

HCWPC

Harris County Women's Political Caucus
3602 milam houston 77002 (713)524-5743



Newsletter

February, 1974

RALLY ROUND! MARCH 1 HOUSTON MUSIC THEATER 7:30 P.M.

It's always exciting when feminists all turn up under one roof (remember the opening morning of the National Convention?), and March 1 promises to be a rousing evening. Come and exchange ideas with Gloria Steinem, editor of Ms and nationally known feminist speaker; Sissy Farenthold, NWPC chairperson and now Texas gubernatorial candidate, and U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Jordan. Bobby Kilberg, NWPC vice chair, will be there, too, with some input from our Republican sisters, and Julia Sosaya, the first woman to serve as a national officer for LULAC, will have much to add from her experiences as a Mexican-American sister. Tickets are \$1, \$5, and \$20--prices for everyone, and everyone should be there. Call 781-0396 or write Gladys M. Heldman, 8100 Westglen, Houston, Tex., 77042 for yours. They may also be purchased at the door. Make checks payable to Political Caucus Forum. Remember that HCWPC will receive one-half of the proceeds (NWPC will receive the other half), so bring your friends, and your friends' friends.

HCWPC CONVENTION MARCH 23 KIVA ROOMS COLLEGE OF EDUCATION U OF H

Our annual convention is scheduled to begin at 8:30 a.m. on Sat., March 23. To solve the problem of limited time, the Policy Council voted to eliminate the workshop sessions from the schedule, thus concentrating energies on annual business. After the keynote speech, the convention will turn to the revision of the by-laws, election of officers, and the adoption of resolutions and priorities.

Kathy Whitmire is chairing the resolutions committee and requests members to submit resolutions one week in advance in order to decrease the number of resolutions introduced from the floor. Please co-operate to save time. Work on your resolutions now and send them to Kathy Whitmire, 10416 Hammerly, Houston, Tx. 77024. Plan now to attend this vital annual meeting. Convention information will be sent out with registration blanks.

RESOLUTION COMMENDS CHIEF LYNN

The HCWPC and the Houston chapter of NOW passed a joint resolution commending Chief Carrol M. Lynn for his investigation of Officers Jack Heard, Jr. and Wayne Jones, who allegedly raped and beat a Houston woman. Like many rape victims, the woman did not want to press charges, and this incident might have gone unnoticed without the investigative work by Larry Conners, newsman for Channel 13 (KTRK-TV) and the decisive action of Chief Lynn. The resolution further condemned the abuse of women at the hands of police generally and urged Chief Lynn to prevent any future acts of brutality.

HCWPC FORMS POLICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The HCWPC now has a Police Advisory Committee, which will advise the Houston Police Department on the treatment of rape victims, employment and promotions for women officers within the department, and all matters relating to both women officers and women prisoners. The committee, chaired by Sharon Moline-Vincent, was formed as a result of a meeting with Police Chief Lynn on Feb. 1, at which topics of concern to the Caucus were discussed. Anyone interested in applying for police training and employment should contact the Advisory Committee either before or after making application, since a review of applications made by women to the police department will be one of the tasks of the committee. The next meeting of the advisory committee will be held on Sunday, March 3, at 5:00 p.m., at the Women's Center. Caucus members who wish to serve on this committee should contact Sharon Moline-Voncent at 661-3231.

WOMEN'S ADVOCATE

A delegation from the HCWPC met with Mayor Fred Hofheinz recently to discuss the status of the Office of the Women's Advocate. The Caucus members emphasized the importance to women of establishing the office as soon as possible. Mayor Hofheinz explained that some of the details needed to be worked out but that resumes were being reviewed and interviews would be set up within two weeks. Watch for an announcement of our new Women's Advocate.

CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION

The Legislative Committee of the TWPC is lobbying on four issues: removal of the welfare ceiling, re-wording of the homestead provision to include single persons, opposition to an anti-abortion amendment, and support of the Constitutional Commission's language regarding appointments to insure that they be equitable with regard to sex, race, and economic status, as well as geographic distribution within the state. Chairperson Jane Hickey was testifying last week concerning the language regarding appointments. Jane and other members will also be testifying in the future as the subjects come up.

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

Cilia Estrada and Olga Soliz met with Luis Cano of Channel 13 to discuss with him the need for greater visibility of Mexican-American women on his program "Mexican-American Viewpoint." Our members stressed the important impact on the community, especially women, of the appearance of active women on television.

HCWPC MEETING TUESDAY MARCH 12 7:30 P.M. HTA 1415 SOUTHMORE

Billie Carr, Democratic Committeewoman from Texas, will tell us how to do it at our next meeting. Billie will be fresh from a meeting in Washington, D.C. and will fill us in on the new rules of the Democratic party. These are the rules that will be used in the precinct conventions held after the upcoming May primaries. We need to be familiar with these rules and precinct convention

procedure if we want to be represented. Nancy Palm from the Republican party has also been invited, but we have not received an acceptance. Please note that the meeting time has been changed from the fourth Wednesday of the month to March 12.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING THURS. FEB. 28 7:30 P.M. WOMEN'S CENTER

The TWPC has designated March as Membership Drive Month. Acting Membership Chairperson Susan Carlman needs help to fulfill our responsibilities to state, as well as to enlarge our own membership. Plans will be made at this meeting. For further information, call Susan at 524-5531.

POLITICAL ACTION MEETS MARCH 16 IN AUSTIN

The Political Action Committee of the TWPC will meet to consider endorsements for the Republican and Democratic primaries. For further information contact Betty Barnes at 487-2489.

CHICANA EDUCATION CONFERENCE SAT. FEB. 23 AUSTIN

St. Edward's University in Austin will be the site of the Chicana Educational Conference sponsored by the TWPC and Dr. Leonard Mestas of the Juarez Lincoln Center. The objective of the conference is to make information available on educational grants, bilingual education, employment, social issues, and day care centers. The conference is scheduled to run from 9:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

NOTES FROM THE HCWPC POLICY COUNCIL

The following officers and policy council members were elected at the January 16 meeting: Pat Carr, Co-Chair Internal; Pam Payne, Secretary; Ann Green, Precinct Organizing Delegate; Miriam Schwartz, Precinct Organizing Alternate; Peggy Kress, Membership Alternate; Barbara Lane-Farley and Sylvia Garcia, Fundraising Delegates. . . . Policy Council also passed a resolution calling for the resignation of Hazel Bracken from the H.I.S.D. School Board in view of her belief that "woman is subordinate to man" and her statement that she "has no wish to compete with men."

NOTES FROM THE TWPC POLICY COUNCIL

The most important item on the agenda at the January 26 meeting in Dallas was the financial crisis of the TWPC. Finance Chair Jane MacC reported that the \$1596.14 in the treasury was simply not enough to continue the present course of expenditures. In Sept. the Policy Council had budgeted \$1246.50 per month to run the state office. Some of the Harris County delegates suggested that the office be run on a volunteer basis, thus cutting expenses to an absolute minimum. The majority present, however, felt it essential to maintain the office in its present location, utilizing the services of a paid part-time worker. The budget finally adopted totalled \$410 monthly. The position of Executive Director, resigned by Cathy Bonner because of the financial situation, will not be filled. Cathy was presented with a gift and the thanks of the TWPC for her fourteen months service. Lobbying will now be done by volunteers. Hopefully, the TWPC will receive more annual dues, which would help to brighten this gloomy financial picture. A state-wide fundraiser is also being planned. . . . The Policy Council also voted to go on record as favoring a pure state constitution. A motion was passed stating that since the problem of child support is not presently adequately addressed by the law, the next legislature must consider statutory methods of dealing with it.

PRIME TIME CAUCUS

At their January meeting, the TWPC special interest caucus of women over 40 changed the name of their group to Prime Time. The group has grown from 5 to 19 members. Anyone interested in joining can reach Barbara Lane-Farley at 461-6075.

DEFEND YOURSELVES

When 275 women arrived on the first night to sign up for the current self-defense course, everyone was overwhelmed, instructors and organizers, as well as participants. The course is being taught by members of the American Karate Association free of charge and is co-sponsored by the HCWPC and NOW rape crisis task force. A new six-week course will begin in mid-March. Call Sharon Vincent, 661-3231.

A REMINDER ABOUT LAST MONTH'S REMINDER

Please pay your dues. Or waive your dues. Or half-waive your dues. But get your name on our membership list. A new membership list of 1974 members is being compiled to determine our representation on the TWPC Policy Council. The new list will also be the mailing list for this newsletter, beginning with the May issue. Fill out the form at the end of this newsletter.

THE LETTER BAG

The well-financed, intense lobbying efforts of the so-called "right-to-life" forces must be met by everyone dedicated to freedom of choice. The hard-fought right to control our own bodies that was won through the January 1973 Supreme Court decision is in danger of being lost, bit by bit. Did you know that a new amendment to the Public Health Services Act allows federally funded hospitals to refuse to perform abortions? That 16 legislatures have already passed resolutions calling for a constitutional amendment banning abortion, and that 43 states are considering legislation against unrestricted abortions? The anti-abortion forces appear to be making headway in Congress as well, which makes it imperative that everyone write his/her senators and representatives. The following is a sample letter by Sarah Weddington, which gives the three main issues that your representatives will be voting on soon. Please write your own letter, in your own words; identical letters are often ignored.

Correct forms of address:

Senators: The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Members of the House of Representatives: The Honorable _____
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator _____ (or Representative _____)

I am writing to you urging that you take several actions with regard to family planning, sterilization, and abortion.

First, please support (S. 1708, the Family Planning Services and Population Research Act in the Senate) (H.R. 6021, 6222, and 6601, the Family Planning Services and Population Research Act in the House of Representatives). Please support this legislation without any crippling anti-sterilization or anti-abortion amendments which would limit freedom of choice.

Second, please oppose any attempt to amend the United States Constitution in any way that would affect the current sterilization and abortion situations in the United States. I favor the current situation which forces no one to be sterilized or have an abortion, but which treats both sterilization and abortion as medical matters between physician and family.

Third, please urge members of the House-Senate Conference Committee on the Social Security Amendments of 1973 to delete the Buckley Amendment. This amendment would prevent women receiving welfare from obtaining abortions under Medicaid. It would mean more unwanted children, perpetuation of poverty and higher taxes. Medicaid should be able to continue to pay for abortions.

Thank you for what I know will be your thoughtful consideration of these issues.

Sincerely,

U.S. ***
Senators:

Lloyd Bentsen, Jr.
John Tower

U.S. Representatives

District 7--Bill Archer
8--Bob Eckhardt
9--Jack Brooks
10--Barbara Jordan
22--Bob Casey

ON THE LOCAL FRONT

The Houston Public Library is now passing out "right-to-life" literature, complete with gory pictures and misinformation. Since the library is a tax-supported institution, it is inappropriate, at best, that the public library serve as a distributor of such material. If this material appears in your neighborhood branch library, complain to the librarian, then write a letter of protest to Mr. David Hennington, Director, Houston Public Library, 500 McKinney Ave., Houston, Tx.

SOCIAL SECURITY FOR HOUSEWIVES

Reps. Barbara Jordan and Martha Griffiths have introduced legislation that would provide the same Social Security benefits for housewives now held by self-employed workers, including disability

and retirement benefits. As Rep. Jordan told guests at the recent HCWPC fundraiser, the woman who cares for children, who irons, who cleans house, is entitled to the same benefits held by other working people. Write your congresspersons to urge favorable action on this bill.

FLEXIBLE HOURS EMPLOYMENT ACT

The Flexible Hours Employment Act (S2022) introduced by Sen. John Tunney would define part-time work as a permanent, responsible position with standard civil service protections and prorated fringe benefits. The bill would further require the Secretary of Labor to promote the expansion of flexible hours employment practices by all public and private employers. This bill should be of particular interest to families, where both parents wish to work outside the home and share family responsibilities. For action on this legislation, write to Sen. Gale McGee, Chairman of the Senate Post Office and Civil Service Committee, with copies to Texas senators.

AGE DISCRIMINATION

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen of Texas is reported to be working for extension of the 1967 Age Discrimination Act to cover federal, state, and local governments. Employees of public service agencies are not now covered by the Act. Age discrimination is an added burden to women already suffering from sex discrimination. Write to Sen. Bentsen to encourage his efforts in this important legislation.

WOMEN'S ACTIVIST LOBBY RATES TEXANS

The Women's Activist lobby gave our elected officials the following ratings based on their votes on such women's issues as the extension of the minimum wage to household domestics and the support of child development programs: Lloyd Bentsen, Jr. (D)--100%, John Tower (R)--0%, Bill Archer--0%, Bob Casey (D)--25%, Bob Eckhardt (D)--100%, Barbara Jordan (D)--100%, Jack Brooks (D)--75%.

A VICTORY FOR FARAH STRIKERS

The Women's Political Caucus has been supporting the Farah strikers

for over a year and can take heart from a recent opinion from a National Labor Relations Board judge that Willie Farah is guilty of unfair labor practices. Among other things, Farah was accused of illegally discharging workers for union activities and of conducting illegal surveillance of workers. Farah will appeal to the full NLRB, but labor lawyers are confident the judge's ruling will be upheld.

COUNTY HIRING PRACTICES UNDER FIRE

County Judge Bill Elliott, County Treasurer Hartsell Gray, and new WEAL president Gertrude Barnstone have all denounced the county employment practices as discriminatory toward blacks, chicanos, and women. Barnstone promises a sex discrimination suit against the county, while Elliott threatens to fire any department head who continues the discriminatory practices.

FEMINISTS EXCHANGE VIEWS

Members of the HCWPC, NOW and WEAL met recently with Ada Cohen, Women's Affairs Attache at the Israeli Embassy. Ms. Cohen explained that although Israeli women are legally equal to the men, a diminished militancy is noticeable among the younger women. Whereas women like her grandmother, Ms. Cohen added, worked and struggled alongside the men to build a state, today's women are more inclined to retire from this role. She thought that increased prosperity might be one of the reasons for this.

Representatives of the Committee of Families of the Israeli prisoners of war were also present at the meeting. They spoke of the refusal of the Syrian government to release the names of the Israeli prisoners of war or to allow visits from the Red Cross, actions that are violations of international agreements. As parents of the prisoners, they are trying to raise American public opinion in support of their sons, urging everyone to write her/his congressperson to protest these actions by the Syrian government.

FROM THE EDITOR

Spring is here. And while the young men's fancies are tied up

turning to love, I suggest that each of us could more profitably turn to politics. The political scene this spring is more exciting than it has ever been, with Sissy campaigning for governor, and Karey and Jo running for state representative positions. Their candidacies prove their commitment to us. Our commitment to them must be to volunteer to work, to make a contribution, or both.

Volunteers will be needed for block walking, registration of voters, telephoning, addressing envelopes, and many, many other jobs. Whether you are an old hand at campaigning or a novice, whether you have an hour or a day to offer, you are wanted and needed. If you wish to contribute, remember that donations of paper clips, rubber bands, envelopes, loans of spare desks, chairs, work tables, are all needed, as well as (need I say it?) money.

The ongoing responsibilities of maintaining the HCWPC as a viable political force sometimes obscures our primary goal--to elect feminists to office. I care very much about this goal; I know that you do. Please, take a moment to fill out the coupon below and send to:

Karey Bresenhan
2726 Sunset
Houston, Tx. 77005

Jo Gerhardt
8332 Gulf Freeway
Houston, Tx. 77017

I'm with you. Put my name on your volunteer list. -----

Name _____ Street _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone (day) _____ Phone (evening) _____

The best time to reach me is _____

I can work: during the day _____

at night _____

either _____

other _____

I am willing to do any kind of work _____

I prefer doing jobs such as _____

Enclosed is my contribution of _____ for your campaign.

As a contribution to your campaign, I can provide _____

Name _____ Street _____

City _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION FOR JO GERHARDT

The Nassau Bay Motor Inn, 1600 Nasa Bay Blvd., will be the scene of Jo's champagne reception on March 23 from 7:30 to 10:00 p.m. Tickets are \$5.00.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE MARCH 11

Send all news to Pat Carr, Editor, 3775 Childress, Houston, Tx. 77005. Announcements may be phoned in to Linda White, Information co-ordinator, 465-2433.

QUESTIONS? CALL ONE OF THESE PEOPLE

Chairperson: Cilia Estrada, 222-8949; 682-3575
 Co-Chair Internal: Pat Carr, 661-3129
 Co-Chair External: Patty Ryan, 523-8982
 Secretary: Pam Payne, 661-8661
 Treasurer: Olga Soliz, 748-7573, 524-5005

CLIP OUT AND MAIL FORM TO: MEMBERSHIP, HCWPC, 3602 Milam, Houston 77002. Make checks payable to HCWPC. If you ask for information of indicate an interest in a committee, please include a phone number.

NAME _____ PRECINCT NUMBER _____
 ADDRESS & CITY _____ ZIP _____
 HOME PHONE _____ OFFICE PHONE _____ OCCUPATION _____

- Enclosed is \$12.50 for full HCWPC membership through all of 1974.
- Enclosed is \$7.50; I need to waive \$5 of my 1974 state dues at this time.
- Enclosed is partial payment of \$ _____; I will pay more when I can.
- I need to waive all dues. Attached statement gives my reason.
- I am interested in the following committees: funding precinct organization information lobbying and candidate rating equal rights, employment, and compensation sexuality and reproduction membership human priorities. Please have someone contact me.
- I need an answer to the following questions about the Caucus and its work.

Send HCWPC information to the following names. Please enclose 25¢ or 3 8¢ stamps for each to cover the cost of sending 3 newsletters, if possible.

NAME _____ ADDRESS, ZIP _____
 NAME _____ ADDRESS, ZIP _____
 NAME _____ ADDRESS, ZIP _____

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Houston, Texas 77002

