



# Texas State National Organization for Women



## NEWSLETTER

VOLUME I, Number 2

December, 1975

REPORT FROM

RUTH THORNTON

STATE TASK FORCE COORDINATOR

Thank you for your support of State task forces by seeing the need for a State Task Force Coordinator.

There are some pressing priorities on which I need each Chapter's help:

1. If your Chapter did not complete the State Task Force Questionnaire sent out in October, please talk with your Chapter President about helping her with it and seeing that I receive it prior to the next State Council meeting in January. If you have lost the questionnaire, I'll be glad to send another.

2. The State Rape Task Force needs support. San Antonio and Houston Area NOW have expressed interest in chairing the Task Force. Since the Rape Task Force will be reorganized, this would be an excellent time for someone from your Chapter to help with this. Please send names of interested persons to me.

3. Three new areas are opened since the November 15 State Council meeting. All need a Chair and as many Chapter representatives as possible.

A. The State Council approved the formation of Third World Women Standing Committee with area of concern being membership. Please help us find a Coordinator for this committee prior to the next Council meeting.

B. State Task Force on Lesbian Rights has been approved by the Council, and will need a Coordinator by the next Council meeting.

C. There is a new Standing Committee on Rural Organizing. I feel that this committee should have Co-Coordinators from Chapters in more rural areas of the State.

If you have ideas in any of these areas of interest, or on State Task Forces generally, please jot them down and send to me. New ideas are what will make the Task Forces and Standing Committees strong and functioning!

Ruth Thornton  
State Task Force Coordinator  
7111 Fair Oaks, #283  
Dallas, Texas 75231

## CHAPTER NEWS

### Houston

The formation meeting of the Greater Houston Council of NOW Chapters will be held on January 5. The purpose of the Council will be to coordinate activities and exchange information among the NOW Chapters in the greater Houston area.

### Northeast Texas NOW

Coverage of Alice Doesn't Day in one Sherman paper alluded to local NOW members not using makeup and abstaining from sexual relations with males. The chapter considered possible actions, including picketing. They were gratified that those members who do not regard picketing as especially effective were willing to picket in the name of sisterhood. The Denison Herald, who reported Alice accurately and completely has appointed NOW member Susan Silver to its citizen editors board.

### Bay Area NOW

Gloria Guardiola (National Board), Celia Estrada (Former National Board Member) and Brenda Lewis (under consideration for coordinator of National Minority Women's Task Force) spoke on "Racism in Now".

"Alice Doesn't" did well at the University of Houston at Clear Lake. Approximately one hundred students, faculty, and staff celebrated Alice Doesn't Day by wearing orange armbands. The event provoked questioning regarding women's roles in society, as well as initiating thoughtful discussions about the roles of both men and women students, staff, and faculty. The distribution table was furnished with a poster stating that armband sale proceeds were destined for Bay Area NOW. The profit was \$94.10.

### San Antonio

SANOW held its second Assertiveness Training Workshop on November 8 with a morning lecture-demonstration and an afternoon experimental study group. With about 53 in attendance, SANOW made a net profit of approximately \$250.

A \$5,200 grant has been awarded SANOW and the YWCA by the San Antonio American Issues Forum Committee and the National Endowment for the Humanities to fund a project entitled, "Working in America: Women's Place." Drawing upon the insights of academic humanists knowledgeable about changing sex roles and other resource people, this project will set up a series of public dialogues to examine some of the cultural factors which limit employment opportunities for women. Also, the impact of changing sex roles on the San Antonio labor market will be discussed. Three dialogue evenings are planned: "Women's Work in Story and Song", "Jobs: Where Are the Women and Why Are They There?", "Equal Pay for Equal Work: Beyond the Slogan." On February 7, an all-day conference will feature a nationally known speaker, a panel of women in non-traditional careers describing how they came to be in the job market, employment problems of minority women and barriers to promotions and better pay.

### Austin

The C-R groups are undergoing an overhaul. Generally, the groups will be more structured, completely dedicated to feminist consciousness-raising, and last no more than 10 weeks. The Austin Women's Center was recently funded for one year by the Comprehensive Education and Training Act. Plans include: helping women prepare grant proposals for innovative projects to benefit women; job counselling and pre-legal counselling; assisting women in assessing and funding business ventures; and information and referral services. Barbara Miller has been selected as Center Director.

# POSTERS

NOW SOUTHERN REGIONAL  
COMPLIANCE CONFERENCE  
Atlanta, Georgia  
February 14-15

for sale

by

San Antonio Chapter

## NOW

"A Work of Artifice"

by Marge Piercy

The bonzai tree  
in the attractive pot  
could have grown eighty feet tall  
on the side of a mountain  
till split by lightning.  
But a gardner  
carefully pruned it.  
It is nine inches high.  
Everyday as he whittles back the branches,  
the gardner croons,  
It is your nature  
to be small and cozy  
domestic and weak  
How lucky little tree,  
to have a pot to grow in  
With living creatures  
one must begin very early  
to dwarf their growth;  
the bound feet  
the crippled brain  
the hair in curlers  
the hands you love to touch.

Silkscreen posters in blue, yellow,  
green or brown.

Price is \$2.00 and includes postage and  
handling. Send orders to:

SANOW  
c/o Gail Baier  
3434 Oakdale, No. 605  
San Antonio, Texas 78229

This will be an exciting  
opportunity for both experienced  
compliance workers and brand new  
people who would like to get  
involved in compliance to learn  
valuable techniques, exchange  
ideas and plan action. NOW  
attorneys and compliance experts  
and activists will be available  
to answer questions. Just as  
important, we will have the  
change to learn from each other's  
experiences.

Try to encourage at least one  
representative (preferably more)  
to attend. Because we will be  
developing action strategies  
during the conference,  
attendance will be limited to NOW  
members. Please ask people to  
pre-register at least two weeks  
in advance so that we can send  
them pre-conference information.

Workshops will be: Anti-  
Discrimination Laws, How to Plan  
an Action, The "How To" of  
Meetings and Confrontations,  
Compliance Agencies, Federal,  
State & Local Gov't and More!

With the economic situation  
worsening, we must demonstrate  
that women are not the expendables  
of the labor force. Come to the  
conference and plan for action NOW!

\$5.00 registration fee to NOW  
Southern Regional Compliance  
Conference, Cathie Del Campo,  
500 Mossy Vale Way, N.W.,  
Atlanta, Georgia 30328.  
Hotel reservations: Century  
Center Motor Hotel, 200 Century  
Blvd., N.E., Atlanta, Ga. 30345.  
Rooms: Single - \$20, Twin - \$24,  
Triple - \$28, Quad - \$32.

## HOW THE ERA ACTIVISTS ACTED

Mary Buxton (past president of Bay Area NOW, Barbara M. Gorman, and Judy Thompson, while undergraduate students at the University of Houston, together with David M. Brady and Kent Tedin, faculty members in the political science department, studied the pro and antiERA activists during the recent attempt at recension in Texas. Two papers written as a result of these studies have been accepted for publication in political science journals. Here is what they found.

### The AntiERA Activists

They decided to interview the women opponents on the day of the legislative hearings, while they waited in the lobbies to testify or support those who were testifying. The logistics of this procedure imposed certain limitations on the questionnaire. The lobbies were crowded and there existed the usual amount of confusion one would expect in such a situation. The questionnaire, therefore, had to be short, the questions simple and the response categories closed-ended. The questionnaires were self-administering, and the students gave them to two or three women in close proximity, waited for them to finish and then moved on to two or three other women. Using this tactic, 154 interviews were successfully completed. The interviewers were provided with a cover letter on university stationery, which explained the project. Using this procedure, only a handful of the antiERA women refused to fill out the forms. In addition, the interviewers tried to sample from all areas of the lobby.

### The ProEra Sample

The sample of proERA activist women was primarily collected during program and business meetings of various feminist organizations throughout Texas. To be eligible for the sample, the respondent had to have done one of the following: (1) lobbied the state legislature for ratification of the ERA, (2) written to an elected official in support of the ERA, or (3) donated money to the proERA movement. The sample included: members of (1) Houston and Austin chapters of the National Organization for Women, (2) the Houston League of Women Voters, (3) the Harris County (Houston) Women's Political Caucus and (4) women who lobbied the state legislature in favor of the ERA during April of 1975.

### Ladies in Pink: Religion and Political Ideology in the Anti-ERA Movement

The anti-ERA women in our sample tend to fit the pattern characteristic of the Religious Right. These women, like other extreme conservatives, believe in a domestic communist conspiracy, feel big government in the United States is a menace, and are very preoccupied with the state of morality. A strong commitment to traditional religion would seem to be the major source of their political beliefs. However, small town provincialism is another possible source, and the nonfundamentalists may be partially motivated by an "old fashioned individualism."

The anti-ERA women are not alienated or disaffected from the political system; on the contrary, they participate heavily in other political activities. They are, in short, well educated, middle-to-upper middle class political conservatives, and as such they are an articulate voice against the passage of the ERA. Our sample is, of course, limited to Texas and cannot be generalized to the anti-ERA movement in other states. However, the journalistic literature on the anti-ERA movement suggests that the participants in other states do not drastically differ from those in our sample. It is not surprising, therefore, that organized groups of educated, articulate, conservative women have had some success in blocking the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. State legislators are not in a position to take lightly the views of such women.

SOCIAL BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRO AND ANTI ERA ACTIVISTS

Clearly the pro and anti ERA activists are drawn from different populations. The proERA activists more closely fit the socioeconomic and attitudinal characteristics associated with political activists. Compared to the ERA opponents, the proERA activists are higher in socio economic status, younger, more urban and suburban in origin, and secular in their religious outlook. To a greater extent they display the "civic attitudes" commonly thought to link high socioeconomic status with political participation. The differences between the two groups in these "civic attitudes" remain even after a control is introduced for SES. It seems likely that the antiERA women are motivated to activism on the ERA issue by a strong belief in the tenets of traditional religion. This religious belief probably serves as a sensitizing variable which compensates for disadvantages in SES and participatory attitudes. Neither group could be described as "political moderates." On the liberal/conservative self-definition item, there were almost no women in either group that chose the "middle of the road" option to describe themselves politically. The proERA women are decidedly liberal and the antiERA women are decidedly conservative. The antiERA women, in addition, find the ideology of the American right wing to be very attractive--an ideology that is almost completely rejected by the proERA activists. And it is this variable--rejection of or support for radical right ideology--which best distinguishes between pro and anti ERA activists.

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Kay Whyburn, Communications Coordinator  
Texas State NOW  
2234 Goldsmith  
Houston, TX 77025

Enclosed is my check for \$3.00 for a subscription to the state newsletter.

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## TEXAS NOW STATE COUNCIL

The Texas NOW Council held its regular meeting in Houston on November 15. Business included:

A vote to support and work with Esther Pena, a Texas A & I University, Kingsville, student in her fight to be re-instated on the women's volleyball team. Ms. Pena has been captain of her volleyball team, but was suspended (on the grounds that "she refused to wear a bra" - despite confirmation from three doctors that she doesn't need one) after she protested inequitable funding of men's and women's sports there.

Voted to send telegrams to Betty Ford, Gerald Ford, and the American Bar Association urging the appointment of a strong feminist as Supreme Court Justice, and separate telegrams asking that it be anyone but Rep. Charles Wiggins of Orange, Calif., a notorious ERA foe.

Agreed to join WEAL and the ACLU in a suit against the Texas Education Agency to fight sex discrimination in Texas schools. Jan Cunningham of Houston and Harriette Kagel of College Station will co-ordinate state action on this.

Set May 29-30, 1976 as the dates for the next State NOW Convention; this is Saturday and Sunday of the Memorial Day Weekend. Abilene, Houston, and San Antonio will bid on the convention; the decision will be made at the next State Council meeting.

Ruth Thornton of Dallas was elected State Coordinator of Task Forces. She will report on the status of all state task forces at the next council meeting.

Elected Helen Cassidy as Texas' By-laws commissioner. Debbie Wernet of Dallas was chosen as alternate.

Two standing committees were established:  
Rural Organizing, chaired by Ruth Thornton, and Third World Women, for which a chairperson is needed.

A state Lesbian Rights Task Force was established to implement the Lesbian Rights Resolution adopted at the National NOW Conference in October. A chairperson is needed for this task force.

The Education Task Force reported much success this year, and only one failure: they urge local school district level lobbying against the Rand McNally spelling series.

Passed a resolution in support of Lesbian mothers' right to child custody, and voted to send details of Ginny Martell's plight and the similar case of Mary Jo Risher, Dallas, to the chapters.

Approved the sum of 10¢ a mile for the five membership co-ordinators in their travels when convening new chapters.

Announced there are 50 subscribers to the new state newsletter which will be out in December. The first issue was printed in September.

There are now 576 state NOW members. Memberships are still being accepted. The state treasury is now at \$1,386 as of mid-November.

Established a five-person State Budget Committee with Sue Rickett, state treasurer, as chair.

The next State Council meeting will be held at the Gunter Hotel, San Antonio, 10:00 A.M., Saturday, January 17, 1976.

## SEXISM ON THE GRAND JURY

Nacogdoches NOW is requesting support and recognition from State and National NOW of their local civil action suti--Grand Jury Challenge-- filed in behalf of blacks, women, young persons and persons of low income in Nacogdoches County. This action is the first of its kind in the State of Texas. If it is successful in the Tyler Federal Court, the way will be opened for lawyers around the State to initiate similar actions. Contact: Betty J. Beaty, Secretary Nacogdoches NOW 7961 Koonce Rd. Nacogdoches, Texas 75961