

VOICES

The Women's Center Newsletter

University of Connecticut

April/May 2003

The Vagina Monologues A Big Success

By Cori Simek

Von der Mehden was packed with both young and old, male and female—all of which were captivated by the hilarious yet moving production of *The Vagina Monologues*.

We all have heard of this infamous off Broadway sensation, but very few know of this play's history and significance. *The Vagina Monologues* is not only a female liberation, but the V-Day campaign.

In 1998 Eve Ensler performed her play in small towns and large cities around the world. After her show,

she was hearing hundreds of women's stories of rape, incest, domestic battery, and genital mutilation. It was clear to Ensler that something dramatic and widespread needed to be done to stop the violence. This is how V-Day was born. Ensler used her performance as the catalyst to raise awareness, and now only four years later two-thousand V-Day events took place in 2003 at over one-thousand locations around the world. When women no longer fear violence, then V-Day will be known as Victory over Violence Day!

Despite the grave topic,

the play opened with laughter. The performers did an amazing job provoking emotion from each audience member, as they spoke from their hearts about vaginas.

The skit "Because He Liked to Look at It" was performed by Nikki McGary and was about how an ordinary man loved her vagina, allowing her to find love for it too. McGary's act created such a roar of laughter and applause from the audience that automatically, I could feel people loosening up, becoming comfortable with the topic.

A personal favorite, and a
continued on page 4

SNEAK PEEK
A Quick Guide to What's Inside

Read about the Vagina Monologues
See pgs 1 and 4

Check out What Events We Have Planned!
See page 2

Read about a member of the Women's Center Advisory Board
See pgs 1 & 4

Reminders and group information
See page 5

Calendar of Events

March

- 3 Women's History Month Opening: *Female Rebels and Mavericks* with Max Dashu**
Join Max Dashu, scholar of global women's history, for a slide talk about audacious women who break the rules: adventurers, wantons, witches, heretics, radicals, lesbians, insurgents, activists and visionaries. Monday, 3 p.m., Konover Auditorium. Thomas J. Dodd Research Center
- 6 Brown Bag Lunch: Identifying and Understanding Eating Disorders**
Join Jen Ketterly from Student Health Services for a discussion about eating disorders. Find out how they come about, what the warning signs are and what to do if you suspect that someone you care about might have an eating disorder. Thursday, Noon, Women's Center Lounge
- 8 International Women's Day**
A day of celebrating women's contributions to the Arts worldwide. Join us for films, exhibits, food and performances by Aparna Sindhoor and Alix Olson.
Co-sponsored with the African-American Cultural Center, Asian American Cultural Center, Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center, the Rainbow Center, International Programs and Services and SUBOG.
Saturday, Noon - 3 p.m., Student Union, 3rd Floor
- 10 Reproductive Rights Panel**
Join us for a panel discussion on women's reproductive rights, the current political climate and struggles that continue to go on to ensure reproductive rights. Panelists will include Lisa Marie Griffiths from the Women's Clinic, Raisa Negrón and Shanta Evans from Planned Parenthood, and Anne Schelegel from Summit Women's Clinic.
Co-sponsored with UConn NOW
Monday, 7 p.m., Konover Auditorium, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center
- 20 Thursday Night at the Movies: *Is Feminism Dead?***
Years after the women's movement burst open doors of opportunity that had long been barred, a new generation of women seems to be questioning the meaning and the value of the battles fought by their mothers and grandmothers. Has feminism somehow gone out of style? In this program, Patricia Ireland, former President of NOW, Dr. bell hooks and others appraise the women's movement as it currently exists and discuss its relevance in today's cultural climate.
Thursday, 6 p.m., Women's Center Lounge
- 27 Women in the Workplace**
Join a diverse panel of women from various nontraditional professions for a discussion about their experiences and find out what insights they have to offer.
Co-sponsored with Career Services.
Thursday, 3:30 p.m., Women's Center Lounge

UConn NOW Events

By Michelle Noehren

The UConn chapter of the National Organization for Women has a lot of great activism in the works for the current semester! Partly due to the anti-choice takeover of the House, Senate and executive branch of our government, this semester we decided to focus around issues of women's reproductive rights. We will be continuing the petition we created last semester that allows our representatives to know that we are against any restrictions placed on women's reproductive freedoms.

We are also planning an event, on March 10 at 7 p.m. This event will be aimed at explaining the current legislation that threatens women's reproductive rights, as well as providing people with a diverse group of panelists who will talk about their experiences and opinions on why we need to work to ensure that women have the fundamental right to control our own bodies.

UConn NOW is back with a revived passion to educate the community about the harmful effects of sexism on women and men and to help work for a future in which women's rights are considered, by society at large, to be basic human rights.

If you would like to hear more about UConn NOW, email us at huskyNOW@yahoo.com or feel free to come to our meetings on Mondays at 7 p.m. in SU 375.

Men Against Violence Against Women

By Ahadu Chernet

Men Against Violence Against Women is a branch of the Violence Against Women Protection Program and works together in educating the campus about violence against women.

This semester, MAVAW is taking part in the White Ribbon Campaign. The White Ribbon Campaign is dedicated to educate men about violence against women. We are handing out information along with a white ribbon to show our support.

Upcoming events include having a speaker and activities in April as part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

We are also expanding our group of men to a larger, more diverse group of peer educators. The MAVAW group is also broadening our outreach to include high schools and neighboring colleges that do not have any violence against women programs.

If you are interested in getting involved or would like further information, contact Program Coordinators Annie Rodriguez or Ahadu Chernet at 486-4738.

Going Full Steam Ahead

The search for information on the herstory of the Women's Center is as strong as ever. Meghan Kimball, a Women's Center intern, has undertaken the task of compiling a comprehensive account of the past thirty years of the Center. Fortunately, the herstory of the first ten years is complete, but the Center has been alive and well for another twenty years! Meghan would appreciate any information people could provide.

Please contact Kathy Fluckiger at 486-4738 or Kathy.Fluckiger@uconn.edu with any contributions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The School of Business is presenting a Global Business Leadership Seminar Series called "Women in Business." The seminar will take place Wednesday, March 12, 2003 from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. in Konover Auditorium, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center. Come share the experiences of recent UConn MBA women executives. Contact Seanice Austin in the School of Business at 860-486-2315 for more information.

The student organization, War Resisters, has formed on campus. For more information about the UConn chapter, contact Suzy Stockton, campus representative, at suzystockton@virgilio.it. Information about the War Resisters League is available at www.warresisters.org.

There are two opportunities each week to vigil for peace. **Storrs** - Tuesdays 4-5 pm, North Eagleville Rd & 195. **Willimantic** - Thursdays 5-6 p.m., corner of Main & Jackson St. Bring signs, candles and anyone who is willing to stand for peace.

The Rainbow Center is looking for people to become peer educators. If you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or an ally who is interested in getting involved at the Rainbow Center as part of its Speakers Bureau, contact Stephanie Marnin at 486-5821 or rnbwdir@uconn.edu.

The Phenomenal Women group will not be meeting this semester. If you are interested in participating in this group in the future, please contact Kathy Larrocco at 486-4130. The group focuses on positive body image and the pressures women face everyday to have the "perfect body".

If you have any announcements that you would like to be included in *Voices*, please contact Jen Babulsky, Editor, at 486-4738.

(Continued from page 1) *Vagina Monologues*

favorite of many, was Molly Horan’s powerful performance of “My Angry Vagina.” She walked on stage, screaming from her gut and cussing.

“My vagina is pissed off...” she said.

Everyone knew exactly what she meant as she continued to speak angrily about gynecological appointments, and uncomfortable underwear. It was hysterical. Although some acts sprinkled the play with laughter, Chanell Robertson’s story of a Bosnian woman brought the play to a more serious tone. Robertson powerfully told us of a woman who was brutally raped by six soldiers in “My Vagina Was My Village.” This, along with a few other acts focusing on violence, allowed the audience to be reminded of the women and girls abused everyday. The 2003 production by the UConn V-Day campaign was a great success. Thanks to the Women’s Center and SUBOG, who co-sponsored this event with UConn V-Day, hundreds of women can now rediscover and enjoy their vaginas – and more importantly people left with an awareness of violence that occurs not only in countries of war, but in our own little world.

As I was ripping tickets and handing out buttons at the start of the play I overheard a young man. “V-Day? What does that stand for, Vagina Day?” he said with disgust to his female friend.

As he walked out of the play about two hours later, after hearing non-stop about this subject that made him squirm – I know he had a better understanding of what V-Day stood for, and will probably never think of the word Vagina without associating it with Eve Ensler’s *The Vagina Monologues*.

Women’s Lacrosse Schedule

3/8	New Hampshire	1 p.m.
3/12	Yale	3 p.m.
3/19	vs. Lafayette	3 p.m.
3/22	vs. Vanderbilt	1 p.m.
3/26	Quinnipiac	3 p.m.
3/29	Syracuse	1 p.m.

* All Home games are in **bold**

Ticket Information...

Tickets for women’s sports events are available through the Athletic Ticket Office, 2111 Hillside Road, U-78 Storrs, CT 06269. The office phone number is toll free from anywhere in the U.S. 1-877-AT-UConn or 1-877-288-2666 or 860-486-2724.

(Continued from page 1) Taylor

in addition to luncheons, are The Women of Color Recognition Banquet which recognizes the everyday accomplishments and contributions women of color have made to UConn, a mentoring program for students and other integrative activities.

She also said a resource guide containing information on businesses that would be of interest to women of color would soon be available.

In addition to serving as co-chair of the Diversity Committee, Taylor is a member of the UCPEA Grievance Team, African-American Cultural Center Advisory Board and Admissions Office Open House Committee.

She is also part of a community service organization that raises money to support a number of needy organizations in surrounding towns.

Diversity on campus is a big issue for Taylor. She said the faculty and staff on campus are not diverse enough and said she hopes that would improve with the Diversity Plan and other measures.

“UConn is going in the right direction,” she said. “Top administrators and the trustees are supporting this, so it is my hope that within the next few years, there will be greater diversity of faculty and staff.”

White Ribbon Campaign

By Cori Simek

The Women’s Center’s Men Against Violence Against Women (see pg. 3) sponsored a White Ribbon Campaign at UConn for the week of Valentine’s celebration. Wearing a white ribbon is a personal pledge to never commit, condone, nor remain silent about violence against women. This campaign is the largest effort in the world of men working to end men’s violence against women.

The White Ribbon Campaign was initially organized in 1990 to acknowledge the “Montreal Massacre,” where 14 women were murdered by Mark Lepine at the University of Montreal. This massacre sparked the first large scale men’s antiviolence organization. Men were outraged and began to take action. Billboards reading “Strong Men Don’t Bully” were sponsored, publicity and much debate was fueled, and finally widespread support was generated and began this campaign.

Although the White Ribbon Campaign began in Canada, men across the globe have begun to take action by wearing white ribbons, holding White Ribbon Concerts, and Ivory Dad Walks to not only raise money, but for awareness and education.

It is wonderful to see the Men Against Violence Against Women (MAVAW) Program at UConn is sponsoring this White Ribbon Campaign and having such success in their work.

Asian American Female Health Forum

The Asian American Female Focus Group (AsAFFG) was created two years ago to educate women about health promotion, disease prevention and self empowerment. Within this group, female students can develop a sense of trust and comfort in a private, yet relaxing atmosphere. Meetings include open floor discussion about family, relationships, sex, body pride and interpersonal issues. Past events have included Yoga, nutrition, learning to do self breast and testicular exams and a discussion about sex.

Events will be going on throughout the semester. On March 8, International Women's Day, there will be a celebration of women's contributions to the arts worldwide including music, art, dance, poetry and ethnic food will be occurring at the Student Union from 12 p.m. - 3 p.m. on the third floor.

The Asian American Female Focus Group will be meeting on April 3 at the Asian American Cultural Center (AsACC) at 7 p.m. to discuss Asian Americans and dating and will see a dating skit performed by Liz Lee. There will also be a meeting on April 29 from 4 p.m. - 7 p.m. for an end of semester workout and barbeque.

For more information, please contact the AsACC at 486-0830. The Asia American Cultural Center is located at 364 Fairfield Rd, behind Hall Dorm, between Wilbur Cross and the William Benton Museum of Art.

VOICES

Kathleen Holgerson
Director

Jennifer Babulsky
Editor

Kathy Fluckiger
Associate Director

Cori Simek
Co-Editor

Annie Rodriguez
VAWPP Coordinator

Carol Millette
Administrative Assistant

Phone: 860-486-4738

TDD: 860-486-1546

Fax: 860-486-1104

Semester Hours: M-Th: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
& F: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Website: www.womenscenter.uconn.edu

Some Reminders...

Join Our Listserv!

Want to keep up with the Women's Center on a weekly basis? Then join the U-WOMEN Listserv, a weekly updated e-mail featuring Women's Center events, on and off campus events, announcements and national/international news. For information on how to subscribe, email j06374@yahoo.com.

Check Out Our Website

Be sure to visit our newly updated website at www.womenscenter.uconn.edu. You can find out about all our events for the Spring 2003 semester, learn about our ongoing groups, get informed on issues such as dating violence and sexual assault and find out what resources we have at our library. You can even find past newsletters on the site.

Ongoing Groups:

Between Women

A rap group for women who love women...or think they might! Come and discuss fun topics, movies and more with women who share your feelings and experiences. This group meets every Wednesday at 7 p.m. For more information call the Women's Center or email betweenwomen@hotmail.com.

Sexual Assault Survivor's Group

A support group for women who have experienced actual or attempted sexual assault at any time.

Co-sponsored with Mental Health Services. Contact Jenn Fox at 486-4705 for information and registration.

Caregivers of the Elderly

This support group is undergoing structural changes to better meet the needs identified by those who have been participating, as well as those who wish to participate. Updates and information will be available on our website in the near future. For more information, contact Kathy Fluckiger at 486-4738.

Greetings from the Editor

I would like to thank all the people who helped put together this issue of *VOICES*. All the hard work and effort people put in is greatly appreciated.

I would like to welcome and offer a special thanks to Cori Simek, who wrote many of the articles in this issue and who is participating in a writing internship at the Women's Center for the spring semester.

VOICES

THE WOMEN'S CENTER...WHERE ALL THE PIECES COME TOGETHER

#289500
University of Connecticut
Women's Center
417 Whitney Road, Unit 1118
Storrs, CT 06269-1118