

# WOMEN'S VU

September 1988

A publication of the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, Vanderbilt University

X:1

## Sex: old rules/new rules

Lauri Wright

What affects our life everyday, but is never talked about? What is the often unrecognized ghost that can torment relationships?

What will we learn about at college, even if we never take a course on it?

### *Our sexuality.*

We are constantly bombarded with sexual innuendo, "dirty jokes," and the media's perception of sex. Music, advertising, movies, and television flaunt their made up, pushed up, high heeled, mini-skirted, doe-eyed version of ideal female sexiness in bed with the silently macho Marlboro man.

Did these partners "plan" to have sex?

Did they openly discuss their needs?

Do they talk about sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS and herpes?

Do they discuss birth control or unroll a condom?

Does a couple, in the heat of passion, suddenly stop because one of the partners hesitates, Wait a minute, this is going too fast for me?

Has one ever turned to the other and lovingly asked, If you don't feel right about this, let's stop?

Of course not. These partners don't get hurt, don't get pregnant, don't spread the AIDS virus, don't confuse sex with love.

While we are being exposed to this "swept off your

those portrayed by the media.

There are too many of us afraid to have a frank exchange about something we think about all of the time.

There are too many women who think that if they say no but do not mean it, then they don't have to take responsibility for the consequences.

There are too many men who think that they don't have to stop when a woman says no.

It is only recent history that has allowed women to own their own sexuality. Before that, sex was a man's game. The rules were written by men and conquest was the goal. Scoring and keeping score was tantamount.

Women's feelings, women's pleasure, women's motivations were ignored.

The feminist movement that caught fire in the 60's and that still burns today is changing the rules of the sex game.

The new rules say that women enjoy and need sex, that women have the right to control their sexuality: to choose, to say no, to say yes.

The new rules make sexual preference a choice. Parodies of gays; stereotypes of lesbians; jokes about bisexuality, whispered with a jab of the elbow, are not funny anymore. Acceptance of personal decisions about sexuality is liberating for everyone.

The new rules refute the tired double standard that a young man should "sow his wild oats," but the women he sows them with are tramps.

The new rules say that date rape is a crime, that it is okay for a woman to say no today even if she said yes yesterday, that dinner is not the price a man pays for sex later that evening.

Today's sexually conscious student must make individual, informed decisions about personal sexuality. Gone are the 50's pressures to say no and the free love 70's pressures to say yes.

The 80's generation understands that each person must make an individual decision. It's not a roommate's decision, or a best friend's decision, or an older sibling's decision, or even a parent's decision.

The biggest influence on today's attitudes and actions towards sex has been AIDS. The real threat of AIDS to sexually active persons makes it increasingly impossible for anyone to deny the responsibility for his or her sexuality.

The AIDS-aware college student knows that a one night stand is like playing Russian Roulette, and that the bullet may not explode for months, sometimes



Faye Wattleton, President  
Planned Parenthood  
Federation of America

Faye Wattleton, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, will present the concluding lecture in the Bishop Joseph Johnson Cultural Center's series on the Black Woman's Heritage. Wattleton's lecture is titled "Women and Reproductive Rights: A New Era". The lecture, sponsored by the Bishop Joseph Johnson Cultural Center, the YWCA of Nashville, and the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center will be at 7:30 p.m., September 29 in Sarratt Cinema and is free to the public. A reception will follow in room 118 of the Sarratt Student Center.

Many people find help with decisions about their

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*"The new rules say that date rape is a crime"*

feel" view of sex, where do we learn how to come to terms with our own sexuality?

How can you make responsible decisions?

Who advises us on how to discuss our sexuality with our romantic partners?

Where do we learn to accept our physical selves without insecurity?

Some of us learned from Dr. Ruth; others of us have tourageous, enlightened parents who talked with us; others were lucky to happen onto the right books in the library; and some were educated in progressive schools that taught courses on sexuality.

Some of us haven't carefully thought about our sexuality yet. There are many people confused and angry because their sexual experiences aren't like

years. This reality forces all of us to play the game of sex with all of the cards on the table and eyes wide open with the knowledge that the gamble is one of life or death.

AIDS is bringing personal sexuality into the conversation between partners before intimacy begins. It's a conversation, like the related discussion of birth control, that must often be initiated by the woman.

These conversations allow no room for coyness, spontaneous uncontrolled passion, or the no, no from her lips but the yes, yes from her eyes.

Students, female and male, should spend time understanding their motives, needs, what they can cope with, and what they can't manage.

Young people today need to understand that when a partner says no, it's time to quit. Partners must respect each other's feelings and discuss motives, birth control, AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases, before they engage in sex.

These discussions may not be as romantic as the movies, but they can create an intimacy that draws

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couples closer than a candlelight dinner ever could. This intimacy can be powerful and vibrant even when the discussions lead the couple to the conclusion of, Let's wait, or We need some time apart to think about this alone.

All students today, male and female, must ask themselves some hard questions. Whom can I trust? The media? My best friend? A professor? My partner?

What are my goals and my feelings? What are the consequences of my becoming sexually involved right now?

Honest answers to these questions make all players in the very serious game of sex winners. That's the prize. ■

*Lauri Wright is the librarian at the Women's Center, a former journalism teacher, and newspaper feature writer.*

## In the news

### Civil Rights Restoration Act Gives Women Athletes a Victory.

A group of women athletes at Temple University in Philadelphia filed suit against the University in 1980, charging discrimination in sports under Title IX. The 1984 Grove City Supreme Court decision forced them to amend their complaint. In March 1988, the passage of the Civil Rights Restoration Act allows the plaintiffs to re-amend their suit to include Title IX and reference to institution-wide use of funds.

On June 13th an agreement was reached in a federal district court. This decision provides that the budget for women's athletics at Temple must be tied directly to the percentage of athletes who are women. This past year 43% of all Temple athletes were women.

The importance of the decision is that "a major university decided that it was within its self-interest to create an equitable program," said Ellen Vargyas, the plaintiffs' attorney. Vargyas, who works out of the National Women's Law Center in Washington, DC, said she hopes other universities will use Temple's plan as an outline to develop more equitable athletic programs.

*Eleanor Smeal Report,  
June 21, 1988*

**More degrees are being awarded to women.** More bachelor's, doctor's, and first-professional degrees will be awarded to women this year than ever before, according to the Department of Education's Center for Education statistics (CES).

The number and proportion of women earning doctoral and first-professional degrees will probably continue to grow, CES predicts. The proportion of doctorates awarded to women is projected to increase from 37 percent in 1987-88 to 41 percent in

(Wattleton continued from page 1)

sexuality at their local planned parenthood clinic. Clinics offer information about preventing sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. Services are confidential and fees are based on a sliding scale according to financial need.

Sexuality education and increased access to birth control methods are two of the many strategies Planned Parenthood advocates to control our society's problem with teen pregnancy.

Wattleton is the first woman and the youngest person to head the nation's oldest voluntary family planning organization. She is a certified nurse midwife and a mother. ■

Pick up a free copy of "Breaking the Code", an article on subtle sex discrimination printed in *June Savvy*, at the Women's Center. "We all know about overt sexual discrimination -- the sort that can land a company in court. But the subtler forms of sexism can be almost as damaging -- and much harder to fight."

1991-92; the proportion of first-professional degrees awarded to women is expected to rise from 35 percent to 38 percent over the next five years.

The number of doctorates and first-professional degrees awarded to men are expected to continue to decline.

*Higher Education & National Affairs,  
5/23/88*

**Sexual harassment grievance procedures underutilized.** A relatively small percentage of campus sexual harassment victims use university grievance procedures for dealing with these incidents, according to a study reported in the Spring 1987 issue of the *Journal of National Association of Women Deans, Administrators and Counselors*. The study noted that few victims of sexual harassment actually file complaints, choosing instead to ignore instances of harassment or to use informal methods of resolving their cases.

*On Campus With Women,  
Spring 1988*

**Editor's note:** Although underutilization of the grievance procedure is not proven at Vanderbilt, Pat Piece, Director of the Opportunity Development Center (ODC), encourages people with problems to report them to her department. The cases reported have been resolved quickly and effectively.

The deficiency in reporting sexual harassment experiences often reflects ignorance of the law and the available procedure for dealing with this unacceptable behavior. Vanderbilt University has a well defined policy that is presented in a sexual harassment brochure available at the Women's Center.

Questions can be directed to ODC or the Women's Center. Both departments are located in the Franklin Building, West Side Row. ODC's phone number is 322-4705. ■

## It's your health

*Beth Colvin, RN, MSN  
Dept. of Obstetrics and Gynecology*

With all the advances in medical technology in the past twenty-five years, birth control options have changed very little. There have been refinements in some (safer, lower dose pills) and removal of others (most IUDs). Now, concerns of disease transmission must be considered as well as pregnancy prevention.

### How does a woman choose the best contraception for herself and her partner?

There are many factors that should be considered and discussed with your doctor or nurse to come up with the best plan. Age, patterns of sexual activity, cost, effectiveness, and plans for childbearing should all be weighed.

In general, for women who currently have more than one sexual partner or who have had more than one partner in the past two or three years, some form of barrier contraception is probably best. Barrier methods include diaphragms, condoms, vaginal sponges, and foams. The spermicide (sperm-killing) agent used with the diaphragm and found in the foams, sponges, and now coated on some condoms can help protect against the transmission of gonorrhea and trichomonas. Barrier methods, especially condoms, may also help prevent the spread of some viruses like herpes, genital warts, and AIDS. A take charge woman may even choose to carry condoms in her purse.

**For women who have intercourse infrequently, a barrier method is also a good idea.** The use of this method is related to intercourse, therefore, she does not have to use an ongoing method that protects her when she is not sexually active.

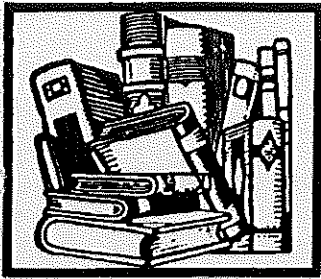
For the woman who is having regular intercourse in a stable relationship, birth control pills may be the method of choice. The pill is not recommended for women who smoke and even for non-smokers over age forty due to the increase in vascular problems like strokes and blood clots.

**The majority of new developments in contraception are, of course, female contraception.** The cervical cap and the vaginal contraceptive film should be available within the year. The cervical cap has been around for many years, but has only recently been recommended for approval by the FDA. It fits over the cervix like a diaphragm, but is smaller and can stay in place several days. It, like a diaphragm, must be fitted by a health-care provider and is inserted by the woman or her partner before intercourse. The vaginal film is a thin, translucent square that is placed in the vagina before intercourse and acts as a covering over the cervix preventing the transport of sperm.

Exciting advances are coming in the use of vaccines to temporarily prevent pregnancy as well as new hormonal contraceptives that can prevent ovulation or implantation.

As with all decisions regarding your reproductive health care, options should be carefully considered with you and your partner's preferences and lifestyles in mind. ■





## In the library

Lauri Wright  
Women's Center Librarian

### New acquisitions in Women's Center Library:

*So What's it to Me? Sexual Assault Information for Guys*, Gayle M. Stringer and Deanna Rants-Rodriguez, 1987.

Who was that fox you were with? Did you score? These types of male locker room questions make it difficult for a young man to be respectful toward the young women he dates and to be "one of the guys" at the same time.

How to answer these types of questions is one of the issues addressed in *So What's it to Me?*, a 35 page booklet published by the King County Rape Relief Center in Renton, WA.

Young men haven't traditionally been given information about date rape, sexual assault and harassment, the use of sex in advertising, and the importance of communication between couples. This booklet fills this gap.

The authors emphasize self respect, self awareness, respect for others, and consequences of behaviors. All are dealt with in a nonjudgemental, positive tone.

Although the contemporary design and workbook style of *So What's it to Me* are aimed at the high school student, university students looking for brief, easily read information about male sexuality will find what they need here.

Parents and educators need to be aware of this resource that addresses the problems of sexual assault to a new audience: the young male.

*Legal Rights of Battered Women* is a handbook available from Legal Services of Middle Tennessee or at the Women's Center Library. Some of the fifteen topics covered are:

- choosing a way out
- what about the police?
- do you want to stay together?
- do you need a lawyer?

In addition to giving concise information there is a list of agencies including telephone numbers where help can be sought.

Legal Services will mail a copy of the handbook in a plain envelope to anyone who calls them at 244-6610.

*Women and Psychotherapy: A Consumer Handbook* prepared by the Association for Women in Psychology and the American Psychological Association summarizes some of the major issues surrounding women and therapy and should provide the information you need to be an informed consumer.

*Financial Aid: A Partial List of Resources for Women* is a fourth edition article published by the Association of American Colleges and includes a list of scholarships and other funds, a bibliography of specific financial aid resources, and other educational related information. ■

## The "Flu Crew" needs you.

The division of Vanderbilt Pediatric Infectious Disease has been awarded a \$2.8 million NIH grant to determine if a new nosedrop influenza vaccine is as effective as the standard flu shot. The nosedrop vaccine has been studied for over ten years and has been shown to be safe, effective and easy to administer.

Last year the VU "Flu Crew" immunized over 2,700 people. They are currently looking for an additional 1,000 participants.

There will be no charge for the vaccine. Ev-

eryone who participates will receive a shot and a nosedrop. A blood sample will be obtained prior to vaccination, one month later, and again the following spring. If you experience any flu symptoms during the winter, you will be asked to report them and a throat culture may be required. Participants are paid \$10 each time a blood sample or throat culture is obtained.

For more specific information about the study, call 322-2477 or stop by room D-3227 MCN. ■

## Women's Center programs

Call 322-4843 for additional information on the programs listed below.

**Dissertation Writers Group** will meet with Nancy Ransom September 14, 4-6 p.m. at the Women's Center. Women of all schools and disciplines are invited to attend.

**Working Up a Storm: Anger, Anxiety, Joy, and Tears on the Job.** Kathleen V. Hoover-Dempsey and Jeanne M. Plas, Associate Professors of Psychology, will discuss their soon to be published book containing research on emotions in the workplace.

Twelve years ago they formed a group to discuss tears at work after several female graduate students expressed a fear that their academic careers were jeopardized because they had cried in front of a supervisor. The findings from this group sparked interest and research on emotional expressions in the work place. Their findings are reported in a book to be published in October by W. W. Norton, titled *Working Up a Storm*. Join us for this discussion with your brown bag lunch in Room 118 of Sarratt Student Center on Wednesday, September 14 at 12:15 p.m. Soft drinks will be provided.

**Book Group** will meet Monday, September 19, 5:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. at the Women's Center to discuss *Hot Flashes* by Barbara Raskin. Joyce Laben will be the leader. Light refreshments.

A new program: **Lunchtime Book Review** will have Cecelia Tichi, Professor of English to review "...And Ladies of the Club" by Helen Santmyer. This new monthly offering is designed to provide an interesting and informative review of a feminist book followed by a discussion period. You are invited to read the book ahead or just enjoy hearing about it. The program will be held on Tuesday, September 20, 12:15 p.m. in Sarratt 118. Soft drinks provided.

**Students for Women's Concerns Committee** (formerly Women's Week) will hold its 1988-89 organizational meeting Tuesday, September 20, 4:30 p.m. at the Women's Center. A transformation of Women's Week, Students for Women's Concerns will sponsor programs on women's concerns and gender throughout the academic year. A special event will be held in March 1989, which is National Women's History Month. Please call the Women's Center if you are interested in participating, but cannot attend this meeting.

**Foodfight**, a cabaret of songs and vignettes about women's obsessions with food, weight, and body image, will be performed at Sarratt Cinema, Thursday, September 22, 8:00 p.m. This poignant play is a serious, yet light-hearted and entertaining exploration into the life and minds of people who struggle each day with eating problems. Following the one hour play a panel will lead a question and answer period. Tickets are available through Ticketmaster: \$1 for students, staff, and faculty, \$5 for persons from the community.

This program is co-sponsored by the Counseling Center, Panhellenic Council, and Student Government Association (SGA).

The concluding lecture in the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center's series on **Black Women's Heritage** will be given by Faye Wattleton, President of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Thursday, September 29, 7:30 p.m. in Sarratt Cinema. "Women and Reproductive Rights: A New Era" will be the topic of this lecture sponsored by the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center, the YWCA, and the Women's Center. A reception for Wattleton will be held in 118 Sarratt following her talk. ■

# Announcements et cetera

## Students for Women's Concerns.

Metamorphosis of Women's Week. After twelve years the Women's Week Group voted last spring to change the format for their program. Rather than concentrating all the efforts of the committee on an intensive week of activities and special events, the group will offer programs on women's concerns and gender throughout the academic year. March will receive special emphasis as National Women's History Month, and at least one program will be held during that month.

The committee has changed its name to Students for Women's Concerns and extends an invitation to all interested students, both male and female, to join with them and plan the 1988-89 program.

The first meeting in the Fall Semester will be held at the Women's Center on Tuesday, September 20, at 4:30 p.m. All interested students are encouraged to attend.

**Intervention In Child Sexual Abuse: Offenders, Victims and Survivors.** Training for professionals working with perpetrators and victims of child sexual abuse sponsored by Forensic Mental Health Associates and The Rape and Sexual Abuse Center to be held in Nashville October 12-14. Complete brochure available at Women's Center.

**Appleworks** is offering an after school Children's Wellness/Exercise Program beginning September 12 for children ages 6 to 12. Included in the twice weekly program will be aerobic routines, fitness testing, educational presentation of principles of wellness, and a nutritious snack. The twelve week program costs \$50 with discounts for more than one child per family. Call 322-3222 for more information.

**Graduate Fellowships: Focus on Funding Opportunities,** a fellowship workshop, September 22, 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. in the Sarratt Student Center is designed for graduate students as well as Juniors and Seniors considering graduate schools. For more information call Kay Hancock at 322-3939.

**The Second Annual Graduate Student Research Day** will be held October 26, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Sarratt Student Center. This is an opportunity for graduate students to present their research to the Vanderbilt community.

**Vanderbilt Women's Athletics** program will include soccer, golf, and cross country this month. The first cross country meet will be in Birmingham on September 10 with Mark Webb as their coach. The department is happy to announce Webb has returned full time to Vanderbilt and will coach both cross country and women's track.

**Sarratt Gallery** will host the opening of Mark Grote Solo Exhibition on September 7 from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. This exhibit of painted aluminum sculpture and wall reliefs will run until October 5 with a lecture at 1:30 p.m. on opening day.

**Planned Parenthood Association of Nashville, Inc.** is making available to parent/teacher associations a two hour program designed to enable parents to provide accurate AIDS information to their children. Additionally it will assist parents in understanding their feelings regarding children with AIDS in schools. For more information and to arrange for a program in your school, call the Education Department of PPAN at 327-1097.

**Take Back The Night March/Rally** on Saturday evening, September 17, will protest the rising tide of violence against women in Nashville. Supporters will gather at 6:00 p.m. and march to Riverfront Park where a program of speakers and entertainment will address constructive ways to solve the problem. Numerous women's organizations are sponsoring this event which originated with Nashville NOW. For more information call Lynne Cushing or June Dye at 298-2499. ■



## *Bombeck for president*

I got a letter from an attorney in Ohio saying he was running me for President of the United States. ...But the truth is, I don't want to be President. It has nothing to do with being a woman and swimming against the tide.

Actually the polls say more than fifty percent of the population believe a woman could run the country. As a feminist once pointed out, "Why not a woman President! Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did...she just did it backwards and in high heels."

The truth is I'm over qualified. I don't want to run around kissing babies and licking spoons. I've done that for thirty years.

The presidency is a dead-end job for women. We're ready for something bigger...something at a higher entry level.

Erma Bombeck, *Los Angeles Syndicate*,  
3/24/88

Edited by Judith T. Helfer

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A yearly subscription to off-campus addresses (except students) is \$3.00. Please make checks payable to Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center.

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