

# VOICES

## The Women's Center Newsletter

University of Connecticut

November/December 2004

### Fresh Faces at the Women's Center

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Members**  
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With the start of another year, the Women's Center has seen a few exciting new changes to its staff.

We'd like to welcome the following new student staff members to the Center: Davon Alston, MAVAW Co-Coordinator; Meredith Alvarez, Administrative Assistant; Jamie Bassell, Statistics; Danielle Chin, Generalist/Program Assistant; Yijid Feng, Generalist; Jenna Manghnani, Thursday Night at the Movies Coordinator/Program Assistant; Suzy Stockton, Generalist/Program Assistant/National Young Women's Day of Action; and Shannon Wong, Library Assistant/Advertising.

We have also been training two student interns: Jennifer Laptew, Programming/Women & Oral Health; and Julie DiMauro, Newsletter Editor/UWOMEN Listserv Manager.

In an effort to acclimate the many new students, graduate student staff member Sasha Smith has introduced a mentoring program to strengthen connections among new and old members.

Senior Jessica Warner has been with the Center for about two years, and has signed up to be a mentor to new student staff.

"It's about half and half old staff and new staff," says Warner. "A new person

would be able to come up to me whenever they had any questions, and we'd encourage them to stick with the Women's Center and help them out."

In addition to the new students, the Center's Advisory Board has new members to offer counsel on the workings of the Center's administration.

New to the board and our subcommittees are Deborah Becker, Domestic Violence Program of United Services; Nisha Hardnett, Admissions; Jean Main, Financial Aid; Becky McENERY, UConn Foundation; Vernon Percy, Counseling Program for Intercollegiate Athletes; Kelly Shannon, UConn School of Social Work; Janet Barnes-Farrell, Psychology; Judy Vasquez, community member; Michael Stenko, Alumni Association; and Beth Settje, Career Services. The new members bring with them a variety of different experiences and backgrounds.

McENERY, for example, has background with UConn's Department of Residential Life, and so has experience working with students. When she chaired the University of Connecticut Professional Employees Association (UCPEA) Women's Issues Committee, she worked closely with Women's Center Director Kathleen Holgerson, who later invited

her to help out on the Advisory Committee.

Stenko got connected with the Women's Center through the Alumni Center's committee on diversity. He says, "It's an honor to have been asked to be involved."

We can expect that these new additions to our staff and Advisory Board will bring some fresh ideas to the Women's Center's program planning.

### Young Women's Votes Important

By Sasha Smith

It is no secret that young American women did not participate fully in past elections. Particularly in the 2000 elections, young single women did not vote in the numbers that they should have to fully represent our population. Their votes could have made a difference in their local, state, and national elections, and in the present state the world is in. Young women affect our world's future. They are becoming leaders, raising the leaders, and have the opportunity to decide who our future leaders are.

The UConn Women Center chose this semester's theme, "Did You Know You Were Missing" for a reason. It is a theme that the

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## 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, go to [vm.uconn.edu/subunsub.html](http://vm.uconn.edu/subunsub.html) and enter UWOMEN-L.

### Check Out Our Website

Be sure to visit our newly updated website at [www.womenscenter.uconn.edu](http://www.womenscenter.uconn.edu). You can find out about all our events for the Fall 2004 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 discussion 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, 7 PM, at the Women's Center. For more information call the Women's Center or email: [betweenwomen@hotmail.com](mailto:betweenwomen@hotmail.com).



#### **Sexual Assault Survivor's Group**

A support group for women who have experienced actual or attempted sexual assault at any time in their lives. Co-sponsored with Mental Health Services. Contact Jenna Fox at 486-4705 for information and registration.

#### **Graduate Women's Group**

This is an ongoing, peer-led group that is intended to provide support, focus, ideas and problem-solving strategies for female graduate students at various stages in the process. The group meets the 2nd Monday of each month and topics will vary and may include issues of motivation, competence, procrastination, anxiety, goal setting, dealing with advisors/committees, bureaucratic struggles, and finding a mentor. Vent, relax, give advice, share stories. This group meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6 PM at the UConn Women's Center.

### **The South Asian Tree (TSAT)**

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka. Do you identify with one of the countries listed above either through self or family? If so, come join in on dialogues of balancing South Asian heritage with North American ideologies and the implications it has on day to day experiences including life at UConn.

Facilitated by Bandana Purkayastha, Bidya Ranjeet, and Shanthi Rao. For more information contact Bidya Ranjeet at 6-5460.

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Perrelli. "For example, the audience learned that 86% of rapes are committed by people the victims know. The plays were educational and entertaining all at once."

The group, directed by Dyas-Fried, is just one of an ever-changing cast in the company's biannual tour. "The five founding members worked in battered women's shelters for many years, accumulating 65 years of experience with assault combined," she said. Dyas-Fried is one of the original founding members.

The group will have traveled to 14 different states in its tour, the run lasting approximately three months.

The two events were sponsored by the Women's Center, and co-sponsored with the Department of Alcohol and Other Drugs Education and Services, and the Domestic Violence Program of United Services, Inc.

## VOICES

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### NOVEMBER

#### 02 Election Day

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

#### 04 Faces of America

Written entirely from interviews and workshops held across the country *Faces* has been described as the first truly multicultural portrayal of Americans ever created, and "edu-tainment" at its best. Co-sponsored with the Asian American Cultural Center, African American Cultural Center, Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center and the Rainbow Center.

Thursday - von der Mehden - 7:00 PM

#### 14 Women's Book Club: *The House of Gentle Men* by Kathy Hepicstall

Come and explore the world through the eyes and words of women. We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. All of the meetings will be held at noon in the conference room in the Office of Special Programs, located in the Wilbur Cross Building. Visit the "Groups" section of our website at [www.womenscenter.uconn.edu](http://www.womenscenter.uconn.edu) to review past selections.

Tuesday - Office of Special Programs Conference Room - Noon

#### 10 Time for Me: Shamanism: Your Inner Doorways

Discussion will include the various States of Consciousness and some of the methods for Shamanic journeywork. Facilitated by Dawna Martin, a healer of many modalities who thrives on helping people transform their lives through devoting time to the balance of their Body, Mind and Spirit, Being in the Now, and having fun. Co-sponsored with Health Education, Office of Special Programs.

Wednesday - Women's Center Lounge - 6:00 PM

#### 17 Negotiating with Your Partner

Think you might be ready to have sex with a special someone? Before deciding, make sure you've considered all the issues and talked directly about them with your partner. Join us for a workshop that will help identify strategies for starting and having what can sometimes be uncomfortable conversations while helping you gain confidence by knowing the facts.

Wednesday - Women's Center Lounge - 7:00 PM

#### 18 Thursday Night at the Movies: *Mai's America*

"Mai's America" is a personal journey that defies all expectations. Mai, a smart, vivacious, and resilient Vietnamese teenager, travels to America for her senior year of high school, shouldering her family's high expectations and her own visions of western-style success. Yet, nothing in Mai's wildest imagination could prepare her for what she finds in rural Mississippi. Encounters with white Pentecostal and black Baptist host-families, a local transvestite, and South Vietnamese

immigrants challenge her long-held ideas about America, the concept of freedom, her identity and even her homeland of Vietnam.

Thursday - Women's Center Lounge - 6:00 PM

### DECEMBER

#### 01 Discovering the Intuitive You: Manifestation Basics

Learn how to focus your energy and create what you need in your life. This hands-on class will cover exercises and techniques used in manifestation, paying attention to your thoughts/limiting beliefs, and you will create a manifestation/wish box to help you along your path. All supplies included. No experience necessary. Facilitated by Dawna Martin, a healer of many modalities who thrives on helping people transform their lives through devoting time to the balance of their Body, Mind and Spirit, Being in the Now, and having fun.

Wednesday - Women's Center Lounge - 6:00 PM

#### 01 Investing in Ourselves: Financial Strategies for Today's Women

Statistics say that more women will outlive their husbands. With divorces on the rise, women are being faced with the task of handling their own finances as well as coordinating their child's college tuition, and their own retirement. Good thing you're a multi-tasker! Whatever your stage in life or your resources, you will get answers to your Financial Planning decisions from one of our successful women executives! Facilitated by Sonia Barkman of Primerica.

Wednesday - Women's Center Lounge - Noon

#### 03 Kwanzaa

Join us for the celebration of Kwanzaa with Keynote Speaker Yolande Cornelia "Nikki" Giovanni, Jr. Born in Knoxville, Tennessee, she is a world-renowned poet, writer, commentator, activist, and educator. Co-sponsored with African American Cultural Center.

Friday - Rome Ballroom, South Campus - 5:30 PM

#### 09 Time for Me: Stress Down Day

Stress down before finals begin with free massage, Yoga, healthy snacks, aromatherapy and more! Co-sponsored with Health Education, Office of Special Programs.

Thursday - Towers - 11 AM—2PM

#### 14 Women's Book Club: *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf

Come and explore the world through the eyes and words of women. We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. All of the meetings will be held at noon in the conference room in the Office of Special Programs, located in the Wilbur Cross Building. Visit the "Groups" section of our website at [www.womenscenter.uconn.edu](http://www.womenscenter.uconn.edu) to review past selections.

Tuesday - Office of Special Programs Conference Room - Noon

## VDay and the Vagina Monologues

By Tara Maroney

UConn V-Day 2005 campaign will be presenting "The Vagina Monologues" by Eve Ensler on February 15 and 16 at von der Mehden recital hall. The show will be at 8 p.m. and tickets may be purchased prior to the show at the Women's Center and remaining tickets will be available at the door.

V-Day is a global movement to end violence against women and girls. V-Day is a catalyst that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. V-Day generates broader attention for the fight to stop worldwide violence against women and girls including rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation (FGM), and sexual slavery.

Through V-Day campaigns, local volunteers and college students produce annual benefit performances of "The Vagina Monologues" to raise awareness and funds for anti-violence groups within their own communities. In 2003, over 1,000 V-Day benefit events were presented by volunteer activists around the world, educating millions of people about the reality of violence against women and girls and raising \$4 million to combat it.

The V-Day movement is growing at a rapid pace throughout the world. V-Day, a non-profit corporation, distributes funds to grassroots, national, and international organizations and programs that work to end violence against women and girls. In its first year of incorporation (2001), V-Day was named one of Worth Magazine's "100 Best Charities." In its first six years, the V-Day movement has raised over \$20 million.

The "V" in V-Day stands for Victory, Valentine and Vagina. This year, in light of the election "V" is also for Vote. (<http://www.vday.org/contents/vday/aboutvday>)

For more information or to get involved email: [uconn\\_vday@yahoo.com](mailto:uconn_vday@yahoo.com) or for more information about the global movement visit [www.vday.org](http://www.vday.org).

## UConn NOW Chapter

By Taylor Woods

The UConn chapter of the National Organization of Women has made voter registration a priority for this semester. As a part of this effort, we are planning a concert on campus to register as many new voters as possible. The concert, called *Rock to be Heard*, will take place on Saturday, October 16th, from 1 to 5 PM, in the new Student Union. *Rock to be Heard* will feature local acts like the Chordials, an all female a capella made up of UConn students. Groups like the UConn College Democrats will also be involved to help educate voters about the issues, so that every UConn voter is an informed voter.

## Men Against Violence Against Women

By Kurt Graf

Men Against Violence Against Women (MAVAW) began on campus in 2000 as an extension of the Violence Against Women Prevention Program (VAWPP). The work of MAVAW is based on the premise that men must work in alliance with women to end men's violence against women. Bi-monthly meetings begin October 14th at 5:00 PM in the Women's Center Lounge. All men are welcome!

## Violence Against Women Prevention Program

By Hilary Jones

The Violence Against Women Prevention Program (VAWPP) is a group dedicated to educating peers on issues of sexual violence, body image, consent, dating violence, and relationship rights. This semester the program welcomes a new group of trained student facilitators. VAWPP will be involved in planning and volunteering during the events for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. We continue to provide educational and thought-provoking workshops such as "Healthy Relationships" and "Saturday Night Hook-Up" to the University community. Any instructor, community assistant or student group interested in hosting a workshop can contact Hilary at the Women's Center, (860) 486-4738.

## Equality's PlayRights Comes to UConn

By Julie DiMauro

On Monday, October 4th, the group Equality presented two short dramas from their PlayRights series. The first of these, *Four Hearts Changing*, addressed the difficult issues of dating violence and other forms of abuse. The cast of four presented their topics of discussion in the form of a brief play with several intermissions in which the audience was allowed to question the characters.

Most poignant of the issues examined was of physical abuse. However, the actors made it clear that other types of control can be just as damaging. Says Heather Dyas-Fried's character Erica, "Emotional abuse is like brainwashing... I used to be so independent and so confident, but now I don't know who I am anymore."

The second performance, *One Night*, as the title implies, takes place in the course of one evening as a rape causes the lives of four friends to take a dark turn.

"Each program provided a lot of facts, statistics and information," said student Marissa

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Center, and I, feel is an important one to educate young women about today. It is pressing that young woman vote in this upcoming election. There are a few reasons as to why this election is critical for you and me. The November 2nd election will not only decide who the President will be, but will also be a part of deciding who the next several Supreme Court Justices are.

The Supreme Court Justices are the individuals who decide the laws that affect women's lives. There are several decisions regarding women that are at stake. The right to an abortion is one of the most controversial and threatened issues. Roe v. Wade (the Supreme Court decision that allowed abortions to be legal) is in jeopardy of being overturned. Women's lives will be in more danger than ever before. Women will be forced to resort to back alley abortions or self abortion, which are much more harmful than a medical abortion. Women will lose their right to choose their futures. Women will have unwanted children, which in turn will create a greater need for social services that are not receiving proper funding as it is.

The current administration continues to cut housing, medical and welfare assistance to mothers. What will the world look like when already employed women make less money to support their families, and the ones who do need support, do not have it. Many women depend on social services to aid their families who are already struggling. Many of them are on the verge of becoming homeless and not able to support their families. Social Security is another major social service that is being threatened enormously by the current administration. Women represent the largest percent of the elderly at the moment. It is very common for women to live longer than men, as well. Many elderly women are in jeopardy of not receiving social security that they have worked years for. How will they support themselves and live? Many of them will have to be another dependent on their family members, who might already be struggling. The mothers and grandmothers of young women are the ones currently threatened, but one day those young women could be victims themselves.

I could continue on and on about why women should, but if young women were one of the largest populations of women who did not vote in the last election, just imagine what power we *could* have. Our predecessors fought for years for the right to vote. How discouraging is it to see that young women are not even exercising this hard-earned right. This election belongs to young women, so they should go out and use their voices so that they can be heard.

***"Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending."***

- Carl Bard

## How to Register to Vote

Looking for more information on how to register to vote? Check out some of the following nonpartisan resources for helpful advice on how to become an informed voter. Remember, CT voters must register by October 19!

Project Vote Smart [www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org)  
DemocracyNet [www.dnet.org](http://www.dnet.org)  
CT Secretary of the State [www.sots.state.ct.us](http://www.sots.state.ct.us)  
Get Out Her Vote [www.getouthervote.org](http://www.getouthervote.org)  
League of Women Voters [www.lwv.org/voter](http://www.lwv.org/voter)

## Announcements

QUAD (Queers United Against Discrimination) is seeking contributions from Women who love Women for a project entitled "LQ" (short for Lesbian Quilt). The final project will be a visual representation of women who love women and their allies. It will be a mixed media "quilt" representing your experiences and feelings of love towards women. Your contribution should fit a 12" by 12" square, and it should be somehow attachable.

There are no other requirements; we are very open to different forms of expression! The aim of this project is that once it is fully assembled (by the spring semester) it will be displayed in a prominent place (or places) on campus in order to give a voice to women who love women. Your contribution will be completely anonymous.

If you would like to come to a queer-friendly environment in which to make your piece, please join us on Saturday nights at the Craft Collective, from 7-9ish, in the 4th floor faculty lounge of the Chemistry building. We will have supplies (as well as great company and snacks!) available. If you would like more information, or to contribute a piece at another time please contact Kim Garland at: [kimbjg@hotmail.com](mailto:kimbjg@hotmail.com) or Sheena Williams at: [sheena.williams@huskymail.uconn.edu](mailto:sheena.williams@huskymail.uconn.edu).

The Allies and Queers Undergraduate Association (AQUA) is sponsoring "Halloween Drag Dance 2004!" This will be a talent show hosted by JuJube and Venus, and DJ'ed by WHUS with 80's music, dancing, and all that fun stuff! Come bend your gender with us on Saturday, October 30th from 9 PM to 1 AM in Student Union Room 304.

AQUA and AHAVA Dream are collaborating on a panel for World AIDS Day (Wednesday, 12/1), to discuss the social ramifications of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on an international scale. Contact the Rainbow Center for further details.