestions as to how this may be accomplished by individuals. There are also examples showing how several large employers, including MIT and Mitsubishi, have been pressured into transforming themselves into workplaces that are fair toward all workers.

This book was written for all female workers and for those men who care about the welfare of the women in their lives. The writer's goal is "to get you angry enough to act; to offer up an overall strategy that will fix women's wages; and to give you constructive tools so that you, as an individual, can get financially even with men." Murphy is the founder and president of the WAGE (Women Are Getting Even) Project, an organization devoted to ending the wage gap. More helpful information on the topic and the organization may be found at: www.wageproject.org.



Celebrate Black History Month with a Good Book!

February is celebrated as Black History Month and the Women's Center has many books on the history of black women. *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave* by Benita Roth challenges the view that second wave feminism was mainly a white middle-class movement. Some of our other works published in recent years include *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* by Barbara Ransby; *Living For the Revolution: Black Feminist Organizations, 1968-1980* by Kimberly Springer; *African American Women Confront the West: 1600-2000* edited by Quintard Taylor and Shirley Ann Wilson Moore, as well as a recent biography of Alice Walker by Evelyn C. White.



February 2006 Calendar



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

SPECIAL EVENTS

SEXUALITY SERIES PART 3

Private Dicks: Thursday, February 2, 6:30pm–8:15pm, Calhoun 109

What: *Private Dicks* is a 60-minute film which surveys young and old, gay and straight, large and small, virgin and not, from all walks of life. Men offer personal revelations that are honest, humorous and often poignant as they frankly discuss puberty, power, impotence, circumcision, sexuality, myths and perceptions, growing old, and, of course, size. *Private Dicks* provides a rare opportunity for both interviewees and audience to begin an honest conversation about masculinity, power, vulnerability, sex and love - all

seen through the lens of a man's relationship to his penis.

Who: This film and the discussion following are free and open to everyone. For more information, please contact jennifer.hackett@vanderbilt.edu

ARTIST RECEPTION

Seedpod Senescence: works by Patricia Jordan
Tuesday, February 7 from 5:00–6:30pm

What: Patricia Jordan utilizes biological and metaphorical imagery in charcoal drawings, prints and collages to deal with the "change of life" for women in an exploration of the possibilities for this new life stage. The show runs February 6 through April 28.

Who: The reception is free and open to the public. On other days, call 322-4843 for viewing times and directions.

VAGINA MONOLOGUES

Tuesday and Wednesday, February 14, and 15, 7:00pm, Ingram Hall

What: Writer and performer Eve Ensler created a one-woman show that speaks of women's bodies covering subjects often considered taboo, risqué, and threateningly empowering. This year, an all-Vanderbilt cast brings the amazing performance to you!

Who: This performance is open to everyone. Ticket sales are now available at the Sarratt Welcome Desk for \$12/person. For more info, contact kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu. Additional information can be found at www.vanderbilt.edu/ProjectSafe

WOMEN IN ACADEMIE

Depression in Graduate School

Tuesday, February 21, 4:10–5:30pm, Buttrick Hall, Room 206

What: Representatives from the Psychological and Counseling Center will present a talk on the characteristics of depression, as well as effective tools on how to manage it.

Who: This program is open to those in or those considering graduate school. For more information, contact vanessa.k.valdes@vanderbilt.edu

GIRL SCOUT COOKIES

Part 1: Cookies on Campus

Thursday, February 23 at the Rand Promenade, 4:30pm

What: *Cookies on Campus* is a program designed to encourage teen scouts to attend college by giving them a look at college life up close. After their tour of Vanderbilt, they will be selling their cookies for you in the Promenade. Please come by to purchase cookies from these young ladies, and feel free to ask them how their work on their Gold Awards are coming along.

Who: Anyone with a checkbook or cash (Vandycard not accepted through the GS). For more information, please contact Jpack@girlscoutsofvcv.org

Part 2: Girl Scout Cookie Night at Rand

Tuesday, February 28 in Rand Dining Hall and Promenade starting at 4:30pm

What: Enjoy your usual fine dining experience in Rand Hall, with a little boost from your favorite Brownie Scouts serving you free Girl Scout cookies for dessert! More cookies will be available for purchase in the lobby, so bring along your checkbook or cash (VandyCard not accepted thru the GS). For more information, please contact Jpack@girlscoutsofvcv.org

REGULAR GROUPS/ MEETINGS

SISTAHS READING SISTAHS

Wednesday, February 1, 12:30pm–1:30pm (Meets the 1st Wednesday)

What: A book group for everyone interested in reading African-American women authors. This group is free and open to everyone! For more info, please contact regina.snell@vanderbilt.edu

TBLAST (TRANSGENDERED, BIWOMEN, LESBIANS AND STRAIGHT WOMEN TOGETHER) BROWN BAG LUNCH GROUP

TBLAST was meeting the second Monday of the month. However, due to staff transitions, this group is currently not meeting. For more information about LGBT groups in the community, contact melinda.brown@vanderbilt.edu

CREATIVE LIFE PLANNING GROUP

Tuesdays, February 7, 14, 21 and 28, 11:30am–1:00 pm (Meets every Tuesday)

What/Who: A group for all dedicated to living life intentionally and creatively. Free and open to everyone and is usually attended by women between 40 and 90 years of age. For more information, call 322-4843.

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February 2006 Calendar Listings

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CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

Tuesday, February 14, 5:30–7pm (meets the 2nd Tuesday)

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. For more information, or to RSVP to the group, contact annasir@bellsouth.net

VANDY MOMS

Thursday, February 9 and 23, 11:30am–12:30pm (Meets the 2nd and 4th Thursdays)

What/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 and larger communities. It also provides programming to inform, empower and enrich. The February 9 meeting will be our annual recipe swap, "sweets for your sweeties." Bring your favorite dessert to share along with the recipe! To RSVP, contact misa.culley@vanderbilt.edu or call 343-4367.

BOOK GROUP

Monday, February 13, 5:15–6:15pm (meets the second Monday)

What/Who: The book group is open to new members at all times and is for anyone who loves to read. The book group will read *Cuba Diaries: An American Housewife in Havana* by Isadora Tatlin. For more information, contact Jane Du Bose at jdubose@bellsouth.net or Carmen Gherman at cgherman@yahoo.com.

VANDERBILT FEMINISTS (VANDY FEMS)

Wednesdays, February 1, 8, 15 and 22, 5:00–6:00pm (meets every Wednesday)

Who: Open to all students of any gender.

What: A student group concerned about women's issues on campus, and promoting equality between genders.

Contact emily.c.baunach@vanderbilt.edu or katie.protos@vanderbilt.edu *Or just come to a meeting!*



PEER EDUCATORS OF PROJECT SAFE

Meets Sunday nights at 6pm

What/Who: Peer Educators are students trained to facilitate workshops that promote discussion and encourage understanding of violence against women. For more information, contact katie.protos@vanderbilt.edu or kasie.r.luttrell@vanderbilt.edu



MEN PROMOTING A SOLUTION

Meets Monday nights, 6pm in Sarratt 112 (except Feb. 6 in Sarratt 363)

What/Who: A group of men dedicated to creating awareness

about violent crimes against women and eliminating those crimes through social change. New members are always welcome! For more information, contact steve.frooman@vanderbilt.edu



SUPPORT GROUP

What/Who: A support group for women who are survivors of domestic/dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. This group meets weekly at a confidential time and location; all information shared is kept confidential. For more information, please contact kacy.silverstein@vanderbilt.edu or 322-1333.

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IMAGE Week:

There's More than Meets the Eye February 20–24th

Join IMAGE at the Wall with our life-sized Barbie, information about positive and negative body image, and resources about eating disorders.

KEY EVENTS:

MIRROR PROJECT AND GREAT JEANS GIVE AWAY
Monday, February 20

"GETTING REAL:" A MEDIA PRESENTATION ABOUT BODY IMAGE

Tuesday, February 21

Where and When: Divinity School, G23, 7pm

WOMEN'S BODIES ACROSS CULTURES

Wednesday, February 22

Where and When: Student Life Center Mtg Rms 1 & 2, 12:10pm

FOOD 101: DINNER & DISCUSSION

Wednesday, February 22

Where and When: Black Cultural Center, 6:30pm

SURVIVING EATING DISORDERS: A PANEL DISCUSSION

Thursday, February 23

Where and When: Wilson Hall, Rm. 126, 7pm

DENIM DAY AND AN EVENING OF DIALOGUE AND DENIM

Friday, February 24

Where and When: Wilson Hall, Rm 126, 4:30pm

Co-Sponsored with Eating Disorders Coalition of Tennessee, Psychological & Counseling Center, Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, the Wellness Resource Center, the Office of Campus Recreation, and the Office of Women's Concerns

For more information, contact IMAGEexec@gmail.com

Freedom Winter '06: A Personal Experience

by Katie Protos

Winter break has always been a time to rest between semesters, to catch up on the many hours of sleep I didn't get during finals, and to relax with my family and friends from home that I only see on these longer breaks from school. Usually, my time home in Philadelphia is spent decorating Christmas cookies with my mother, window-shopping with my best friend from high school, or watching reruns of the television shows I missed throughout the semester.

I was able to spend some time doing all of these favorite activities, but I willingly left this respite a week early to take part in the national Freedom Winter organized by the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF) and the National Organization for Women (NOW).

I arrived in Washington, DC along with students from over 35 different states – all of us giving up our breaks to raise awareness about the danger of confirming Judge Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court, to demonstrate to the Senators that their constituents will not tolerate a vote in favor of Alito, and to rally behind those senators who are championing our cause to stop the confirmation of Alito. Judge Alito would be the fifth vote on a number of key issues, including: sexual harassment; anti-discrimination laws; access to legal and safe abortions; the Family and Medical Leave Act; access to birth control; and the right to privacy. Unlike other nominated justices, Alito recorded his opinions on these controversial issues throughout his years as a judge on the Third Court of Appeals. Alito's opinions are clear and are not written in an ambiguous manner. Women's rights, civil rights, immigrant rights, and equal rights groups are organizing against Alito not because we are afraid of what he may rule on any of these issues, but because of what know he will rule based on his past precedent.

Why do I care? As a twenty-one year old female, the confirmation of Judge Samuel Alito is a threat to my ability to be a whole person in this country and an assault on my right to bodily integrity. In *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*, Alito wrote the dissenting memo that stated his opposition to public access to birth control pills and intro-uterine-devices, or IUDs. He erroneously links these family planning practices with abortion – stating his

judicial opinion that all three practices should be outlawed. I am alarmed at the possibility of returning to a time when women are not able to control their bodies because I am both pro-family and pro-choice. I believe in the sanctity of the family and I think it is imperative to be able to plan if, and when, you have children so that you may give those children the best possible future. Eliminating public access to birth control destroys a woman's ability to maintain bodily integrity – effectively returning her to a dependent lifestyle without the ability to choose what happens to and

“**Judge Alito would be the fifth vote on a number of key issues, including: sexual harassment; anti-discrimination laws; access to legal and safe abortions; the Family and Medical Leave Act; access to birth control; and the right to privacy. Unlike other nominated justices, Alito recorded his opinions on these controversial issues throughout his years as a judge on the Third Court of Appeals.**”

within her body and without the ability to plan for her family.

Alito is a concern for any individual who is pro-family. In *Chittister v. Department of Community and Economics Development*, Alito wrote the opinion that Congress did not have the power to require state governments to comply with the Family and Medical Leave Act. This is the Act that allows Americans to have three months of unpaid leave without risk of being fired to take care of any medical or family emergencies, such as recovering from a personal injury, caring for a dying parent, or spending time after a birth with the newborn child. Alito wants to reduce this basic safety net—a move that minimizes the ability of workers in America to take care of their families. This is unacceptable. Like many of my peers, my parents are part of the baby-boom generation, and they will be reaching retirement age in the next ten to fifteen years. Without the protection of the Family and Medical Leave Act, how are we supposed to take care of our aging parents while sustaining our own families and the requirements of our jobs?

Rather than sit around and bemoan the confirmation hearings to my friends and family, I decided to act upon these concerns by joining with Freedom Winter. I stayed in the townhouse home of one of the Feminist Majority Foundation campus organizers – along with about eight other students from the Southeastern region, and her two other roommates. Beginning at 7am we'd be planning

our strategies for the day. We navigated the DC Metro system to meet the other students at our “headquarters” on Capital Hill, a local Lutheran Church that supported our efforts to stop the confirmation of Judge Alito. At the Church, we would research information about the Senate Judiciary committee, write personal letters to the senators from our home states as well as those on the Judiciary committee, and would draft action plans for those who would come after us during the Freedom Winter campaign. We wore bright red stickers saying “NO on Alito!” and would walk

throughout Capitol Hill, talking to anyone we could find about the danger of confirming Judge Alito. Each day we ate lunch in the senate lunchroom, wearing our stickers, stopping staff members and senators for a word about Judge Alito. In the afternoons we would meet with our senators and their staff members in person, and we would visit the offices of senators championing our cause to show them that they are endorsed by a large portion of America.

Throughout any given day, we would be called upon to help different organizations with press conferences. We would travel to various locations throughout DC to show our support for the work they are doing, and to show America that students across the country are committed to protecting our right to be free, independent people no matter our race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual identity. At night, we would divide into groups to operate the phone banks, write on online journals about Alito, and research more ways to reach the maximum number of people to oppose Alito. We asked, and are still asking, everyone to contact their senators and to ask them to vote No to Alito, and to support a filibuster if necessary. We ask people to call, to write, to visit, and to email their senators – every state is important, every senator is important. We would work for twelve to fourteen hours straight before turning in for the day, taking the Metro back to our temporary homes, and catching a few hours of sleep before starting it all again the next day.

Was it worth it? Absolutely.

Katie Protos is a senior double majoring in Women's and Gender Studies and Communications Studies. She is the co-president of the Vanderbilt Feminists, president of IMAGE, and is a student on staff at the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center.



Eve Ensler's V-Moment

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part of daily life. How a slap to a woman's cheek or a man's fist in her face, is not considered outrageous or extraordinary. How we do not value women, hold them sacred, understand that to honor their beings and bodies is tantamount to honoring life itself.

What the WHO report reinforces for me is that addressing violence against women is central to everything. Violence is the tyrannical mechanism which undoes women and keeps them powerless and in their place. It is not inevitable. We can stop it. In addressing it, we will have to address gender inequality, poverty, education, human rights, and HIV/AIDS.

I applaud the World Health Organization for this excellent report. Sadly statistics may be what it takes to compel governments and individuals to fight to protect women. It seems to me that one abused woman would be enough to call out the community. If the WHO report is right, and our experience would suggest it is, that one out of two women are beaten in many countries, it seems this might be an indication of an emergency.

Billions of dollars are spent every year on homeland and national security. How ironic that it is in the home where women are most insecure, where they are abused, beaten and murdered, and where there is little to no money spent protecting them. Women are the primary resource of this planet. Their safety, their empowerment, their freedom is a guarantee for all our futures.

-Eve Ensler is a playwright ("The Vagina Monologues," "The Good Body") and the Founder of V-Day, the global movement to end violence against women and girls.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NASHVILLE NOW (NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN) meets the 4th Monday of the month, February 27 at the Nashville Peace and Justice Center behind Scarritt Bennett at 7pm. This meeting is open to members, friends and those seeking more information. For more information, contact CynthiaNashNOW@aol.com, tennesseehow@comcast.net or 269-7141.

MAYA ANGELOU To Speak at Vanderbilt, Monday, February 27, 2006 at 7:30pm at Memorial Gymnasium. Tickets are FREE for all Vanderbilt students, faculty, and staff and are available starting this Saturday, January 21, at the Sarratt Box Office. Community tickets are available for \$10.

The Speakers Committee presents acclaimed writer Maya Angelou. Angelou has had widespread success as a poet, educator, historian, best-selling author, actress, playwright, civil-rights activist, producer and director.

Co-sponsored by Vanderbilt Speakers Committee, The Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center, and The Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center. For more details, call 322-2471, 322-2524 or visit the Vanderbilt Speakers Cmte website, www.vanderbilt.edu/vpb/speakers.html or The Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center website, <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/bcc>.



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