



Texas State National Organization for Women



NEWSLETTER

Volume I, Number 4

September, 1976

WE ARE NOT ALONE

As members of the National Organization for Women, we are part of a group 62,000 strong in the United States. NOW, founded in 1966 in Washington, D.C., today has from 20 to 27 chapters in Texas with a combined membership of 2,000. If we are part of small struggling groups, perhaps in a community with little understanding of our goals or even hostility toward any such group, we can take heart at the explosion of forming and growing women's groups. NOW is a part of not merely this nation's continuing fight for liberty and justice for all, but also a world-wide movement. Ms. magazine recently listed feminist publications from around the world.

Fortunately, too, many other women's groups who at first feared "women's libbers" are coming together in coalition with feminists. We are discovering our common goals and aims and banding together to combine our numbers into an effective force with clout to achieve our demands.

Some of these organizations are the National Women's Political Caucus, the League of Women Voters (which has begun to get into the political arena rather than merely observing it), the American Association of University Women (whose plan for action was recently defined as, "Get into politics."), the National Nurses' Association, the Business and Professional Women, and the Women's Equity Action League (which often works with ACLU), and Church Women United. All the groups make up a total of over one million women.

In addition, women in work controlled by organized labor are beginning to fight for their rights, women in the Episcopal and Roman Catholic Churches are demanding equal status, public school teachers recently formed a Women's Caucus at the National Education Association national convention, and women in academia have formed groups. These women are writing scholarly articles and publishing journals to join the ever-increasing stream of books, small magazines, and newspapers written by feminists.

We are not a passing fad which will go away. We will not turn back. Our local NOW chapters will grow and become stronger. Each one of us is important, and we will not be denied. We are legion.

Dortha Dee Vaughan, vice-president, Greater Beaumont Area NOW

HOW TO READ MAGAZINES AND HELP NOW TOO:

Need to renew some magazine subscriptions? If you renew through Texas NOW, we will get a rebate of 10 to 40 percent of the subscription price. All subscriptions can go through this service the very low, half-price offers. However, regular specials qualify. Checks should be made out to "Alice Johnson" and sent to

Alice Johnson
Texas NOW Service
P.O. Box 393
Berkeley, CA 94701.

Be sure to renew your subscription on first notice as it takes about three months to get a renewal through this service.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE STATE CONVENTION

Sara Weddington was the Keynote Speaker of the NOW state convention held in Abilene, May 28, 29, and 30. The state representative from Travis County stressed the need for continued support of the ERA. She said that when the legislature convenes in January, 1977, we should be prepared to lobby for women's issues, including abortion, a commission on the status of women, a state displaced homemakers bill, battered wives, day care, family planning services, and insurance regulations.

The newly elected state officers are Barbara Duke of Austin NOW, state coordinator; Tommie Brent, Beaumont Area NOW, communications coordinator; and Teri Chandler, Dallas County NOW, treasurer. They will hold office until the next state convention.

The membership coordinators are Gretchen Jarvis, Region I, from Denton County NOW; Frances Hicks, Region II, Bay Area NOW; Gail Baier, Region III, San Antonio NOW; Nancy Kohutec, Region IV, El Paso NOW; and Shirley Wright, Region V, Lubbock NOW. All of these state officers are automatically members of the NOW State Council

Other speakers at the convention were recently-elected Southern Regional Coordinator Martha Gaines from Atlanta, George, and Mary Jo Risher, Dallas, lesbian mother who made a very emotional speech about her fight to regain custody of her nine year-old son. Over \$500.00 was collected from the delegates to help Mary Jo pay her child support to her ex-husband.

The three day convention was attended by about 100 delegates.

ERA UPDATE

HERSTORY

Alice Paul. When they first hear the name, most feminists will pause, vaguely aware that this is an important name, a name that paints a panorama of the women's movement's last 75 years.

Isn't Alice Paul the woman who?

Indeed she is. For 91 years Alice Paul has harnessed her particular genius, every ounce of its strength, to the crevices of body and soul, in order to achieve one principle, the legal equality of all women, everywhere.

It was the drum to which Alice Paul marched. She trampled the White House lawn to demand votes for women, then stumped Capitol Hill for fifty years, insisting, coaxing, arguing that Congress pass the Equal Rights Amendment she both wrote and sponsored.

As vigorous and vital today as on the day the National Women's Party she founded won the suffrage struggle, her guardian tells me, ERA still absorbs all Dr. Paul's energy. With victory within our grasp, she urges us to press forward, unhesitating, unafraid, until final victory is ours; because, as Dr. Paul explained once, ERA's purpose is "to remove every handicap placed on women by law and custom."

Contributed by Ellen Norton

SAN ANTONIO EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT RALLY

The San Antonio chapter of NOW held an Equal Rights Amendment Rally on Saturday, August 28, in San Antonio. August 26, as you know, is the anniversary of the date that women got the right to vote. This year we feel the ERA is a major issue, and therefore chose this date to remember our fight for equal rights, and to renew our enthusiasm. We cannot afford to assume that the battle is over. A number of organizations worked to make this rally happen and we have been greatly encouraged by endorsements from such groups as ACLU, AFL-CIO, LWV, National Chicana Foundation, and Final Opportunities for Women, to name just a few. The rally was a truly exciting time, with prominent people, both local and national, speaking in support of the ERA.

Antoinette d'Orozio and Susan Garry

LOOKING BACK

July was a good month for feminists with over 36 leading women's magazines publishing articles on the ERA. It really blows your mind to pick up a "Love Story" or "True Romance" and read about the ERA. Maybe we are finally beginning to realize that we must reach women where they are at and not where we are at.

NEED MONEY? TRY OUT THESE FUND-RAISING IDEAS

There's a new Women's Speakers Bureau out of San Francisco. It is comprised only of women who are professionals in their fields. The Bureau not only arranges for speakers, but also helps groups with information about how to raise funds through these speakers' appearances. For their brochure (free of charge), write to the following:

Women's Speakers Bureau
2229 Lombard Street
San Francisco, California 94123

HUMANIST PLAYS

In Texas this fall there are five actors and a humanist traveling around doing a three-day series of skits and discussions on contemporary problems. They are funded by an endowment by the University of Texas at Arlington and come out of the Dallas Theater Center. They charge nothing except room and board.

El Paso NOW has scheduled them for the series on October 29-30. If you are interested in this potential fund-raiser, write to the following:

Mr. Paul Baker
3636 Turtle Creek Blvd.
Dallas, Texas 75219

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

As concerned individuals and constituents, the undersigned wish to solicit your support for legislative reform of the existing Texas penal laws dealing with the offense of rape. It is a certainty that Chapter 21 of the Penal Code, as currently drafted, inadequately reflects the needs and preferences of concerned citizens.

We specifically support the following changes:

- (1) Current Texas Penal Code sections 21.02 and 21.04 should be combined under the common heading of "Sexual Abuse." The word "Rape" should be expurgated from the Penal Code; its connotations are both stigmatizing and odious to the victims of sexual abuse. Similarly, Texas Penal Code sections 21.03 and 21.05 should be combined under the common heading, "Aggravated Sexual Abuse."
- (2) As in other progressive jurisdictions, Chapter 21 of the Penal Code should be amended to preclude the introduction of a victim's prior sexual conduct on the issue of consent in prosecutions for Sexual Abuse. Unrelated prior conduct is not relevant to the issue of present consent, and even if consent is at issue, the introduction of prior sexual conduct in inflammatory, unnecessarily demeaning to the victim, and highly prejudicial to the prosecution.
- (3) Spouses should not be immune to prosecution under the Penal Code. Where a spouse has filed for divorce, or has voluntarily separated from his/her partner, or is merely living with his/her partner as a matter of convenience or necessity, non-consensual intercourse should be classified as sexual abuse. The issue of consent would of course be reserved for trial.

As proponents of enlightened legislative reform we urge you to adopt and support these positions. Will you request the Council on Legislative Drafting to draft a bill embodying all or part of these proposals? Will you co-sponsor and/or work for such a bill? In an attempt to mobilize forces to pursue these changes, we will be contacting you to enlist your support. Thank you in advance for your consideration and attention.

El Paso Rape Task Force
Pamela Lee Maki, Coordinator

LET'S MAKE SURE EVERYTHING'S UP-TO-DATE IN KANSAS CITY OCTOBER

BUS TO KANSAS CITY

Texas NOW should be represented in Kansas City in October at the National NOW constitutional revision meeting. Therefore, interested members should fill out the following blank to charter a bus from Texas. The bus will probably leave from Houston, pick up people in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, and on to Kansas City. If you are interested, please fill out the following and send to Nancy Kohutek, 125 Vaquero #58, El Paso, Texas 79912, so I can see if the trip is possible. Estimated cost per person for 43 people is \$40.00. Also, the time of departure and arrival will have to be worked out

Name: _____

Address: _____

Will attend

Might attend

Phone: _____

NEW LOW IN BAD TASTE

The Rolling Stones have a new album called "Black and Blue." For any of you who have not seen the advertisement for this album, I will try to describe it.

Picture a young, beautiful woman in an inverted "Y" position. Her wrists are bound together with rope and her arms are stretched above her head as she is suspended from the ceiling by a rope. Other ropes are bound about her neck across her chest, around her waist, crotch, thighs, calves and ankles. The ropes around her ankles are stretched to each side, thereby providing maximum crotch exposure.

She is clad in what appears to be a slip or a short night that has been ripped to expose most of her breasts. There are bruises on her thighs, her arms, and her face.

Carefully placed between her spraddled legs and immediately below her crotch is the album cover, featuring the faces of Mick Jagger, et al.

I have a copy of the ad if you'd like to see it. Words really cannot convey the full effect.

To look at this ad and to understand its implications is to understand why we have a sexist society. No wonder our society tolerates, and even condones, sexual assault

upon women. Sex and violence have become an integral part of our culture.

By that I do not mean Sex, period. And I do not mean Violence, period. I mean Sex & Violence, together. It is a constant theme in our literature, our cinema, and in advertising. But it is usually more subtly done.

Perhaps this particular ad has done us a service by being so blatant. Perhaps the outrage generated by this ad will alert our dulled senses to those more subtle manifestations of masculine hostility toward women.

But first things first. Let us begin with this particular case. This album is distributed by Atlantic Records, a division of Warner Brothers. Let us boycott this album in particular, and all records produced and distributed by Atlantic in general. A petition to that effect is available for your signature at the Women's Center, Houston.

In addition, let us write to Bob Greenberg, Atlantic's West Coast General Manager, 3300 Warner Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90024, and tell him how we fell about this. Closer to home, let us write and telephone the local Atlantic representative. He is John Dunaway, 6425 Skyline, Houston 77057 (782-5054).

We must rise up together and put a stop to this.

Jan Dilbeck

Food for Thought

(When a woman is in dispute with a man) "no logic on earth can shake her when she is ridden by the animus" (the masculine element within each woman's unconscious). "Often the man has the feeling - and he is not altogether wrong - that only seduction or a beating or rape would have the necessary power of persuasion."

-Carl G. Jung

"Aion: Phenomenology of the Self"

TEXAS NOW TASK FORCE ON WOMEN AND RELIGION

In accordance with the resolution passed at our Conference in Abilene this Spring, we're announcing the formation of Texas NOW Task Force on Women and Religion. The first organization meeting will be held immediately following the state council meeting on September 18 about 3:00 p.m.

We will concern ourselves with theological positions on women's demands and requests, or even polite remarks about women's place in religious organizations in America. One of our first priorities will be the problem of ordination of women in the Episcopal Church. Other areas will be determined by members' interest.

If you would like to comment before the meeting in September, please write or call

Clergy: Rev. Ginger Jarman
2434 Guadalupe
Austin, TX 78705 512 454 5588 (Methodist Student Center)

Ms. Bobbie Manthei
Rt. 5, Box 1152
Bryan, TX 77801 713 846 3322

VALIDATION OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

The NOW National Board of Directors at its June 5-6 meeting voted to invalidate the Southern Regional Conference held April 24-25 at Atlanta, Georgia. This was the result of an \$18 pre-registration fee and a \$23 late registration fee which discouraged the participation of poor NOW members. Economically depressed members were in attendance and were denied the right to vote or participate this is against NOW National By-Laws.

The Board then voted to invalidate the Southern Regional Conference and declared that Martha Gaines was not the Southern Regional Director.

Eleanor Smeal, Chair-One of the National Board, sent a letter dated June 12 to all Chapter Presidents in the Southern Region. The letter notified the South that the Board had invalidated their Conference and had voided the election of Martha Gaines. The letter went on to state that the Board would appoint a new Southern Regional Director and polled the chapter presidents as to whether they wanted (1) a written poll by the National Secretary; (2) another Southern Regional Conference to be held within 90 days; or (3) reaffirmation of the appointment of Martha Gaines.

THE NEWSLETTER WELCOMES ALL COMMENTS ON THE ABOVE. FOLLOWING IS A REACTION FROM SOME HOUSTON FEMINISTS:

REACTION FROM HOUSTON AREA NOW:

At the business meeting held June 9, 1976, members of Houston Area NOW voted unanimously to send the following letter to the NOW National Board of Directors:

"We are appalled and disgusted by your recent decisions at the National Board Meeting of June 5-6.

You have obviously decided to follow an elitist, bigoted path, taking unto yourselves the authority to make all decisions for the entire National Organization for Women. It is ironic that a group which appointed itself in a manner which violated the bylaws of NOW should presume to tell an entire regional conference that it must obey the exact interpretation of the bylaws that the non-elected group decides is right.

You may consider yourselves to be an all-knowing elite who can command the peasants. We do not view you in such a light nor do we view NOW as a body where the membership's role is to obey the orders of the self-established elite. The membership of the National Organization for Women demands and expects decisions of the organization to be reached in a democratic fashion, by majority rule.

The Southern Regional Conference was a meeting where decisions were reached democratically--with full discussion and then majority vote. Are you, who call yourselves the "Majority Caucus," afraid of majority rule? Do you fear that if the majority of NOW members make the decisions in NOW, you and your actions will be repudiated?

Martha Gaines was overwhelmingly elected by the vast majority of Southern Regional Conference attendees, in accordance with the NOW national bylaws. You presumed to declare her election invalid and to choose a Southern Regional Director for the South. Yet most of you are NOT from the South, so this action was in violation of the national bylaws.

You decided to treat the South differently from all other regions. You decided to make rules after the event and apply them to that event. Making an action illegal after the fact is contrary to fundamental principles of justice and liberty.

In addition, due to real economic discrimination, Helen Cassidy was not present at your meeting to voice the wishes of the majority of the Southern NOW members. Were you so afraid of Helen's voice that you refused to give her travel money in time that she might attend? Or did you simply wish to express further your prejudice toward an entire region of the nation? Or was the failure to reimburse her promptly simply another example of your continuing incompetence and ineptitude?

You have violated every principle of democracy, decency, and justice in your actions, not only toward the South but also toward the Midwest.

You have exposed yourselves for the elitist bigots (rather than feminists) you are. In Philadelphia some of you spoke of Chapter Rights and the grassroots. We now see that you meant none of that.

Your illegal, illegitimate actions of June 5-6 are indicative of a deep and abiding illness in NOW. This cancer is destroying us.

Unable any longer to stomach your continuing destruction of NOW and the Feminist Movement, the Houston Area Chapter of NOW hereby repudiates your actions and denies your authority. We will move without National so we can work on feminist concerns unhindered by your undemocratic, stupid, and incompetent actions. We will work with other chapters in the South through our Regional Director, Martha Gaines.

We want to create a new feminist society and we will do it in spite of you."

RECENT EVENTS

August 26, 1976 - Sponsored by Southwest Houston NOW: The climactic performance of the ever-popular "The Pageant of American Women," First Unitarian Church, 5510 Fannin, Houston

August 28, 1976 - ERA Rally - San Antonio

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

September 18, 1976 - NOW State Council Meeting, State Capital Representative Conference Room - 3rd Floor, Austin, Texas

November 20, 1976 - NOW State Council Meeting, State Capital Representative Conference Room - 3rd Floor, Austin, Texas.

WE NEED YOUR NEWS AND INPUT. PLEASE SEND US NEWS FOR THE
NEXT NEWSLETTER BY NOVEMBER 1.

WE NEED YOUR MONEY, TOO. TO SUBSCRIBE FOR THE NEWSLETTER,
FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING AND RETURN:

Tommie Brent, Communications Coordinator
Texas State NOW
3620 Evalon Avenue
Beaumont, Texas 77706

Enclosed is my check for \$3.00 for a subscription.

Name and Address: _____

TEXAS STATE
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION
FOR WOMEN

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Beaumont, Texas 77706

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