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Commission for Women

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Elliott elected new CFW chair

Dr. Nina Elliott, assistant to the vice provost, has been elected as chair of the Commission for Women. Elliott will succeed Dr. Linda Burton, assistant director in Personnel, in that post.

The Commission for Women is an advisory body appointed by the chancellor to advise on planning, implementation, and evaluation of University programs, policies, and services designed to improve the status of women.

Elliott wants the CFW to continue investigating issues and sponsoring programs which will enhance the environment at UTK. "I want to work on several issues we have examined in the past few years, such as the child care center and safety. I also would like to see us sponsor Women's Week again."

Because of the various changes that have taken place in the administration, Elliott wants to develop a good working relationship with the new central administration. She also feels it's important for the CFW to have close ties with the Affirmative Action office and its directors, Camille Hazeur and Lola Dodge.

Elliott also wants to work on "making the CFW more visible to the campus and community." To that end, she wants to see the CFW look at "some of the new issues facing women in higher education in the 1990s and find resolutions for some of the issues we have been dealing with this decade."

In 1972, the University published a Task Force on Women which examined the status of women at UTK and made suggestions about how to create a more equitable environment for women faculty, staff and students. Elliott notes that this report is almost 20 years old and would like to see the University undertake another such study.

As for her interest in women's issues, Elliott says she has always been a staunch supporter of women being treated fairly. "I'm not asking for special privilege, just equal and fair treatment within the society. Whatever a woman chooses to do, whether it is to be a homemaker, student, worker, or career woman, she should be treated fairly and have an equal opportunity for employment, promotion and equal pay."

Mobile mammography unit to visit in November

The Commission for Women, in conjunction with Women's Health Services of the University's Medical Center, is sponsoring a breast cancer screening program by the Mobile Medical Unit during the weeks of November 6 and 13.

The service will be available to female students, employees and dependents over the age of 35. Mammography is a simple procedure taking about 15 minutes. The procedure involves taking a low dosage X-ray of the soft tissues of the breast. Research suggests that mammograms can detect breast cancer up to two and one half years earlier than with self-examination and improve the survival rate up to 40 percent.

WCC's variety of fall programs lists musician, seminar, poet

The Women's Coordinating Council is sponsoring a variety of programs this fall. On September 27, Lucy Blue Tremblay, a Canadian folk musician will perform at 8 p.m. in the Music Hall. Tremblay's music has been described as "heart-warming introspection and amorous meditations in both French and English."

In conjunction with the Wellness Office, the WCC will host the seminar "Feminism: a Black Perspective" at 4 p.m. October 12 in the University Center, room 220.

On October 19, Sharon Olds will give a poetry reading in the University Center's Shiloh Room at 8 p.m.

The WCC office is located at the Women's Center in the University Center, room 301. The Center keeps an up-to-date referral list of services available to women on campus and in the community. In addition, the Women's Center has an extensive collection of books and magazines covering a wide range of topics. The books are available for checkout to any student, faculty or staff members.

Along with the reading material, the Center maintains current information on job openings, course offerings, seminars and other items of interest.

The Women's Center is open to the public Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information about the WCC or the Women's Center drop by their office or phone 974-1029.

CFW slates meetings first Thursdays at noon

The Commission for Women holds its regular meetings on the first Thursday of every month at noon. Meetings are held in the University Center and are open to the public. If you would like to know more about the Commission for Women and its meetings, contact the office at 974-4739.
Late summer and early fall bring with them unusually hot temperatures, as a result, some women become susceptible to various vaginal infections. One of the most common of these infections is yeast.

*Candida albicans*, the yeast fungus, normally grows in harmless quantities in the vagina and rectum. Whenever the vaginal ecosystem is out of balance, however, yeastlike organisms grow out of control and cause a thick, white discharge that looks like cottage cheese and smells like baking bread. Other symptoms may include a heavy vaginal discharge, itching, pain (which can increase as sexual activity increases), burning on urination, and a red rash on the outside of the vagina and around the anus.

**Yeast condition poses problem for women**

*Candida* grows best in a mildly acidic environment. The pH in the vagina is normally more than mildly acidic (4.0 to 5.0 pH). Many things, however, can act to change the pH of the vagina and cause it to become more alkaline. Birth control pills, antibiotics, pregnancy and menstruation have all been implicated in cases of yeast infection.

Yeast infections are preventable, and taking preventative methods may insures that you never have a problem. To prevent yeast infections:

1. Wash the vaginal area regularly, particularly in hot weather. As with other vaginal infections, if you have a special sensitivity to scented soaps, avoid them.
2. Avoid leather pants and nylon underpants. Indeed, avoid wearing any substance that retains moisture and heat. Cotton underpants are always preferable during summer.
3. Avoid clothes that are too tight in the crotch and thighs.
4. Applying unpasteurized plain yogurt (check to make sure it is high in *lactobacilli*) in the vagina replenishes “good bacteria” and helps keep bacteria from destroying bacteria in the vagina.
5. Cut down on coffee, alcohol, sugar, and refined carbohydrates. Diets that are high in sugar can radically change the normal pH of the vagina.
6. If you have proven to be prone to yeast and other vaginal infections in the past, douching with a vinegar and water douche (one quart warm water to two tablespoons of vinegar) can keep the vagina’s pH mildly acidic.
7. You can acidify your system by drinking eight ounces of unsweetened cranberry juice daily. This prevents the vaginal pH from changing and is 8. Avoid stress. Stress can influence hormonal function and muscle tension. Muscle tension decreases blood flow, which can change the vaginal environment.

In severe cases, medical treatment is a must, if only to cope with the pernicious discharge and pain. Medical treatment usually consists of mystatin, miconazole nitrate, or clotrimazole. This is usually taken as a vaginal suppository as it has fewer side effects.

One other treatment is to paint the vagina, cervix, and vulva with gentian violet. This is bright purple and it stains, so be sure to wear a sanitary pad.

There are also several self-help treatments available, many take the form of a douche. Daily yogurt douches (remember to use a live culture yogurt) seem to be effective. Goldenseal-rryrh douche (simmer one tablespoon of each in three cups of water, strain, and cool) and yellow dock douche (make the same way, only use yellow dock instead of goldenseal) used two or three times a week also seem to help.

Two other self-help approaches that have been successful are garlic suppositories (peel a clove of garlic, wrap in gauze, and then insert in the vagina) and boric acid suppositories. Many self-help advocates believe that boric acid suppositories are the most effective nondrug method for stubborn cases. Put 600 milligrams of boric acid in size 0 gelatin capsules and insert in the vagina for fourteen days.

If the infection persists a visit to your health care practitioner is definitely in order. If you follow the preventative methods above, however, your odds of avoiding an infection during these last hot days are high.

**Conference to focus on gender in academia**

The University of South Florida is hosting the conference “Gender in Academia: The Future of Our Past” November 2-4.

The conference will include presentations on:
- Women as teachers, scholars, researchers, administrators, writers and students
- Gender and curriculum—what we teach, overt and covert
- Intersection of gender, race, class, ethnicity and disability

* Education—catalyst for change or protector of the status quo?

The registration fee for the conference is $110 before the October 26 registration deadline, $120 after the deadline. There is a special fee for students of $85 prior to the deadline, $95 after the deadline.

For more information, contact School of Extended Studies, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL 33620; telephone (813) 974-2403 or call the Commission for Women office at 974-4739.
Webster decision has impact on abortion issue

The Supreme Court decision in the Webster v Reproductive Health Services case has been rendered and it was the decision most Court watchers expected. In a 5-4 vote (Rehnquist, Kennedy, White, O'Connor and Scalia in the majority; Brennan, Marshall, Stevens and Blackmun in the minority) the Court upheld a Missouri law banning the use of state facilities and prohibiting state employees from performing abortions. Another provision requiring physicians to perform tests to determine whether a 20-week-old fetus could survive outside the womb was also upheld, the decision commenting that such testing "permissibly furthers the State's interest in protecting human life."

Court watchers fear the decision shows that the Court is expressing a willingness to go all the way and overturn Roe v Wade, the 1973 ruling that established the right to terminate pregnancies. As Rehnquist commented after his reading of the decision, "the goal of constitutional adjudication is surely not to remove inexorably 'politically divisive' issues from the ambit of the legislative process, whereby the people through their elected representatives deal with matters of concern to them."

At this point, then, legislatures now have the right to put some restrictions on the principle of abortion on demand, but abortion remains legal in all 50 states.

Some legislatures, however, have not waited on an overturn of Roe v Wade before attempting an all-out assault on abortion. In Louisiana, the House of Representatives told district attorneys to enforce a 1942 law that outlaws abortion with no exceptions (even if pregnancy endangers a woman's life), mandating hard-labor prison terms for doctors who perform abortions, and outlaws contraceptive advertising. In other states, most notably Michigan, multiple bills introducing new restrictions are pending.

At this point, it is logical to expect a continued struggle between pro-life and pro-choice activists. Pro-lifers plan to continue their blockades of abortion clinics while pursuing a piece-meal strategy of increasing restrictions through state legislatures. Their best bet for future action will rest on the Supreme Court's willingness to accept a test case that will allow the overturn of Roe v Wade.

Since the Webster v Reproductive Health Services decision was handed down, however, pro-choice advocates have shown an increasing willingness to adopt the direct action approach usually associated with pro-life advocates. One route has been to draft federal legislation that reinforces the still-standing constitutional principle of privacy. If federal legislation is successful, then all states will be compelled to have at least some type of legal abortion.

Pro-choice workers also plan to target states for intense political action. Many 1989 political races are, in fact, becoming referenda on abortion. In New Jersey, for example, where polls show that 70 percent of voters oppose making abortion illegal, GOP gubernatorial nominee, U.S. Rep. James Courier, modified his strict anti-abortion position. In another example, Georgia gubernatorial candidate Lt. Gov. Zell Miller has blocked anti-abortion legislation from the Senate floor.

Where will the fight over abortion rights go? People looking for an indicator area would do well to watch the 1989 gubernatorial and mayoral elections. Popular support for candidates of either position should be an indicator for Supreme Court politics and for issues in the 1990 House and Senate races.

About women's health

Travis challenges myths

One recurring myth in reading about health has been that women have both mental health and physical health determined largely by their biology. In two new books, Cheryl Travis, associate professor of psychology at the University of Tennessee, challenges those myths.

In the two books, Women and Health Psychology: Biomedical Issues and Women and Health Psychology: Mental Health Issues, Travis confronts those myths head on. As she states in her preface, "health status is a function of genetic, hormonal, physiological, behavioral, and social factors."

Travis contends that an area where researchers often slip in analyzing cause and effect in regard to women and health has been in overlooking confounding factors, that is, special assumptions or conditions that, when overlooked, affect conclusions.

Travis is also interested in focusing on health problems and issues seen as specific to women. Depression in the case of mental illness, and cyclic biology, pregnancy and birth, gynecologic surgery, and breast cancer as biomedical issues are some of the topics on which she focuses. Travis points out that each, in addition to their physiological aspects, have inseparable social features that shape diagnosis and treatment and psychological experiences of those conditions.

Travis's work came out of her interest in risk analysis as well as her extremely popular arguments for her basic thesis that "health, especially women's health, occurs within a personal and social framework."

Professional development grants offered

The Commission for Women is once again sponsoring Professional Development Grants for Women. The purpose of the grants is to provide funds to enable women to attend local, one-day workshops geared to professional developments.

Below are guidelines for women interested in applying for grants:
1. The workshop or seminar must be offered in the local area.
2. The program must be appropriate to professional development.
3. The grant is open to UTK faculty, exempt, and non-exempt women.

4. The CFW Programming Committee will make recommendations for funding to the Chancellor.
5. The CFW Programming Committee will announce the availability of the grants.
6. The applicants should submit requests to the Chair, CFW, 2012 Lake Avenue. Applicants should include a description of the event, cost and resume.

For more information about the grants, contact the Commission for Women at the address listed above or call 974-4739.
Ancient Egyptians cosmetic artisans

To some it might seem surprising that American men and women spend close to six billion dollars a year in the name of vanity; going to beauty parlors and barbershops, buying cosmetics, perfumes, and colognes. But the pursuit of good grooming is an ancient art, one which has persisted for thousands of years.

By 4000 B.C. in ancient Egypt, the art of makeup had become a highly skilled craft. There were beauty shops and perfume factories. In pursuit of the perfect face, women and men alike utilized a vast array of cosmetics. For eyeshade, the preferred color was green and blue-black was used for lipstick. Fashionable Egyptian women stained the flesh of their fingers and feet a reddish orange with henna. Because Egyptian women often went barebreasted, it was not uncommon for women to accent the veins on their breasts in blue and to paint their nipples gold.

Egyptian men were equally as vain as women. In burial tombs, even that of King Tutankhamen, men stored away skin cream, lip color and cheek rouge, all necessary items for the afterlife. Early cosmetics were created from a vast array of materials. Eyeliner was formed by crushing beetle shells and mixing them with malachite eye shadow. Oils were scented with frankincense, myrrh, thyme and especially almonds. Egyptian women bothered by blemishes would treat their faces with masks of whipped ostrich eggs, olive oil, flour, sea salt, plant resin and fresh milk. To prevent aging and wrinkles, men and women would sleep for six nights in a paste of milk, incense, wax, olive oil, gazelle or crocodile dung, and ground juniper leaves.

Later civilizations contributed to the development of cosmetics and their uses, but the ancient Egyptians seemed to have made a true craft, if not art, out of it.

Molly Yard to Speak in Knoxville

The Tennessee Chapter of the National Organization for Women will be hosting its 1989 State Conference in Knoxville Oct. 21-22. Molly Yard, president of national NOW, will be the keynote speaker at the Saturday, October 22 luncheon.

The theme of the conference is "Women—The Choice Is Ours," and many of the activities and workshops will be oriented around a pro-choice theme, e.g. lobbying, picketing, and updates on changes in the state abortion legislation. There also will be workshops on custodial rights, child sexual abuse and women's history.

The conference will be held at the Best Western Campus Inn. The registration fee is $15 and is on a sliding feescale for NOW members. Other expenses include $7 for the buffet lunch on Saturday and a Sunday breakfast buffet for $6.

For more information contact Mary Gregory, president of Knoxville NOW at 522-3264.