


Gainesville **NOWletter**

Fighting for Women's Rights Since 1982

Gainesville Area NOW

President - Lori Tinney

377-2301

UF/SFCC Campus NOW

President - Stefanie Lauria

Gainesville Area NOW Editor - Lisa Labbe

Campus NOW Editor - Adrienne Maxwell

Spring 2004

NOW is a multi-issue political organization. Our self-defined role has been to initiate change for the benefit of the greatest number of people, to affect the legal and institutional structures of the society in a way that systematically expands the choices and possibilities available to all women. In this way, NOW takes action to bring women, as a class, into the mainstream of society, (rather than offering aid to individual women) in achieving personal solutions or temporary relief from oppression, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in true partnership with men.

Elections - March 9th !!!

Don't forget to vote. On Tuesday the 9th, Florida voters choose their Presidential Preference. Also, Gainesville voters are deciding who will be the next mayor. Gainesville Area NOW defers to Judy Levy NOW in offering its support to Pegeen Hanrahan.

NOW is encouraging its members to register as "permanent absentee." This way, all ballots leave a paper trail. We don't want a repeat of the fiasco in 2000.



Local feminists protest the prescription requirement of the Morning-After Pill on February 15, in front of The Independent Alligator offices. Oddly, The Alligator did not cover the protest.



Gainesville Area NOW Calendar

- Mar 9 Election Day
- Mar 11 Board/Planning Meeting
- Mar 15 ERA Rally in Tally
- Mar 25 General Meeting
- Apr 8 Board/Planning Meeting
- Apr 22 General Meeting
- Apr 25 March for Women's Lives, DC

Our Board meetings are from 7:30 - 8:30 in the Grace Knight Room of the County Administration Bldg. At 8:30, the meeting becomes a planning session for the April 25th March in DC. All members are welcome.

Our general meetings are at 7:30 at the Pride Community Center at 1107 NW 6 Street. We encourage you to attend, and bring a friend!



Pride Community Center
of North Central Florida
PO Box 5383
Gainesville, FL 32627
(352) 377-8915
pridecommunitycenter.org

March is Women's History Month



We would like to extend a big and heartfelt *Thank You* to Sheila Bishop and all of the performers of "Queen of Hearts/Queen of Spades". The performance on Friday, February 13th, raised money for all the area NOW chapters to use as we organize for the March for Women's Lives in Washington D.C. this April 25. (See insert)

**Check out the Gainesville Area NOW
new & improved website!
www.gainesvillenow.org**

Gainesville Sun Daily Poll 02/16/2004 - 02/17/2004

**Question: Should the morning after birth
control pill be sold as an over-the-counter
drug?**

**Total Votes: 359
68.8% yes
32.3% no**

International Women's Day is March 8

Women in the US organized the first Women's Day in response to the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Fire that killed 146 women trapped in a locked workroom. Their actions helped inspire International Women's Day.

Rally in Tally

Tuesday, 3/15/04

This March 15, you will be able to walk the halls of the Capitol in Tallahassee, and make a difference. Judy Levy NOW is providing a bus for the FL NOW annual Lobby Day and ERA Ratification Rally.

Members from around the state will be delivering packets of information on our issues to legislators. We will demand that Florida-- one of the three remaining states that has NOT ratified the Equal Rights Amendment-- move to the floor the concurrent resolutions for ratification (S 238 by Sen. Margolis and H 93 by Rep. Joyner)

Our legislators need to be aware that we are watching them, and their actions. Other bills before the legislature that are of paramount importance to Florida Women include:

- Parental Rights Amendment
- Dignity for All Students Act
- Unborn Quick Child
- Women's Health & Safety Act
- Employment Practices

At the rally, Florida NOW will demand that appropriate action be taken on these issues.

NOW Action VP Olga Vives will come from DC to participate in the Lobby Day and Rally.

The day starts with lunch in the Capitol cafeteria, then a briefing at 12:40 PM, and then to the legislators at 1:10. We will gather at the west steps of the Capitol facing the Supreme Court, for a 5:15 ERA Ratification Rally. There will be a sunset watch and debriefing where we will congratulate ourselves on a good day's work at 6:30 at Cucinella's restaurant (formerly Sloppy Joe's) on Kleman Plaza.

The bus will leave Gainesville at 9 AM to arrive at Tally by noon. Then to come home, the bus will arrive by 10 pm. If we can fill the bus (47 people), the cost (plus tip for driver) is \$15; if we get 40 people, cost is \$17.75; if we get 35 people, cost is \$20. Contact Emily Browne, 352-376-7479. Emily@JudyLevyNOW.org

A side note: Tallahassee NOW is sponsoring a signature ad in the Tallahassee Democrat. Cost is \$10 for up to 40 digits of information. If you want to participate, mail check to Tallahassee NOW, PO Box 47, Tallahassee, FL 32302.

**April 22nd is "Take our
Daughters to Work Day!"**

UF/SFCC Campus NOW Report

Rape Action Committee Surveys

Jessica Powell, Campus NOW Rape Action Committee Chair

The Rape Action Committee of Campus NOW has launched a revised version of the sexual assault survey that has been used by the committee in past years. The anonymous survey is designed to gather data on the nature of sexually violent acts committed against students and staff, as well as the survivor's account of reporting the incident to the authorities. It is no secret that in the past women have been discouraged from reporting rapes to UPD, and GPD, for fear of interrogation and harassment, as well as sexist attitudes aimed towards blaming the victim. In 2002, UPD reported a total of four "forcible sex offenses." We feel that these statistics are devastatingly inaccurate and do not represent the actual number of sexually violent crimes committed.

We hope that the information provided to us in this survey will be a catalyst for finding an alternative, feminist approach toward combating sexual violence on campus. The current angle utilized by UF consistently puts the onus on women, convincing us that if we watch our drinks, learn self-defense and never walk alone at night, we will eliminate or decrease our risk of sexual assault. We contest this perspective and feel strongly that the university must actively work to eradicate this most extreme form of sexism on campus by publicly recognizing that women don't need to be 'safer', men need to stop raping us! Our survey is open to people of all genders and lifestyles, since sexual assault isn't limited solely to women, and is often targeted towards people living non-conventional lifestyles. An unsettling number of people who identify as either a woman, man, queer or trans will be sexually assaulted sometime in their lifetime. However, it still remains one of the most unreported and therefore unconvicted crimes.

We must band together to combat sexual assault, and bring an end to this male supremacist weapon of destruction.

MAP Over-the-Counter Campaign

Kelly Mangan, Campus NOW Vice President

For the past six months, Campus NOW has worked with Gainesville Area NOW and the NOW New York State Reproductive Rights Taskforce on a campaign to win over-the-counter access to the Morning-After Pill. On Dec. 17, we traveled to Washington D.C. to testify before two committees of the Food and Drug Administration-- from our personal experiences-- as to why women need non-prescription access to the Morning-After Pill (MAP). The committees voted overwhelmingly (23-4) to recommend over-the-counter status.

In the months following this recommendation, political pressure has mounted against this safe and effective form of contraception. President Bush and 49 federal legislators have ordered FDA Commissioner, Mark McClellan, to maintain the prescription requirement-- a requirement that forces women to make doctor's appointments, answer prying and judgmental questions to get prescriptions, go wait in line at pharmacies to get it, and then foot the bill for the entire process! And this is if we're "lucky" and we can afford to take off work or school in order to get it. Waiting to take MAP decreases its effectiveness, and makes it more likely that we will get pregnant.

To pressure the FDA to make the right decision, Gainesville and New York feminists-- under the name "Morning-After Pill Conspiracy"-- distributed a pledge which more than 400 women

across the country have signed. The signees (who include Kim Gandy, Patricia Ireland, and Ellie Smeal) pledged to help women they know get the Morning-After Pill whenever the opportunity presents itself, even if that means breaking the law by giving away this prescription-only drug. On Feb. 15 (the morning after Valentine's Day), women in Gainesville and New York gave their friends MAP in front of the press, in much the same way women like Margaret Sanger broke the law by passing out information on birth control when it was illegal to do so.

A few days before the FDA's scheduled deadline to make a decision (Feb. 20), McClellan announced that they would be postponing a decision on over-the-counter status for a further three months. The FDA wants to impose an age restriction on the Morning-After Pill (which would effectively make it a behind-the-counter drug). The American Medical Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and 74 other groups have said MAP is safe for over-the-counter distribution. Even the FDA's own advisory committees agreed unanimously that the drug was safe (yes, even the four that voted against over-the-counter access!).

The Morning-After Pill meets the FDA's requirements for an over-the-counter drug. An age restriction is medically unnecessary, and places the Morning-After Pill out of many women's reach. Campus NOW believes that if a woman is old enough to get pregnant, she's old enough to decide that she doesn't want to be pregnant! Furthermore, it is NOT the FDA's job (or right!) to regulate young women's sex lives, or to deny women drugs based on the moral qualms of religious extremists. This delay shows that the FDA has allowed its agenda to be governed by anti-woman politics rather than by science.

Having greater control over our bodies is something that ALL women benefit from. It's for this reason that we're asking you to help us pressure the FDA to make the right decision. Sign the pledge by emailing your name and contact information to MAPConspiracy04@hotmail.com.

Women are the real experts on our lives, and the men heading up the FDA need to listen to us when we say that the Morning-After Pill should be available over-the-counter.

**Susan B. Anthony was born on
February 15, 1820.**

Campus NOW - Dates to Remember:

March 19 Band Benefit @ 8:30 pm at the UC
March 21 .. Board Meeting @ 1:00 pm @ the CMC
March 23 General Meeting, Women's History
Month @ 6:30 in Little Hall, 201
April 2 Board Meeting @ 7:00 pm in Little
Hall 201
April 12 General Meeting, Campus NOW
Elections @ 6:15 pm in Little Hall 201
April 25 March for Women's Lives - DC

NOW is funded solely by its members' fund-raising and the contributions of supporters. In order to bring the fight for women's rights to Washington DC for the March for Women's Lives, we need your support. Funds will pay for scholarships for activists who could not otherwise afford to go. Please be generous.

I would like to donate:
___\$15 ___\$25 ___\$50 ___ \$100 ___other

Send contributions to: NOW (March Funding)
P.O. Box 2235
Gainesville, FL 32602-2235

Coretta Scott King was born on
April 27th, 1927.

Contact Info - 377-2301

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Campus_now@hotmail.com

President Stefanie Lauria

Vice-President Kelly Mangan

Gainesville Area NOW and Campus NOW operate exclusively on members' contributions and fund-raising. Every time we put out a newsletter, it costs us hundreds of dollars, due to printing and postage costs. This comes out of our limited treasury. So, we are thinking of trying something new. In keeping with the times, we would like to send as many newsletters as possible via email. In the near future, you will be contacted to determine if you like this idea, and if it will be feasible for you. There are added benefits this way. You will receive your newsletter faster, it will be in color, with better graphics, and you can either print it out, or save it on your computer. Don't worry, those of you who do not have a computer, or cannot receive attachments, will still be able to get your NOWletter sent snail-mail. We don't want anyone to miss out, we're just trying to keep our overhead to a minimum. If you know right now that you would like to receive your newsletter through email, please send a note to Lisa@gainesvillenow.org. Thank you.