An Organizing Packet...

A Call To Speakout

Abolish All Barriers To Abortion Rights
And Fight For Women’s Liberation

"All of a sudden, there were a whole bunch of women talking the truth about abortion. Finally! Finally! We were saying, yeah, we did it, we had it, and we want our rights. We want to have legal, free abortion." —Irene Petukh, describing the 1969 Redstockings abortion speak-out.

Redstockings disrupts an abortion reform legislative hearing demanding repeal of the abortion laws and that women testify as the real experts on abortion. New York City, 1969.

The New York Times, Friday, February 14, 1969

Authored and distributed by Gainesville Women’s Liberation
with assistance from the Redstockings Women’s Liberation Archives for Action
This packet is authored and distributed by Gainesville Women’s Liberation (GWL) with assistance from the Redstockings Women’s Liberation Archives for Action. To order more copies of this organizer’s packet on abortion send $5.00 to Gainesville Women’s Liberation, P.O. Box 14017, Gainesville, FL, 32604. Additional monetary contributions are welcome to offset the cost of labor and production of this packet and to help strengthen GWL’s work organizing for women’s liberation.

To order audio tapes and Redstockings Archives for Action packet from the Redstockings 1969 and 1989 Speakouts on Abortion send $0.55 in stamps to the GWL address above to request a catalog of the Redstockings Archives materials or check out the Redstockings website at: www.redstockings.org.

Speakers also available. Call (352) 372-7356.

Front Cover Photo Credits

January 2001 “Speak Out for Women’s Freedom” Gainesville, FL. Natalie Maxwell, UF/SFCC NOW’s Abortion Rights Chair kicks off the speak out. Lidia Castilla, Campus NOW member, is in the background. Photo: Candi Churchill, Iguana

A group of feminists who called themselves the “Women’s Liberation Movement” disrupted an abortion reform hearing demanding repeal of the abortion laws and that women testify as the real experts on abortion, NYC, 1969. The group later became Redstockings.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. "A Call to Abolish All Barriers to Abortion Rights and for Women's Liberation," GWL (April 2001)

3. Speak Out Testimony at the First National Speak Out on Abortion, February 13, 1969 organized by Redstockings of the Women's Liberation Movement, New York City (anonymous)


10. Feminist Consciousness-Raising Series flyer, GWL and Campus NOW (Fall 1998) Sample Consciousness-Raising questions about birth control and abortion

11. Introduction to UF/SFCC Campus NOW's “Speak Out on Abortion”, read by Kirsten Young (February 1996)

14. Speech by Carol Giardina (co-founder of Gainesville Women's Liberation) given at a rally organized by GWL and NOW in Ocala, FL after an abortion clinic was burned down (April 23, 1989)


18. "A Call to See, Learn, and Take Back the Power of History for Activist Use," Women's History Month Flyer, Gainesville Area NOW, Campus NOW, with analysis and discussion by GWL (March 30 1990)

20. Florida State University Campus NOW and GWL Speakout Flyer, from GWL class "Women's Liberation: Where Do I Fit In?" action (April 15 1996)

21. Testimony about an illegal abortion by Jeannie Uffelman, given at the Speak Out organized by UF/SFCC Campus NOW (February 4 1996)

24. Signature Ad by Campus NOW, *Independent Florida Alligator* (November 2, 1992)


30. Testimony on Relationships and Sex with Men, anonymous (October 1996)
32 "Morning After Pill Distributed in France For Free," Testimony from Stephanie Seguin (March 2001)
Various newspaper clippings compiled by Lori Tinney
French Pill Distributed at Bars in France graphic, Daniel Gimenez (April 2001)

33 "Feminists Protest Sexist Morning After Pill Practices at University of Florida Infirmary," Leaflet from the Gainesville Women's Liberation Community Education Class, "Women's Liberation Where Do I Fit In?" march on the University of Florida Infirmary to demand unrestricted access to the Morning After Pill (December 4, 1997)

35 Consciousness-Raising Questions, Testimonies and Conclusions about the Morning After Pill from the GWL's Community Education Class, "Women's Liberation Where Do I Fit In?" (December 1997)

39 "Move Forward on Abortion Rights," Campus and Gainesville Area NCW, Editorial in the Independent Florida Alligator (March 27, 2001)

40 "Medical Residents Will Still Perform Abortions, UF Says," Article from the Gainesville Iguana and Photo from Rally in Jacksonville, FL to pressure University of Florida Medical School to allow medical residents to perform abortions (July/August 1996)

41 Gainesville Area NOW NOWletter on D & X, Pennie Foster (September 1996)

42 "Speakout for Women's Freedom" Flyer by the Campus NOW January 26, 2001)

43 Speech and personal testimony given by Destry Taylor, Chair of UF/SFCC Campus NOW's Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action Team (January 21, 2000)

47 "Children and Parents Need Universal Childcare!" Gainesville Area NOW general meeting and CR flyer (December 2, 2000)

47 "Women's Issues Downplayed", letter to the editor by Laurie Reisman, Gainesville Area NOW's Legislative Director, ran in the Gainesville Sun (February 6, 2001)

48 "Vote Yes! For Universal Health Care November 7!" Flyer by Campus NOW original was 11 x 17 in (September 2000)

49 "Anonymous testimony from a young woman about her coat hanger abortion in 1991..." (April 2001)

50 "Let's Go For What We Really Want!" Emergency March for Women's Lives flyer by Gainesville Area and UF/SFCC Campus NOW (April 2001)

51 Action flyers leading up to march in D.C. from Gainesville Area NOW and UF/SFCC Campus NOW (April 2001)
A CALL TO ABOLISH ALL BARRIERS TO ABORTION RIGHTS
AND FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Following in the footsteps of the feminists who organized to win abortion rights and many of the other benefits women have today, Gainesville Women's Liberation (GWL) wants to alert women to two powerful tools in our struggle for abortion rights and women's liberation. We put together this packet as a guide and to encourage women around the country to organize Speakouts and Consciousness-Raising groups so that we can abolish all the restrictions on our abortion rights. We hope you will find this packet to be a useful source of ideas, lessons and tools.

Based on our struggles -- and victories! -- we've learned the importance of building up our feminist organizations and movement into a fighting force so that we can do more than just keep politicians from messing with our abortion rights, but also build a strong movement to push forward not only on abortion and birth control, but to also win all the other things women need like equal pay, quality public child care, paid parental leave, an end to discrimination on our jobs and respect from men. Feminist organizing and victories in the abortion struggle are rich in lessons and ideas to fuel our movement today for women's liberation.

As you will read in the packet, the feminist movement -- not the Supreme Court -- won women abortion rights and has maintained what we have. Women won the right to abortion through the efforts of radical feminists that defied the laws criminalizing abortion, organized Speakouts, protested, marched, broke up legislative hearings on abortion and filed class action lawsuits. Feminists demanded that all laws restricting abortion be abolished. Women waging the abortion struggle did consciousness-raising and found out that their illegal abortions weren't just their personal problems, their personal failures—that there was a political root they shared as a group because women were denied the right to abortion and the ability to control the direction of their lives.

In March 1989, the Women's Liberation group Redstockings held a 20th Anniversary Speakout to Commemorate the March 1969 Speakout on abortion when women, defying the law and custom, first spoke publicly about their then-illegal abortions. This packet is a companion to the Redstockings Women's Liberation Archives for Action packet about the Redstockings' 1969 and 1989 Abortion Speakouts. The events described in the Redstockings' packet made us in Gainesville Women's Liberation take another look at how we need to defend and advance our abortion rights in the context of the larger fight for women's liberation.

GWL got in touch with abortion pioneer Lucinda Cisler, who came to Gainesville to tell the story of the struggle to repeal all laws restricting abortion. The feminist demand for repeal led to New York having the most liberal abortion law in the nation in 1970. Cisler's presentation of these ideas and the documents from the Redstockings archives gave us the ammunition and inspiration to push for a march in Tallahassee in fall 1989 when Florida became the first state to attempt to restrict abortion after the Supreme Court's Webster decision. We worked with feminists around the state and stopped those attempts to roll back our rights. That story is told here in the packet. We strongly recommend that you read this packet after reading the Redstockings Archives for Action Packet (available from www.afn.org/~redstock).
The idea in starting Consciousness-Raising and Speakouts was simple yet powerful, that women are the experts on our experience, not books, not politicians and not men. One of the founders of Gainesville Women's Liberation, Judith Brown, said in 1976, "Speaking out is still the most revolutionary act of our time." It is women like us, standing up, demanding change, saying our experiences with laws that restrict abortion, telling the truth about our lives and making the private and personal into the public and the political that has galvanized enough women to win what we have won.

The Speakout is a public form of consciousness-raising. Through consciousness-raising we examine the root of the problems we face as women, the truth about our lives, why we do certain things, figure out what it is we want to change and look at who benefits and how they get away with it, so we know where to aim our feminist forces. (Examples and ideas for questions are included in the packet.) Our experience has been that feminist consciousness-raising is still the most powerful tool we have to abolish lies about women and to develop strategies to organize. We have compiled another packet, entitled "Consciousness-Raising," that is available through the Redstockings Women's Liberation Archives for Action. Original source materials on consciousness-raising are also available from the Redstockings Archives and in Redstockings' book Feminist Revolution.

Consciousness-raising isn't just useful in the abortion struggle, either. We can use it to figure out an analysis and a plan of action based on women's experience in all the other ways we are treated unfairly -- for example, beauty standards, sex, housework, treatment on our jobs, child care and in our relationships with men.

This year, 2001, we face an unelected President, Thief-in-Chief Bush, who with Executive Orders, appointments and legislation is punching through one anti-woman, anti-people policy after another. This is not what we voted for, it's against the will of the people. We need to build a movement that can counter all of it, no matter who's in office and no matter by what illegal means they seized power. We hope the ideas and tools in this packet will be useful to you as we work together to build that movement.

Our feminist history shows that we're the ones who have changed the course of history, we have a history of fighting and winning when it comes to our right to abortion and other things critical to women's freedom. We invite feedback about the contents of this packet and how you use the ideas in your organizing.

--Gainesville Women's Liberation
Gainesville, Florida (April 2001)
What I want to talk about is something that we call a therapeutic abortion. Therapeutic - I don't know. I've been trying to think for many years what that meant. But all I know is that when I went to get this therapeutic abortion, like I knew what was happening, I knew that I was going in and telling this psychiatrist that I was insane because that's what you have to do. You have to tell them that you're going to commit suicide and you can't just say now look doctor I'm going to commit suicide... but I knew what I was doing though. But when I had that therapeutic abortion it cost me more - the therapy after the therapeutic abortion - than before.

When I got pregnant I had a sister who was a nurse and that was fortunate because unless you know how to go about doing things it's really hard. My sister said well, look go see this obstetrician and talk to him. And I saw him and he said well, you're pregnant what do you want me to do? And I said well, look, I don't want to have the baby. And he said do you have some money? (This is the truth I'm not making this up.) And I said well, I don't have much. I didn't have any, but I was figuring out, like I wrote on a piece of paper the friends I had, which ones could give me $50, $25 and I'd have to sell my body for the rest. You know, that's what happens when you get pregnant again. So I told him that I had some money and he gave me the address in his office. And he said go see these two psychiatrists ... and I went to see them.

The first one I saw approximately 8 to 12 minutes. (I don't want to be too modest about it) And he said to me yeah, you're pregnant and you want an abortion. Do you have any history of mental illness? Were you ever in a hospital? Were you insane? He said well why don't you want this baby? And I told him why: that I just didn't feel at that time that I could be a mother and I couldn't see carrying the pregnancy and then having to give the child away. There was no need for that. So he told me, he came out and said, what are you going to do if you don't get an abortion. And I knew what he wanted me to say and that was I'm going to kill myself. And I said I'm going to kill myself. And he wrote it down
that I’m going to kill myself, and he said to me $60. And I said to him I don’t have $60 and he told me (this is the truth) that if I didn’t give him the $60 then or come back and give it to him, he would not write the report that has to be given to the obstetrician that’s presented before the board. That was only one doctor.

So then I saw the other one and it was pretty much the same thing. And he said well how much did the other doctor charge? (This is all the truth) And I said $60. And he said well you know I usually charge more for this kind of consultation. He said it’s very hard for me to write this report. I offered to write it. I feel like I’m telling a joke, but let me tell you something. This is no joke that two psychiatrists wrote that they agreed I should have an abortion. This is their opinion.

I called up the obstetrician and I said what’s happening. Meanwhile I was in school. I was going to college and working, supporting myself, not living at home. And meanwhile I kept getting bigger and bigger and he said to me well look, it has to be brought before the abortion board at the hospital and we’ll let you know.

Well one day I was at school and at that time my school was on strike. I was standing outside and my sister came and just saw me there. And she said come on. And I said where are we going? She said you have to go to the hospital right now, just like that. I had my books, went to the hospital and was brought up to the labor room. Meanwhile I hear these women screaming and yelling they’re going to have their babies. I just didn’t know what was happening and a nurse comes in and she shades you and she sticks a needle in your arm and a bottle is hanging. And I said maybe they’re going to kill me. It’s not funny. I honestly thought that maybe they were really going to kill me. I didn’t know what was going to happen when I got in there. Then the doctor comes and I was really crying. He says what are you crying about? I said I’m scared. He said you’re scared? My job is to bring life into this world, not to destroy it. Now this was the sympathetic obstetrician who was giving me a therapeutic abortion cause I was insane, but you know he handled it very well.

Then you had the abortion, which is a very simple procedure. This is something that should be understood, it’s a very simple procedure. It takes about 12 minutes if it’s done in a hospital. If it’s done in the bathroom of some hotel it’s not such a simple procedure.

Well then you’re put up on the maternity ward. See this is all therapeutic. This is all torture. This is planned. I’m not paranoid. This is planned torture. You just had an abortion. You’re put on the maternity ward. They happen to find me a room right next to the nursery and near all the little babies crying. Then they bring out the little babies to their mothers and you have to see all this shit. Then the nurses come in and say oh, you had the abortion. When you go into the operating room, there’s a bulletin board/a blackboard, and it’s written “therapeutic
abortion.” I won’t forget that. This is the procedure for a therapeutic abortion.

The reason we have the war that we have now is because men want to make women suffer for their sins and it’s a sin to get pregnant. And women are forced to carry an unwanted pregnancy. If you do not want the pregnancy you are faced with a very clear reality and that is that you are sacrificing your life when you go to a hotel. Or when you get into a car on 54th Street and Lexington Avenue and you’re blindfolded and taken someplace. You don’ know where. You’re not given anesthetic. The instruments are not even sterilized. You wind up with an infection. You can wind up never being able to have children and this is what women have to go through. This is our debt to society.

As I said before, we owe society nothing. Society owes us something and that is to give us the right to decide what we want to do with our own bodies. The man is the one that screws you and then when you turn to him and say hey look sweetheart I’m pregnant: How do you know it was me? You never slept with anyone else? Or he says what am I going to do? What is he going to do, what am I going to do? The man’s not the one that has to have the abortion or have the kid. Yet we have a panel of 10 experts, men and a woman, a nun. Is she an expert? These are the experts. The people that are sitting here. The people that are in the audience who have had the abortions, but no one wants to listen to us.

From Abortion Without Apology, By Nina Baehr, © 1990

This graphic is by Irene Peslikis. In 1969, along with other Redstockings members, Irene Peslikis disrupted a committee of the New York State legislature holding a hearing on abortion with 13 men and a nun as the panel’s so-called "experts." The protesters demanded that the committee hear from women, the real experts, on abortion. Irene spoke out publicly about her own, then illegal, abortion at the Redstockings Abortion Speakout on February 13, 1969, put on after the legislative committee refused to let the women speak. Irene wrote the women’s liberation paper on consciousness-raising, "Resistances to Consciousness" in Notes from the Second Year, Shulamith Firestone, ed., New York, 1969. Irene helped to develop the method of consciousness-raising and the concepts the "personal is political," the pro-woman line and sisterhood is powerful. Irene had also led feminist art campaigns to establish a feminist gallery, feminist art journal and a teaching project for women artists.
Bring your own lunch.

Right-to-the Coal Handers Drive Kickoff

Sunday, January 22 at 1:00 pm, Concourse: Emily Browne, 376-7479.

Workshop

Sunday Schedule

$2 tickets include complimentary lunch. (No price for lunch for aborition rights!) Arrangement for reception at the Womans' Residence: 20 SW 2nd Ave.

Question & Answer

Lucinda Cister

and When Can Be Learned From It.

When Really Happened in the Abortion Movement

Nina Beer

Recovering Movement History: So We Can Win

Donna Bingham, Director, Feminist Women's Health Center

Honoring the Protectors & Defenders of Abortion Rights

Carol Guldin, Feminist Women's Liberation

Greetings Remarks

Judith Brown, Attorney, Carmen Harrison Legal Defense Fund

"First they came for the Jews..." Emily Browne, President, Feminist Women's Alliance NOW.

Welcome

Saturday Schedule

Nina Beer

Lucinda Cister

The first time alive of the National Abortion Action League (NAAR) in 1986. The second time alive of the National Abortion Action League (NAAR) in 1987.

In 1992, when the NAAR went on a domestic strike, Lucinda Cister, President, Feminist Women's Health Center, was fired from her job as a nurse. She discovered that her discovery of the real history of the movement began.

Nina Beer mentioned this problem of the role of radical history in 1985 while she was working at Columbia University, expanding the scope of her research. She discovered that the scope of her research was much more extensive than her previous efforts. She discovered that the scope of her research was much more extensive than her previous efforts. She discovered that the scope of her research was much more extensive than her previous efforts.
With the A.W.O.D.

THIS TIME WE'RE GOING

The work of a group of Greek women was to build a strong grassroots movement with the goal of...
Consciousness-Raising
presented by UF/SFCC
Campus National Organization for Women

Question: When have you used contraceptives? Why? Did the guy play a role? Have you ever had a condom break, a diaphragm slip, or forget to take Birth Control pills? What happened? What did you do? What role did the guy play? When have you not used contraceptives? Why not? What role did the guy play?

OR

Have you ever needed/wanted to take the morning after pill? Did you take it? If not, why didn't you take it? If you did take it, what happened when you went to get it? What did you like about taking it? What did you not like about taking it?

Thursday, Feb 19, 1998
at 7 pm
Anderson 210

Consciousness-Raising is a Radical Weapon of the Feminist Movement:

--A way of getting to the root of sexism
--Understanding that sexism you face is not an individual problem to be solved with individual solutions
--A way to get together with other women to figure out and get more involved to create change for women

For more information call Amber @ 379-7641
Consciousness-Raising Questions on Abortion and Birth Control

When have you used contraceptives? Why?
Did the guy play a role?
Have you ever had a condom break, a diaphragm slip, or forget to take your birth control pills? What happened? What did you do? Did the guy play a role?
When have you not used contraceptives? Why not? What role did the guy play?

Do you or did you want children? Have you ever participated in child rearing (as a parent/grandparent, other family members, as a childcare teacher, etc)? What do/did you like about it? What do/did you not like about it?
What factors do you or did you weigh in when you considered whether or not to have kids and/or to become a childcare teacher (if applicable)?
How have you changed on your decision over time?
What do you want from society? What do you want from men (in terms of child rearing)?

What restrictions/obstacles have I faced when trying to get birth control and/or abortion?
How did these restrictions/obstacles affect me?

What did I do?
Are these restrictions acceptable to me?
Why?

Would I be willing to participate in an organized struggle to do something about this?

How does birth control, abortion or child care affect my life?
What restrictions do I face? What role do men play?
What role does my insurance company or the Infirmary play?
How would full and free (no cost) reproductive rights affect my life?

Feminist Consciousness-Raising Group

We use consciousness-raising to:

• Get to the root of sexism—who benefits, who pays.

• Understand that the pain and struggles in our lives are not our individual problems and we cannot solve them on our own.

• For women to get what we want, we need to get together

Every Monday at 7:30 p.m. for 8 weeks starting Oct. 5.
Cost: $45 (no one turned away for inability to pay.)
Fee includes readings and NOW membership.
Childcare provided:

Contact: Pennie at 335-5034

Co-sponsored by Gainesville Women's Liberation and UF/SFCC Campus National Organization for Women.
My name is Kirsten Young and I am President of the University of Florida/Santa Fe Community College National Organization for Women. I’m here today to speak out on my abortion rights. I would not be speaking here today if abortion were not legal. My mother had an abortion when I was a toddler. She became very ill during pregnancy, lost 30 pounds—at one point she weighed only 70 pounds—and would have died had the doctors not known how or been willing to perform an abortion. I can’t imagine how different my life would be without my mother in it.

I’m here to tell you it is absolutely necessary that we as women speak out on abortion rights. What rights we have now aren’t good enough and those rights we do have are being threatened. There’s a widespread misconception that Roe v. Wade gave women the right to abortion. I’m here to tell you that this is not true. Women marched, rallied, and fought for the right to abortion. Roe v. Wade was the result of women organizing, not a gift from the Supreme Court.

Abortion is currently legal, but women are constantly being threatened by anti-abortion legislation, health insurance policies that don’t cover abortion, and extreme financial costs, which deny or restrict or access to abortion. After more than 27 years of organizing, we are still fighting for the right to abortion!

We have organized the speakout today to protect the rights we have and expand them even further. Several women are going to speak on their experience with abortion and unwanted pregnancies. It’s time for women to speak about an issue we are experts on, and it’s time for men to listen!
The first speakout was held on February 13, 1969 by the pioneering Women’s Liberation group, Redstockings. Members of Redstockings invaded the New York State abortion hearings, which were being held to decide whether abortion would be legal in this state. These hearings, which were deciding the future of women’s lives, were begin presided over by a panel of 14 men and one woman—a nun! The panel wanted to legalize abortion only for women who had more than four children, women with fetal deformities, and women who had been raped or were victim of incest. This proposed abortion reform would not have helped any of the women like you and me who have dealt with unwanted pregnancy or the fear of it. One woman shouted out to the panel, “We have waited and waited while you have held one hearing after another. Meanwhile, the baby I didn’t want is two years old.” Redstockings took a revolutionary stand and demanded that the real experts on abortion speak—women. They distributed a flyer I’d like to read for you today.

After Redstockings disrupted the hearings, the first organized speakout of the second wave of the feminist movement took place. And this is the spirit in which this speakout is held in—the spirit of women demanding change, of demanding that women control our own sexuality and reproduction, of fighting for the right to control our lives.

The Women’s Liberation Movement fought for the repeal of all abortion laws. Women wanted abortion laws permanently removed from the books, not a time limit under which women could get abortions. Women wanted abortion on demand—with no limitations on when and under what circumstances they could get one.

Because ordinary women’s speaking out and organizing, because of their determination and courage to fight for what is rightfully ours, we have abortion rights as we know them today. But what we have is not enough! A first trimester procedure costs between $300 and $500, one-quarter of the typical financial aid check each term! A second trimester abortion can cost up to $1900. Raising this amount is not easy but those women who scrape the money together often have to drive to the nearest county—sometimes out of state—to get an abortion, because 83% of counties don’t have a clinic or doctor who will provide abortions. Women who live in Gainesville are lucky—most towns don’t have a single abortion clinic, yet Gainesville has three. Medicaid and most other health insurance policies don’t cover abortions. Military and Catholic Hospitals refuse to perform abortions. The majority of medical schools, including UF, don’t require students—even OB/GYN’s—to learn how to do abortions.
If gynecologists can't be trusted to take care of women's reproductive health, who can? Nurse practitioners and physician assistants are prohibited from performing abortions—even though midwives can deliver babies—a much more dangerous procedure than abortion.

Currently, three proposed bills are threatening our abortion rights. In Florida, the proposed 24-hour waiting period will force a woman to register her intent to have an abortion and wait 24 hours before having this procedure. This means taking an additional day off work, often paying hotel bills, and returning to the clinic the next day to have the abortion. The “Woman’s Right to Know Act” will force clinics to provide clients with anti-abortion propaganda. The proposed ban on the D & X procedure for second trimester abortions is the first step to taking away women’s rights to have second trimester abortions at all. Our right to abortion is being threatened. These laws, costs, and lack of available clinics are punishing women—making it harder to get an abortion, sometimes impossible.

So what are we going to do about it? Join Campus NOW and fight back! Fighting back in an organized effort is how we got Roe v. Wade in the first place, and this is the only way we are going to keep and expand abortion rights.

Those women who have faced the burden of an unwanted pregnancy, women who have found the money to pay for the procedure, know that we must have unrestricted easy access to abortion. Women must have the right to abortion, regardless of their ability to pay. This means no more parental and spousal consent laws! No more forced waiting periods! And no more state sponsored anti-abortion propaganda!

Women are the real experts on abortion, not Supreme Court Justices, not state legislators, not Congress, not the President. Ordinary women—you, me and women who know that until we have the right to decide the course of our lives, we will never have equality with men.

Now you’re going to hear six women testify on their personal experiences with abortions and unwanted pregnancies. After the scheduled speakers, there will be an opportunity for women in the audience to come up and speak out on their abortions and pregnancy scares.
Testimony by Carol Giardina at the Rally in Ocala, Florida, April 23, 1989, after an abortion clinic was burned to the ground after two arson attempts.

I'm Carol Giardina. I'm 42 years old. I co-founded Gainesville Women's Liberation together with Judith Brown and am a member of Gainesville Women's Liberation and the Gainesville Area National Organization for Women. As a freshman at the University of Florida in 1963 when my friend Anna, also a young student, told me in pain and pride and in strictest confidence about her successful attempts to abort her pregnancy which ended in her miscarrying on the floor in the dorm shower with her mouth full of rags to gag her screams, I don't know why, but I felt awe for her courage and sympathy for her pain. Later that same year when my own roommate got pregnant, I helped out.

As the year wore on, I watched so many of my freshman female classmates drop out with unwanted pregnancies, I wound up becoming a secret abortion referral service operating out of Reid Hall, our dorm. I continued to do this without much thought of the politics of it until 1968 when the politics of it were made clear to me in the Women's Liberation Movement. I continued the referrals but began fighting publicly for abortion and women's liberation. Some important lessons from the highly successful fight we made to win legal abortions have been hidden from us. We should learn them fast now.

Abortion is not a "single issue" or an apolitical, medical procedure. It's a feminist demand and must be fought for as part of a militant mass Women's Liberation Movement. Fighting in a way that doesn't "offend" whatever politicians are popular this year is a loser. When we take to the streets and the state houses in large numbers and speak out clearly and without apology from our own experience for what we really want, not just a watered down version, the politicians and the Judges fall in behind us. They did before and they will now, not because we wear dresses or speak sweetly, but because we represent power. We represent power. We represent 63% of the American people, male and female, who support abortion rights. We represent over one fourth of American women who will have an abortion before they reach menopause. We represent the suppressed potential of millions of women throughout history who were forced repeatedly to bear children against their will. We represent the potential contribution of young women today and future generations who must be free to take an equal place in the world along side men.

But we have been tricked into believing that we must never say the word abortion. I call it the "a word" -- that it's too strong, too clinical, that it turns people off, that it's not nice, that it's not what we're for, we've been fooled into believing it's something we must pretend to feel guilty about wanting and embarrassed about having had. We become scared of admitting to be for just wanting to have one because we want to finish school or don't love the father anymore, that it's somehow frivolous or
unwomanly, something we should hide. We’ve been tricked into believing that wanting to have an abortion is no longer okay, that Operation Rescue is the new Civil Rights Movement, that this fringy group of fascists and clinic bombers have the upper hand.

I learned how much I’d been taken in the media hype for this tiny minority as we drove up to D.C. for the march two weeks ago. We were writing slogans on our van windows with bright white shoe polish. We wrote “Gainesville, FL -- Proabortion and Proud” “Women’s Liberation.” We drew the women’s symbol with the clenched fist in it, the coathanger with “Never Again.” We were scared, we laughed nervously about wiping them off after the first bomb.

As we drove through North Florida, Georgia and South Carolina in the middle of the night, old wrinkled women at gate stations cheered us on. “Are you girls going to that march?” asked one. “Show ‘em,” she said. A black Department of Agriculture inspector at the Georgia line gave encouragement. A man in a cowboy hat at 5:00 a.m. at a rest station at the South Carolina line on the return trip asked the first woman out of the van if she’d been at the march and were there really 300,000 there? She said there’d been more. She was scared, braced for a hostile response at best, you could have knocked her over with a feather when he announced knowledgeably that Ellie Smeal said 300,000. He not only knew her name, he was proud to say she was his source. He said, “Well, I’m real happy you girls went to that march.” We got honks and thumbs up all the way through the south to D.C. and back. At a 7-11 Store in Virginia, two surfers ran over to tell us their mother and sister had marched. When we counted it up, positive comments beat the negative ones about 40 to 4 and we’d counted and kept notes. Well, the consciousness in that van changed from fear to near euphoria as we cheered back to friendly honkers and vowed to take more actions and write letters taking on the press and Campus NOW decided to start a newsletter. A spirit was generated such that later on members talked about sleeping in at the clinic to make a human deterrent against the bombers.

I realized how much I’d been bamboozled into fear and doubt about the enormous popularity of this issue, and ours were not ladylike slogans. They said “abortion,” not “choice,” said “proud,” not “I’m sorry.” I realized that by taking what we thought was a risk, we overcame our fear by what we learned from it. When they try to scare us, it’s the right time to stand up and Speak Out -- will you join me? What do 1 out of 4 women have before menopause -- do we dare say the word? Let’s say it together, abortion -- right on. Now, will all the women who have had an abortion join Jeannie and Joan Toady and raise their hand up high and be counted with them. Let’s give them a hand because if we don’t take a stand, one day next year what they’re doing may be an act of civil disobedience. They’ll need some solidarity. So, now will all the women who haven’t had one but thought they were going to have to have one or would have one if they needed one or could have gotten one -- let’s raise our hands together with all the women who have had an abortion. Now keep them up. Will all the men who’ll raise the bail money raise your hands -- all right -- let’s give the brothers a hand.

Right now many of us are raising children and we know the sacrifices we make daily on their behalf. We organized the Women’s Liberation Movement in part so women would have a real choice to have children as well as to not have them, to have more say about the conditions of raising them. A real choice to have children means not having to give up our lives from them, as mothers still must. It means childcare, parental leave, a national health care system and child support enforcement and men who’ll be responsible, equal and loving partners and fathers who not only don’t beat their wives and molest their children, but who do half the house work, respect our opinions and most of all who fight for these things by our side.
LAWMAKERS SPURN CURBS ON ABORTION IN FLORIDA SESSION

REBUFF TO THE GOVERNOR

Advocates of Women’s Rights
Hail Legislators’ Stand as
National Turning Point

By JEFFREY SCHMALZ
 Associate Editor, The New York Times

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., Oct. 10 — The Florida State Legislature today rebuffed a call for tighter restrictions on abortion that its Governor made after the United States Supreme Court opened the way for tougher state laws.

Key lawmakers said that at least four of the Governor’s proposals would almost certainly die in committee in the special session that began today, a session that was called by Gov. Bob Martinez immediately after the court ruled in July. By this evening those bills had already been killed. A fifth proposal might be passed but only in a watered-down version, lawmakers said.

Democrats Control Legislature

The stand by the Legislature, which is controlled by Democrats, and the rebuff to the Governor, a Republican, was hailed by abortion rights advocates as a turning point in the nation’s battle over abortion. It came in the face of intense pressure from abortion opponents, who rallied at the Old State Capitol Friday evening.

“I stand with you,” Governor Martinez shouted to the crowd, which waved crosses and broke into choruses of “Onward Christian Soldiers.” “I stand with you because you are the voice of the unborn, those who have rights but no one has listened to them.”

In 1989, Gainesville Women’s Liberation took the lead, along with several progressive Florida NOW Chapters in organizing mass, grassroots protest when Florida's Republican Governor, Bob Martinez, called a special session of the legislature to restrict abortion rights immediately after the Supreme Court's Webster decision. Webster gave states the ability to roll back abortion rights and Martinez had vowed to make Florida the first state to take advantage of Webster by restricting abortion. This feminist organizing brought together 10,000 demonstrators to Tallahassee, Florida for a march on the Capitol, making the New York Times front page. The special session failed; no legislation was passed. Then, Martinez was resoundingly defeated in the next election, making governors all over the country hesitant to restrict abortion rights. Studies showed that women voters made the difference. Our mass action approach showed that the lesson from struggles past still holds true — people at the grassroots, people power, is the movement's greatest resource. In Tallahassee, women and youth took at stand and made history.
Pro-Choice Victories
Abortion-rights activists win in Florida court, legislature

Anti-abortion forces suffered a dizzying setback in Florida in October when that state's supreme court and legislature rejected restrictions on abortions.

At about the same time, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 216-206 to approve federal funding for abortions for women victimized by rape or incest.

The Florida Supreme Court relied on a state constitutional guarantee of privacy in striking down a state law making parental consent a prerequisite for minors seeking to end their pregnancy. (In re T.W., No. 74,143 [Oct. 5].)

The seven members of the court agreed that a 1980 state constitutional privacy amendment protected, to some extent, an adult woman's abortion decision.

However, only four members of the court, a majority, voted to overturn the parental-consent law.

"Florida's privacy provision is clearly implicated in a woman's decision of whether or not to continue her pregnancy," the majority opinion said. "We can conceive of few more personal or private decisions concerning one's body that one can make in the course of a lifetime, except perhaps the decision of the terminally ill in their choice of whether to discontinue necessary medical treatment."

In his dissent, Justice Parker Lee McDonald agreed that abortion decisions should be left to adult women, but said he would not extend the prerogative to minors.

"Absent an enabling statute," Parker wrote, "a minor does not have the capacity to consent to an abortion. This is because of the common law and long-recognized disability of minors because of nonage."

The case was brought on behalf of a 15-year-old high-school student, described as T.W. in court documents, whose father had given his permission for the abortion. However, T.W. said in her court petition, it would be dangerous if her mother, who was ill, learned of the pregnancy. "It would kill her," T.W. said.

Although a lower court permitted T.W.'s abortion without her mother's consent, the supreme court decided the case to set precedent.

Round Two
Pro-choice activists went on to score another victory in the Florida Legislature and U.S. Congress.

Summoned into special session by Florida's Republican Gov. Bob Martinez, the Democratic-controlled legislature let the governor's proposed abortion restrictions die in committee. What had been scheduled as a four-day special session was adjourned after only 1 1/2 days.

Martinez's defeated bills would have required viability testing beginning in the 20th week of pregnancy and would have set a week-long waiting period for an abortion. Other proposals would have banned abortions in public facilities or by public employees, and would have imposed tighter licensing requirements on private abortion clinics.

"What happened here was not, as some believe, a reflection of successful political strategy," said Florida Senate spokesman Michelle McLawhorn. "The legislators were acting out the will of their constituents when they voted the way they did in the committee hearings."

On the same day the Florida Legislature acted, the U.S. House of Representatives reversed its previous stance and voted to permit federal funding of abortions for low-income women whose pregnancies resulted from rape or incest. President Bush later vetoed the law.

Before the House debated the abortion measure, ABA Government Affairs Director Robert D. Evans expressed the association's support in a letter to congressmen.

"The American Bar Association firmly espouses the view that, as long as the right to choose an abortion is constitutionally protected, it is wrong to deny such services to our most needy citizens," Evans wrote.

ABA Legislative Coordinator Denise Cardman said the recent legislative developments "reflect a new status of abortion as a public issue."

"It reveals that the pro-choice movement, which has been an underdog since the early Reagan years, has now gained tremendous strength and put viable political clout on both sides of the abortion issue."

—Charles Edward Anderson
Women's History Month Presentation

A Call to See, Learn, and Take Back the Power of History For Activist Use

SEE:
"WITH A VENGEANCE"
A film by Lori Hiris & Ninia Baehr.
Pioneers of the early abortion and women's liberation movements tell it like it was. Early action footage.

LEARN:
What did 60's feminists really fight for?
Why did masses of women join the fight?
Did the Supreme Court give us abortion?
Is Roe v. Wade what we really wanted?
Can you really get an abortion when you need one?
Who buried our radical history? Why did they do it?

"The history of the radical movement and struggle in the 60's that brought us the abortion rights we're now losing — that history has ... been buried ... suppressed, because it's radical history, and there are a lot of vested interests that don't want that history known ... When I talk about the usefulness of history, I'm not talking about history as a frozen concept—an ivory tower view of history. I'm talking about a radical view of history—which is history for activist use." —Kathie Sarachild of Redstockings, in "With A Vengeance."

Friday, March 30th, 1990
7:30 p.m.
Presbyterian Student Center
1402 W. University Ave.
Gainesville

Sponsored by:
Gainesville Area National Organization for Women (NOW) & Campus NOW
With analysis and discussion lead by Gainesville Women's Liberation
For more info call: (904) 378-5655

"In order to stay alive, the movement must grow ... Women aren't going to keep on joining the movement, women aren't going to stay in the movement, unless it expresses our true desires, unless it tells the truth and fights for the truth."—Kathie Sarachild, in a speech given at the Women's Strike March, Aug. 26, 1971.

March on Tallahassee, October 10, 1989, "UF Students Mani Kozima, Katie Murphy, Tara Goldstein, Tracy Arace and Kelli Salmi participated in the march from Myers Park to the Capitol."—Independent Florida Alligator 10/11/89.

"The choice is up to us: we must subject every proposal for change and every tactic to the clearest feminist scrutiny, demand only what is good for all women, and not let some of us be bought off at the expense of the rest."

—Lucinda Cisler

Can You Really Get an Abortion if You Need One?

Rae V. Wade did not guarantee women's absolute right to abortion, so women face many obstacles when we try to get one.

- An abortion costs $300-$2000 and is almost never covered under Medicaid and health insurance.
- Because abortion is not available in 83% of U.S. counties, we have to take more time off from work to get to a provider. Hotel and travel costs make abortion even more inaccessible.
- Some states require our parents' permission to have an abortion, taking the decision out of women’s hands and giving us more hassles.

Our abortion rights are being chiseled away. The U.S. Congress has voted to ban the D & X procedure, which is used for second and third trimester abortions. A bill pending in the Florida legislature will mandate a 24-hour waiting period and force clinics to distribute state-sponsored anti-abortion propaganda to women seeking abortions. These are sexist laws!

Join Gainesville Women's Liberation and FSU National Organization for Women for a

Speakout and Rally For Abortion Rights

At the State Capitol
Meet in the courtyard
Monday, April 15, 1996
12:30 pm

We believe that all women have the right to get an abortion at any time for any reason, regardless of the ability to pay, without waiting periods, consent laws, and other hurdles. We believe women have a right to decide when and if we will bear children.

Our reproductive rights are at stake! Take feminist action now with an organization! The abortion rights we have were won by the Women's Liberation Movement of 1968-73. If you want to stop the restrictions and make abortion available to all women, join FSU NOW. For more information about this action or to get involved with FSU NOW, call (904) 224-8230.

This speakout is organized as a project of the 1996 community education class, "Women's Liberation: Where Do I Fit In?" taught by Gainesville Women's Liberation (GWL), the oldest southern Women's Liberation organization, founded in 1968. You can write GWL at P.O. Box 2625, Gainesville, FL 32602.

First, I would like to say, I am very disappointed not to be here in person, but my story is very important, very real, and should be heard. I make it a point to speak out and to speak especially to young sisters whenever the chance arises.

In 1967, I was 21 and I, like thousands of others, felt the call and I found my way to the East Village of New York City, thinking to study art but found myself studying revolution instead. Let me say, I was not the kind of young woman who stumbled blindly into life. I was very much in control of my life and I knew what I wanted. I had my first sexual relationship at 19 and had been safely on birth control pills one month before I went into the sexual phase. My problem arose in New York when I ran out of birth control pills and had a two-week interval before I could find a clinic.

I had met a new love and we decided to take the plunge. It was my first LSD trip and I trusted him. I was full of trust and love. He told me that he had a condom on, and in my spaced-out, psychedelic state I didn’t realize until he came what he had done. He knew it was a dangerous time for me, and I never forgave him. His comment was “Oh well, you can get an abortion” like it was no big thing. Even in my youth and naivety, I knew an abortion was hard to find, expensive, dangerous, physically and emotionally painful. This is the story of what happened to me because the laws of this land did not honor and respect women. Today, it’s a lot better, but we cannot go back even an inch.

I left New York City with this same man to come to Gainesville soon after. Soon after coming to Gainesville, I left him. My feelings had completely soured. When I found out I was pregnant, I was devastated. He was gone and I was new here. Many people, new friends, knew of my situation, and I found my way to a young man named Richard who would become a Movement buddy in the years to follow. He had a number of an abortionist in Georgia, and that was the only one I could find. I had heard about a black doctor in Ocala
but could not make the connection. I actually went to his office, his response made me think he was not doing abortions. I even went to a local psychiatrist to plead for some kind of referral as I was totally freaked. He dispensed with me by showing me the door. I had enrolled at Santa Fe, so I went there for help. The guidance counselor there looked at me with such sadness but couldn’t help.

So I went to Georgia. A friend took me to the airport in Jacksonville and I boarded a plan for Atlanta. I was met at the airport by a contact, blindfolded and escorted to a vehicle. We drove out into the country some way until we met up with another car, and I, still blindfolded, got in with them. My blindfold came off only when I was inside a large house. I looked around and saw a young black woman, equally scared, who was waiting in front of me. I also saw off to the left through a door slightly ajar, a family sitting down to a meal. After a time the door to a room opened and an old woman, an amputee in a wheelchair, motioned me in. She looked ghastly. She looked like Reputed, the mad Russian monk, and all around the room on the walls I saw pictures of Jesus and Mary. She told me to take off my pants and lay across her bed. She brought out a knitting bag—it was then I started to talk fast and real scared like. I remember asking her “are those clean or sterile?” “Will you give me something for pain?” She was irritated. I could not relax and the pain was intense. I think I passed out but I remember her saying “Okay it’s done,” and pushing something up in me. She said there would be trickle of blood but I was bleeding fairly heavily in the Atlanta airport later. I was quiet sick, all white and dizzy. A woman came to me to ask what was wrong. My friend met me in Jacksonville and I could see the worry on his face.

Back in Gainesville, by now it was late at night, I went home to sleep. I awoke in a bright pool of blood. We went to the hospital. The ordeal got worse. In the emergency room the detective showed up. I was administered to a floor at Alachua General Hospital and placed in a maternity room. A nurse told me, “we will save this baby.” I had a high temperature and was vomiting and bleeding. They started IVs and pumped in the antibiotics. The other woman in the room knew and openly hated me. One had lost a baby and a nurse told her what I had tried to do to mine. For three days I was there, distraught beyond imagination. I requested to see the staff shrink and told him I would do whatever was necessary to abort and he lectured me. He actually told me I was a daughter of the devil. That night I raised the bed to its full height and pitched myself over on the floor. Later I awoke, felt a gush, and got up from the bed. I had passed the fetal tissue. The nurse was horrified and I looked at the red glob on the floor. That’s all it was. No little arms or any recognizable parts at all. I had been three months pregnant.
The next morning I had a D & C. I awoke back in the room and looked above me to see my nurse open my IV full throttle. I thought she was trying to kill me, she looked so evil. I began to recover and in two days was ready for discharge. The morning of discharge they brought a wheelchair and took me to the emergency room. I thought I was going home, instead there were other plans. I was picked up by that detective who I had seen in the emergency room on the morning when I was admitted. I was held down at the police department for four hours. I was hungry and still very sick, but they kept me there trying to make me name the abortionist. This detective who was a pig and nothing more was trying to bust that black doctor in Ocala. Over and over I told him I went to Georgia. Part of me wanted to tell them who the abortionist was because she was horrible and more women would suffer, maybe die. But I kept my silence. We had no choice, no real options. And besides I didn't want to give this detective any power or satisfaction. They finally gave up and I went home.

You talk about the emotional scars. Do I have flashbacks, nightmares or guilt -- No -- it was sad and very frightening but I can share my story. Please hear me, we can never go back.

I waited to have the child I was meant to have. He's twenty-four now and will start University of Florida Medical School in the fall. Family planning works.
Abortion Rights for All Women!

- We oppose the recent erosion of abortion rights in the United States as evidenced by the U.S. Supreme Court’s decisions in Webster in 1989 and Casey in 1992. We believe that women have a fundamental right to abortion, unhampered by parental or spousal consent, forced waiting periods, and/or state sponsored anti-abortion propaganda, all of which were upheld in the 1992 Casey decision. Government interference or restriction is unacceptable!

- We believe that all women have the right to regulate their own bodies, regardless of their ability to pay. Medicaid, health insurance, student insurance, and military benefits must include abortion.

- We believe that reproductive rights include not only safe, legal, funded abortions, but also access to birth control, prenatal care, and child care, regardless of ability to pay, and access to parental leave. And no woman should be forced to have her tubes tied. We stand for a woman’s right to choose when and if she will have a child.

Join us! In this election year, it is imperative that our voices be heard. We must elect candidates to local, state, and national offices who are committed to upholding abortion rights. And we must demand that our representatives act for abortion rights when they are in office.

Join NOW—The National Organization for Women

Fill out and return to: NOW, P.O. Box 2235, Gainesville, FL 32602

Enclosed:

Name___________________________

City_____________State__ZIP_____

Telephone (_____) ________ I want to join: Campus Chapter Community Chapter

The following candidates are pro-choice:

Margaret Sweeney for Congress
Kate Barlow for Congress
Beverly Hill for State Assembly
Cynthia Robinson for State Senate

For U.S. House
Karen Thurman for U.S. Senate
Bill Clinton for Governor
President VP

The ad was paid for by the people who signed it. It was organized by UF/SFCC Campus National Organization for Women.

Original Signature Ad Size 81/2 X 14
Let the Real Experts Speak! Women speak out on their abortions and pregnancy scares

The first speakout was held on February 13, 1969 by the pioneering Women's Liberation group Redstockings. Members of Redstockings invaded the New York State abortion hearings which were being held to decide whether abortion would be legal in this state. These hearings, which were deciding the future of women's lives, were being presided over by a panel of 14 men and one woman—a nun! The panel wanted to legalize abortion only for women who had more than four children, women with fetal deformities, and women who had been raped or were victims of incest. This proposed abortion reform would not have helped any of the women who disrupted the hearings that day.

Redstockings took a revolutionary stand and demanded that the real experts on abortion speak—women. In the spirit of women demanding change, of demanding that we control our own sexuality and reproduction, of fighting for the right to control our lives, women from around the state organized two abortion speakouts.

The following testimony was taken from UF/SCCC Campus NOW's Abortion Speakout (February 1996) and Gainesville Women's Liberation class/Florida State University NOW's Abortion Speakout (April 1996). These sections of testimony were originally printed in the March and May/June 1996 issues of The Gainesville Iguana.

Pennie Foster, speaking on the abortion she had right after Roe v. Wade passed and the second one she had when she was in the Air Force. At that time the government paid for military women to get abortions. In 1975 the Hyde Amendment eliminated funding for abortions for women in the military and women on Medicaid:

"Recently I've realized how lucky I was. An abortion was easier to get 20 years ago than it is today. Both times I had abortions I didn't get hassled. Twenty years ago there was no such thing as a 24-hour waiting period, or some requirement that a doctor read state-sponsored propaganda before you can get permission to have a legal medical procedure. I also didn't have to risk meeting up with some psychotic right-to-lifers giving moral judgment or worse. And nowadays if a woman in the military wants to get an abortion she cannot get it from her local military hospital or clinic and she still has to come up with the money to pay for it. Women who had low income once were able to get free abortions. Now they cannot...Who do you want controlling your body? Your parents, your sex partner, a doctor, or worse, some official who has never even had to worry about an unwanted pregnancy and who doesn't even want to help us take care of the children our society has now and the future children we may or may not want?"

Susan Delazain: "I had no idea where I should go, and I couldn't ask any health care people because I was afraid that they would recognize my name and that it would get back to my parents. I got my sister to go to the store with me to buy a pregnancy test. When I took it in the middle of the night with all the lights off and doors locked, it was positive. That really freaked me out, but I was a little skeptical because I had read that they weren't always accurate. Plus I had this idea that only a doctor or nurse could tell me the real truth about my body. So, I called the HRS clinic across town from a pay phone near my work, after throwing the well-wrapped test, box, and stuff in a dumpster down the road. They told me that I should collect a sample of my earliest morning urine,
refrigerate it, and bring it with me to my appointment the next day. To do this, I had to fake being sick from school, wait until the family cleared out of the house, hold my urine for what felt like ten hours too long, and finally collect the sample. Then, I had to figure out a way that I could refrigerate it without anyone seeing it and asking a lot of questions. I put it in the extra refrigerator we used for the bar. I told my dad I had decided to start packing my lunch for school. The next day I skipped a couple classes to retrieve the evidence. Then I headed to my appointment. On the drive over there, I felt my period start. I pulled over at a gas station and started to cry because I wasn't pregnant. I was so relieved, not because I was sad or worried about the abortion procedure, but because I didn't want to go through an even bigger hassle of secrets and lying to get an abortion than I already had."

Kristy Royall: My name is Kristy Royall. I work as a bookkeeper in Gainesville and I used to be Co-President of the University of Florida/Santa Fe Community College campus chapter of NOW.

I had an abortion ten years ago when I was in high school. I was sixteen and I had just started having sex with my boyfriend, whom I had been dating for several months. We used condoms occasionally, even though I had known we should have been using them all the time. I would bring it up sometimes, but he told me that he was sure he couldn't get me pregnant. He also made it perfectly clear that he hated wearing condoms and had almost never used them in the past. I didn't feel comfortable with this, but I guess I felt like getting pregnant couldn't happen to me.

When I didn't get my period, I knew in my heart right away that I was pregnant because my periods have always been very regular. But I waited and hoped anyway because I was afraid of dealing with the truth. After a week I bought a home pregnancy test. It took about a half hour of standing around in the store to get the courage to take it to the counter. I did the test the next morning, and, of course, it was positive.

I knew right away that I didn't want to have a kid and I wanted an abortion, but I didn't have $300. I was also afraid of the pain and I desperately didn't want anyone to find out.

Well, my boyfriend told all his friends and family (although he didn't want me to tell my mother), and he pretty much acted like he didn't care. At one point he accused me of making up to keep him from breaking up with me. Eventually he said he would try to get the money, but he never came up with any of it. He knew a place that supposedly did abortions with general anesthesia, so I called and made an appointment, and we both planned to skip school that day. Meanwhile I was throwing up every morning before going to school, running to the downstairs bathroom so my mother wouldn't hear.

The night before my appointment we still didn't have any money, so I told my mother who turned out to be not so clueless. She had noticed that I wasn't having any periods. I should have just told her in the first place because she was so cool about it. She gave me $300 in cash, even though she was nervous about me going to this clinic which was in kind of a low income neighborhood on the other side of Miami.

My boyfriend came to pick me up in the morning. He had brought his best friend for support, and I had to sit in the backseat. When we got to the clinic, they wouldn't do the abortion because I was under 18. Even though we don't have parental consent laws in Florida, clinics can set their own policies for minors. So I went home, told my mother, and she took care of everything: finding another clinic, taking me, and paying for it. I felt so much better being with my mother. She was really terrific and supportive. But I still felt extremely nervous about the physical aspects--I had never even been to a gynecologist at this point. It hurt some, and I think the drug, Demoral, had a scary effect also because it made me semiconscious, sort of drifting in and out. But it was over fast and in the recovery room I was laughing hysterically, because I was so happy and relieved.

Afterwards, we went out to eat at my favorite restaurant. I felt pure relief. If I think about it today I still feel relief. What would I be doing today if I had a ten year old child? Would I have gotten to travel around Europe or go to college? Would I be on welfare? Would I be stuck with some guy I didn't like because he was willing to be a father to my child? Either way, I'd be trapped.

I'm speaking out today because I know how important abortion is to me and other women. For me, it gave me a second chance at having a life, even though I feel like I made some mistakes. I'm really made at the legislature for constantly trying to take away our rights, and I refuse to let them do it.

I'm also mad because we have to deal with other people acting like we're immoral or irresponsible or slutty for

ABOUT SPARK...

Funding for this issue was made possible by a resolution from Florida NOW at the 1995 State Conference and by personal donations made by Chicky Desmois and Sherry Langlais of Upper Pinellas NOW and Judy Hasner of West Palm Beach NOW. Special thanks to Jenny Brown, Betty Campbell, Alex Leader, and The Gainesville Iguana.

We are currently welcoming high school/college chapter, and other young feminist volunteers to join an expanded editorial collective. We need your articles and pictures of what you are up to! If you would like to be added to the SPARK mailing list, please...

Contact:
Florida Young Feminist Task Force, c/o Campus NOW
P.O. Box 2235
Gainesville, FL 32602
(352) 335-1583

Editors: Kirsten Young
Eve Koenig
Francie Hunt
getting pregnant and choosing not to be mothers. We in the feminist movement deserve part of the blame when we talk about abortion as if it is this difficult terrible decision that women only make in the most desperate situations. The implication is that we really want to have the child, but we just can't because of our unfortunate situation. It sounds like we are requesting permission to be excused from our motherly duties in certain circumstances. Sometimes people even say that it's the best thing for the child (as in every child a wanted child), as if it's not enough that it's the best thing for the woman.

Sometimes we feel guilty about wanting an abortion, but I don't think it's because we don't fit into that hard case; we're just women who don't want to give birth right now. We probably don't have what some might call a "good excuse." We weren't raped, we don't have fetal deformities, maybe we weren't even using birth control.

So what? I got pregnant and I didn't feel like giving up my life at that point to raising another human being for 18 years. It's my life and I've never felt guilty and I've never had nightmares. I have felt embarrassed, because I know people thought I was an idiot for not using birth control. But you know what? Even if I made bad birth control decisions, why would that mean that a fetus automatically has more rights than I do, or that the government can force me to have a child? How a woman got pregnant should not be an issue when it comes to abortion.

We as women know that pregnancy and child-rearing affect every aspect of our lives, and we need to have full control over those decisions in order to have freedom and equality with men. If you want to get more rights for women (and defend the rights that feminists before us won through organizing and struggle), you need to get involved with a feminist organization now and start doing your part.
WOMEN

DO YOU HAVE TROUBLE GETTING GUYS TO WEAR CONDOMS?
YOU’RE NOT ALONE.

In our experience, guys almost never volunteer to wear a condom. The burden is on us, the women, to ask. Not only do we have to initiate the use, we often have to supply the condoms and sometimes put them on guys, because they won’t. We know why we want men to wear condoms, and it is unacceptable that we have to do all the work and take all the responsibility to get men to wear them.

Men resist wearing condoms, and they use a variety of tactics. Sometimes they tell us lies (“I won’t come inside you,” “I can’t get you pregnant”). Sometimes they will outright refuse to have sex with a condom, but usually their resistance is subtler, like whining (“Aw, come on...”), trying to make us feel guilty or selfish (“It doesn’t feel as good”), or letting us know that there are plenty of women out there who won’t make him wear a condom.

Extreme forms of men’s “passive” resistance include losing erections and not being able to come. These problems men have seem to be involuntary (“just biology”), but our experience shows if we insist on condoms anyway, these problems usually go away. These problems can be another pressure tactic men use to get us to let them not wear condoms.

The struggle to make men use condoms makes sex less pleasurable for women and a lot more work because we’re fighting a wall of men’s resistance. Even men’s subtle continual pressure on us to have unprotected sex or use other forms of birth control (like the Pill) wears us down, and sometimes we give in. Then we are forced to take all the risks of unprotected sex in order to get pleasure and love from men, and to reduce struggle and tension with them when they whine and complain.

For men, not using condoms is a matter of convenience and marginally more enjoyment. They apparently don’t think they’ll get AIDS or other STD’s.

But women fight back even though men resist, because we have so much more to lose:

• Women get pregnant and have to either have an abortion—or do the physical work of reproduction, carrying a fetus for nine months and then giving birth. In addition, women usually shoulder the financial burden of either choice, and if we carry the pregnancy to term, they are expected to raise the child as well.

• Women suffer much greater consequences from STD’s than men. Chlamydia and gonorrhea can make us sterile; genital warts and herpes can cause cervical cancer—things that don’t happen to men with these same diseases. Women are also much more likely to catch AIDS from men than vice versa.

• We also face irritating and serious side effects and long-term effects of chemical contraceptives like the Pill and the Depo Provera shot.

• Even if we don’t get pregnant or catch an STD, we still have to worry about these things and worry about getting the guy to wear a condom. These worries make sex much more of a drag for us—less spontaneous and less fun—while the guy is apparently care-free.
MEN, TAKE YOUR SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITY IN SEX

- Always assume that you need to wear a condom. Do not assume that women have taken care of birth control. Don’t wait for the woman to have to ask. Be prepared by having condoms and knowing how to use them.
- Don’t give us a hard time about using them under any circumstances.
- Pay the full costs of the birth control we choose or abortion, or pay at least half of childbirth and childcare costs, if we choose to have a child.

Men use a whole gamut of resistances and tactics to avoid wearing a condom. They succeed because women haven’t formed a united front on this issue yet. There is always the threat that your man will go find someone else, another woman who will go that extra mile, another woman who won’t make him wear a condom or make as many demands on him to shape up in general. So we women end up doing things we wouldn’t normally do if the relationship were more equal. Women know that our chances of keeping a guy are better if we don’t make him wear a condom or we don’t insist that he treat us better—if we make demands for him to shape up, we’re afraid he’ll think we’re a “nag,” “bitch,” or just too much of a pain to be worth his time. The threat he uses is that some other woman will be nicer to him, less demanding.

Women struggling individually on the great condom front, each with our own guy, is not working—we end up fighting this battle with each new guy and repeatedly in relationships. Men do improve some when we individually pressure them, but then they backslide. To get all guys to wear condoms, unconditionally, let’s all of us get together, all of us who are having sex with guys, and insist that men wear condoms. Let there be no “other woman” for men to turn to. Making men wear condoms is a political issue, not just an individual, personal problem we’re having.

WOMEN, WHAT WE CAN DO TO MAKE OUR LIVES BETTER

- Make men wear condoms. We need to join forces on this—we all need to make this demand together, now, for us to win—to get all guys to wear condoms.
- Talk to other women about this.
- Copy and distribute this flyer.
- Join a feminist group.

We believe that all men have been able to get away with fighting us on wearing condoms because they have more power than us, the power they get from male supremacy. “We define male supremacy as behavior which benefits men at the expense of women. Men get better pay, more freedom from menial or repetitive chores in the home, an unwarranted sense of personal worth and deference from women in hundreds of little ways each day.”

We women need an organized women’s liberation movement to fight back against all these little and big ways that men keep us down every day, including not wearing condoms. If enough women demand condoms, at some point men will automatically put them on—we won’t even need to ask.

This flyer was produced 4/23/95 as a project of the 1995 community education class, “Women’s Liberation: Where Do I Fit In?” taught by Gainesville Women’s Liberation (GWL). Women in New York City, Philadelphia, Orlando, and Vero Beach are also distributing this flyer. The experiences described here are those of class participants and people we interviewed.

Let us know what you think of this flyer by writing to GWL, P.O. Box 2625, Gainesville, FL 32602, or check out GWL’s literature shelf at the Civic Media Center, 1021 W. Univ. Ave, Gainesville, FL 32601.

To take feminist action, call: UF/SFCC Campus National Organization for Women (NOW) at 904-377-9935 or 904-338-0853. Next meeting Wed., May 24, 1995, 6:00 pm, Anderson 2.

---

Testimony on Relationships and Sex With Men

One way in which I am personally kept down by most men I’ve slept with is in being the one who has to worry about birth control.

In the last few years, the kind of birth control I like to use is condoms, because I know they are my best bet at protecting myself from STD’s, and because, since I’ve been 19, my sex life consists of either short flings--sleeping with a guy a few times--or having longer relationships with en who have slept with other women than just me. Before I was 19, I was content to be on the pill, because my boyfriend and I had both been virgins before we started sleeping together, and I didn’t have to worry about catching anything. I was also really skinny, and the weight gain aspect, along with the mood swings I had, didn’t bother me that much yet. Every once and a while we would use condoms, if I’d skipped some pills that month, but the big pain here was going in to buy the condoms, because I was really embarrassed to go into the store and buy them and my boyfriend acted embarrassed to buy them. Between the two us, I felt like I was doing something almost illicit, going into buy condoms in a grocery store. We used to try to hide them under our other groceries when we bought them. I remember his one time we were going to buy condoms in his hometown, and he wanted me to go in because he was afraid his Southern Baptist mom would find out he was having premarital sex because the pharmacist would recognize him. I was really embarrassed in the store, which then turned to feeling defiant. Why should I be embarrassed about buying condoms?

But when I started to sleep with other men other than my first boyfriend, I got really concerned that I’d catch something, and that, along with being tired of the pill’s side effects, made me think it would be worth it to just stop the pill and use condoms. Living with my new roommate and friend also made it easier for me to start buying condoms and me not feel like there was something wrong with me for wanting to guys to wear them, because she was really pushy and open about buying them, defiant like I described before, and she would try to shock people in the grocery store, by getting the biggest box of condoms -- the three-dozen pack -- and putting them down in the middle of the cashier conveyor belt, to see how people around us in line noticed. I assumed she used them with all the guys she slept with, and this gave me the bravery to always give them to guys or bring them with me to a guy’s house or away on vacation with a guy. By the time I started going out my second really serious boyfriend, I was really used to condoms, and not at all interested in going back on the pill. It shocked me that the first few times we slept together, he would lose his erection when he or I put a condom on him. I didn’t recall this happening to me before, so I thought maybe it was just him, and that I just had to be patient. After a few times of this happening, I asked him what he did about losing his erection, and he said that most women gave up on trying to make him wear a condom. I don’t know if he thought that this was going to make me give up too, but instead I felt terrified and even more committed to making him wear one. I had heard through my friends that he had slept with a lot of other women, and that gave me a great motivation to make him wear them with me, since I really like him and wanted to be able to sleep with him. I told him I’d just wait.

After a few weeks, he did get over this problem, and started to be able to wear them. (I wonder if this is what Barbara Susan is talking about when she says in her article, “About My Consciousness-Raising,” “After several weeks of bitter hassling, he realized I wasn’t kidding, and finally came around!”) He was pretty good for the first few months, keeping his erection, but I eventually noticed a downward trend, where he’d lose his erection every several times we had sex, when he put on the condom. This made me kind of tense up every time we got ready to put the condom on. Would he lose it?

In the first year of our relationship, he would some times pressure me to go on the pill or another kind of birth control. It was as if after a few months of going out I should give up on the condoms. But I resisted. Condoms don’t prevent you from getting warts or herpes, but they do stop you from getting other things like
gonorrhea, chlamydeous, and AIDS, so I remain committed to them. After I got pregnant from a condom coming off inside me, I went back on the pill for a short time, and then remembered all things that I didn't like about it -- my breasts got bigger, I felt a little heavier, and my moods didn't feel like my own.

I continued to use condoms throughout our four-year relationship, and eventually the situation had degenerated to the point that I stopped making him wear condoms when I had my period, and I let him have sex with me without any birth control. But I really didn't like this. I always felt like I was taking an STD risk, but he got to the point where he was pretty grouchy and pushy about not wearing them if I was on my period. After all, I hadn't made him wear them in the past when I was having my period, and there was no going back for him! It was a little more fun and exciting -- like uninhibited and crazy -- when we had sex without them, but I think that was mostly because he was so much more aggressive and into it without them, that it made it more fun for me. It was like a reward for me to not make wear condoms.

Hearing my girlfriends and women in my feminist group joking about how guys lose their erection as soon as you pull a condom out made me realize that other women have this problem, too, and that it wasn't just my personal problem or struggle with my boyfriend. This made me understand more how I was being screwed over and gave me the courage to talk about "my problem" publicly, so other women could also see that this wasn't their personal problem. And seeing that my boyfriend could change on losing his erection (after I decided I would just wait until he got over the "condom problem") made me understand that this wasn't just a male biological problem he was having.

Since I've been single again, three out of five guys I've slept with have resisted wearing condoms, even tricked me into not wearing them. One of them grabbed a condom, but I wasn't paying real close attention to him, I was trying to enjoy myself and let him be in charge, and he never put one on, which I didn't find out until after he came out of me. He only seemed to be concerned about me getting pregnant, I was still worried about this, and had to go through a really sick day of taking the morning after pill.

Another guy was really turning me on and I was getting really in to it, that lost sexy feeling again, until I realized that he was putting his dick, not his fingers inside of me. I had to stop him, too, and put a condom on.

Another guy would lose his erection almost every time I put the condom on him, which made me not sure of why we were in bed together, made me start holding my breath again, and made me not want to even try having intercourse, because I couldn't stand the suspense.

I thought my current guy was real good on them, but if he thought he wouldn't get me pregnant, he wouldn't put it on unless I stopped him, too -- whoa, there -- and made him put it on.

The constant theme here is that I always have to be on the lookout, I have to be the one pushing for the guy to wear condoms, and he is usually resisting me, or at best, not taking the responsibility and making me be the one to say "put it on."

Anyway, it's a constant struggle, and it makes sex less fun for me, and puts me on constant guard in bed. I feel like I have to literally guard men from going inside of me until I get a condom on them. It's not right that I have to go through this struggle, worrying about catching an STD, which they should also be worried about catching!!

---Anonymous (10-28-96)
NOW activists in Raleigh, NC, challenge Wal-Mart's continuing decision not to stock the emergency contraceptive Preven.

* Raleigh NOW
On June 19, Raleigh (N.C.) NOW members picketed Wal-Mart to protest the refusal of Wal-Mart Pharmacies to dispense Preven, a prescription contraceptive (see related article on page 9). Picket signs read, "Wal-Mart says No to Preven — but they're up on Viagra!" "If you're raped, don't expect Wal-Mart to help!" and "The Wal-Mart way says Guns OK, but not Contraceptives!"

French schools OK morning-after pill

13/11/99 Gainesville Sun

Why Do U.S. Women Need a Prescription Again?

Stephanie Seguin: A couple summers ago I lived in France for a study abroad. Some friends and I were out at a bar one night off on a side street, it was late like 1 a.m. The bars there are inside/outside a lot of times and we were at a table outside by the street when these guys in white t-shirts that said AIDES (which means "HELP" in French) rode up on bikes with little carts attached to them and stopped next to the tables. No one else seemed to think anything much of it, a couple people walked up to them, it seemed as though it was a normal occurrence. I figured maybe they were selling glow-sticks or ice cream or something. When they came to our table I saw that they were giving out stuff, condoms to be exact and little packets of pills.

We all thought the condoms were funny, they had the Eiffel Tower on the package and it said "Official Condom of France," but we thought the pills were weird. We decided they must be aspirin for the hangovers we would have the next day.

The next morning I told my host mother about it and asked her what the pills were. She tried to explain it to me in French I could understand. What I understood was, it's the "if you think you might be pregnant and don't want to be pill." In other words, the Morning After Pill.

She asked if we had it in America (she knew that we didn't have RU-486). I told her that we did but we had to go to a doctor and get a prescription for it. She grunted, as she often did when she was amazed at something I told her about the U.S. Among other things it didn't seem possible to her that I could work AND go to school and the same time, and that I even had to pay the money back to government later.

I thought about the time I needed the morning after pill and had to brave the football game day traffic to go to the university's infirmary which turned out to be closed. How great it would have been if I had just had the morning after pill laying around my house from some night out at a bar.

-Stephanie Seguin, March 21, 2001
We refer you to the previous page of this document for more information on the importance of providing free and accessible menstrual products. In the United States, and across the world, menstrual products are essential for maintaining personal and public health. Without access to these products, many individuals are at risk of ill health and social exclusion. It is crucial that we work towards ensuring that everyone has access to menstrual products, regardless of their socioeconomic status or location. This includes advocating for policies that prioritize menstrual health and equity, and supporting organizations and initiatives that work to address menstrual poverty and stigma.}

Next, read the text on the following page for more details on the importance of menstrual health and equity.
Why are females prescribed the morning after pill?

It is a common belief that females are prescribed the morning after pill due to their reproductive system being vulnerable at certain stages of the menstrual cycle. This belief is based on the idea that females have a higher chance of becoming pregnant during certain phases of their menstrual cycle. However, studies have shown that the risk of pregnancy is not significantly different throughout the menstrual cycle for most women.

Despite this, the morning after pill is commonly prescribed to women who have had unprotected sex or who have had non-steroidal contraceptives fail. The pill works by preventing ovulation or by interfering with the fertilization process in the fallopian tubes. It is not a form of emergency contraception and should not be used as regular birth control.

Emergency contraception is available to women of all ages and can be used by both women and men. The pill is not a permanent form of contraception and should not be used as a method of long-term birth control.

When planning for pregnancy, it is important to discuss birth control options with a healthcare provider. This can include hormonal methods, barrier methods, and intrauterine devices. It is important to choose a method that is effective, safe, and meets the needs of the individual.
Consciousness-Raising Conclusions from the Gainesville Women's Liberation 1997 Class
Consciousness-Raising on Contraceptives and the Morning After Pill

As part of the GWL Women's Liberation Class, students from the class organized a Speak Out at the University of Florida about their experiences and feelings about being hassled by unnecessary and sexist restrictions, denials of requests and lack of information about the Morning After Pill at the university infirmary. The Speak Out was based on the consciousness-raising testimony and conclusions that are below.

******************************************************************************

When have you used contraceptives? Why? Did the guy play a role?

We use contraceptives most of the time, because we don't want to get pregnant. Most of us said we did not want to have a child right now and one person said she never wanted a child.

The guys sometimes played a role. It was rare that men would automatically pull out a condom without being asked, put it on, use it right (i.e., the whole time we had sex, put it on correctly, etc.) without complaining. Only a few people described this as ever happening. For those who had a partner who would automatically put on a condom without a fuss, it was one particular partner, it was not the norm. In other words, it was rare that the guy took on the role that we usually take on of providing and using birth control without being asked or nagged. Some men refused to use condoms at all and so birth control was almost entirely our responsibility unless he offered to help pay for the method we used.

Some other roles men played: splitting the cost of pills or Depo-Provera (two women had this experience; they asked him to do it), withdrawing before coming, buying pregnancy tests when condoms broke, pills were forgotten or birth control was not used.

Most men would put on a condom if we provided it and asked/insisted on him using it. We described varying degrees of resistance men gave us when we tried to get them to use condoms—getting soft when the condom was pulled out, pretending not to have any, refusing to buy them, complaining and spoiling the mood.

1 Conclusions Compiled by Amy Coenen (GWL Class Instructor) for 12/3/97 Action Planning Class Meeting
Many of us described side-effects and problems with the birth control methods we used. These included: mood swings, loss of sexual desire, breasts swelling and no periods with hormonal methods; burning from spermicide; dried out vagina from condoms; UTI with a diaphragm; cervical bleeding with the cervical cap. We also described other problems with our methods; forgetting to take pills (3 people), men outright refusing to wear condoms (4 people), not having the money to buy birth control pills/hormone shots (1 person).

Have you ever had a condom break, a diaphragm slip or forget to take your birth control pills? What happened? What did you do? What role did the guy play?

Five people had condoms break. Five people said they had forgotten to take pills and three described it as a big problem for them, something that happened often.

When these things happened, one person said she took the morning after pill. Everyone else said they just worried and waited and kept their fingers crossed. Two people described times when a condom broke and they did not worry about it. For the rest it was very nerve racking and people described a lot of anxiety and worry.

Women who had forgotten pills described how they carefully calculated whether they could get pregnant or not, so they could try to get their boyfriends to use condoms, or for those who did not want to use condoms or their boyfriends did not want to use condoms, how long to wait before having sex again. One person got pregnant when a condom broke. She was on the pill too, but was taking antibiotics which nullified the pill's effectiveness.

The guys played no role at all except for two people who said their boyfriends paid for and/or went to the store and bought pregnancy tests. One woman whose partner did not help financially with the pregnancy tests talked about spending a lot of money on them, taking frequent pregnancy tests.

When have you not used contraceptives? Why not? What role did the guy play?

Everyone but one person had sex at least once without birth control. It ranged from one time for one woman to about 50% of the time for one woman. Everyone else fell somewhere in between.

There were lots of reasons we did not use contraceptives. The most common reason was, we tried to get the guy to use a condom and he wouldn't. One woman testified about struggling and struggling to get her boyfriend to use condoms. Sometimes she would just give up and do it without one. Eventually she started using Depo Provera because she was tired of struggling. Another woman talked about a man pulling the condom off 1/2 way during sex. She did not insist that he put it back on after that because she didn't want to have an argument in the middle of sex. A few women talked about some version of this--the guy's resistance just wears us down and we sometimes don't ask, we just have sex without it and take a chance.

If we don't particularly like using condoms, either it makes the struggle doubly hard. Two women, for various reasons, can't use any other methods but condoms. One of them really hates condoms so she often ends up using nothing. The guys rarely volunteer to use them, leaving her in the position of insisting on condoms which she doesn't really like. The other woman doesn't mind condoms but gets
sick of being the "condom cop" all the times and so sometimes does not remind the guy to put one on, so he doesn't wear one.

Two women described themselves as "young and stupid," but further investigation revealed that men's resistance to condoms was underneath it. One woman described herself as being afraid to push guys to wear condoms when she was younger. It seems like the younger we are, the less likely we will push or insist that the guy wear them. And the younger we are, the more difficult it is to get other forms of birth control besides condoms.

Forgetting birth control pills was another common reason (three people), though far behind men's reluctance to wear condoms. However, forgetting pills would be less of a problem if guys automatically wore condoms.

Some other reasons women had sex without contraceptives: the guy said he was sterile (the woman ended up getting pregnant); we were "swept away"; we were drunk, one woman was forced to have sex, one woman felt so bad about having sex she didn't want to know she was definitely having it, let alone use a birth control method.

The role the guys plays here in obvious. Often the guy's reluctance to wear condoms, even for the occasional time if we miss a pill, is pivotal in the few times we don't use a contraceptive. Many of the other reasons listed above are directly related to a guy, too.

*Students from the GWL Class march to the university infirmary following the Speak Out to deliver their demands about women's right to unrestricted access to the Morning After Pill. The leaflet with their demands is included in this packet and was based on the consciousness-raising testimony and conclusions.*
Have you ever needed or wanted to take the Morning After Pill? Did you take it? If not, why didn't you take it?
If you did take it, what happened when you went to get it?
What did you like about taking it? What did you not like about taking it?

Almost everyone said that there had been a time when they needed to take the Morning After Pill. But only two of us actually took it. We had taped comments from one woman who tried to get it at the university infirmary and was turned away.

The biggest reason that people did not take the MAP was because they did not know it existed. With two exceptions everyone who had heard about or knew about the MAP heard of it from Campus NOW.

A close second to not knowing about the MAP was that once women knew about it, they were afraid to take it because they were afraid of getting nauseous or vomiting. A few women had the MAP confused with RU-486 and thought that they would have cramping and bleeding.

This was a real contradiction, because we seemed to be willing to take birth control methods like the pill or Depo-Provera which had similar or worse side effects on our bodies, but were afraid of the MAP. We thought maybe the side effects have been overemphasized while the effects of other hormonal birth control methods have been downplayed.

Other people were afraid it would be a "big deal" to go and get it. (Unclear whether people were talking specifically about hassles from the university infirmary staff or other reasons.)

For the two people who took the MAP, they described getting it from clinics with no questions asked and no forms to sign promising to use birth control. For both women it was free. They liked that they got a lot of peace of mind from taking it. As one woman said, "What did I like about taking it? Knowing that I could control what would happen to me in the future when I couldn't control having sex." Neither one of them got pregnant, they like that too.

One woman who took the MAP several times because her primary method was condoms and sometimes broke, sometimes she didn't use them or didn't use them correctly. Condoms and the MAP have been her main form of birth control for seven years.

What did we not like about taking the MAP? Feeling nauseous. This did not happen every time, however, and both women thought the nausea was worth it to not be pregnant or worry about being pregnant.
Guest Column

Move forward on abortion rights

Abortion is a woman's basic right to control her own destiny. Without the right to determine the course of our lives, we cannot be on equal footing with men at school, in the workplace, or in our relationships. We have to struggle with men to wear condoms and take responsibility for contraception, fight with the infirmary to get the morning after pill and fight with our government to get an abortion. When we do have kids, we don't have paid parental leave, health care, or access to reliable, affordable childcare, making it difficult to be a parent and lead a full life.

Women have talked to have had trouble getting the morning after pill at the infirmary because of inconvenient hours or sexist doctors. To get free pregnancy tests that aren't offered at the infirmary, women have been forced to go to an anti-abortion center whose mission is to force women into having kids no matter what. In Europe, the government hands out the morning after pill in bars at night, at high schools and drugstores. While in the United States, getting an abortion has become nearly impossible for most women. The average cost ranges from $400 to $1000 or higher; it is difficult for most women to come up with that money, not to mention travel costs if you happen to live in the 85 percent of U.S. counties that don't have a clinic. There are also restrictions like parental consent, 24-hour waiting periods, no government funding, repression of doctors, lack of access on college campuses and guilt-trip counseling sessions to name only a few. Almost every state has laws restricting our abortion rights. We say forward, not back on abortion!

The feminist movement won the abortion rights we have today through mass organizing, protesting, breaking laws criminalizing abortion and speaking out for women's right to control our reproduction. The right to abortion as guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution (through the Supreme Court decision Roe v. Wade, 1973) was actually a compromise from what the Women's Liberation Movement really wanted – the complete repeal of all laws restricting abortion.

In 1989, National Organization for Women organized more than 10,000 people to march on Tallahassee to stop Gov. Martinez from making Florida the first state to restrict abortion after the Webster decision. No restrictions passed, and Martinez lost the next election. Campus NOW has been organizing for years on campus to get the infirmary to provide more reproductive services such as access to the morning after pill, free pregnancy tests, a larger women's clinic, abortion services and for UF to provide free childcare for all students and staff.

It's time we start organizing to stop anti-woman legislation and push forward for more abortion rights.

NOW has declared an emergency campaign for women's lives to stop George Bush and the Supreme Court from continuing to pile on restrictions to abortion rights. We will kick off the campaign with a march on Washington D.C. on April 22. Join us in demanding:

No barriers to abortion or birth control – Women must be in control of when and if we have children, no anti-choice nominees to the Supreme Court, public childcare as part of the school system, paid parental leave and men to take equal responsibility for birth control, and raising kids!

Campus NOW

Speaking Out

Let's "Go for What we Really Want" – as Kathie Sarachild of Redstockings (www.afn.org/~redstock) said in 1971. If we fight for what we all really want and need for our freedom, we'll get further and inspire more people, since we're addressing demands that benefit all women. Marching on D.C. will show that we will not stand for any insulting and sexist restrictions.

Alex Leader, the executive director of NOW-New York City, will speak as the Women's History Month Keynote speaker Wednesday March 28th at 8 p.m. in Turlington Hall, Room L011 about how women won abortion rights in the past so we can win more rights using lessons from the Women's Liberation Movement. Leader was a key local organizer in the '89 march.

To learn more about the heroic struggle women have waged for our survival and freedom, Gainesville Women's Liberation is offering a summer class, "Women's Liberation – Where do I fit in?" To sign up call 377-9935 or stop by Women's Studies.

To get on the bus to the march in D.C., contact 380-9934 or campus_now@hotmail.com.

Campus NOW is represented here by Stephanie Seguin, Natalie Maxwell, Nicole Hardin, Candi Churchill, Jen Carvalho-Spector and Lidia Castilla.
Medical residents will still perform abortions, UF says

UF President John Lombardi announced July 17 that he would reverse the decision to prevent UF medical residents in Jacksonville from doing abortions in several north Florida counties. But, he said, it was not because of protest.

It wasn't because Gainesville Area National Organization for Women (NOW) & South Brevard NOW (Melbourne), along with members of Jacksonville NOW and Refuse & Resist from Atlanta converged for a protest in front of the Jacksonville hospital 9 days before his statement.

It wasn't because he received a fax from the national organization Medical Students for Choice stating that "Succumbing to anti-abortion pressure encourages harassment at other training institutions across the country thereby placing many more at risk [for anti-abortion harassment and violence]..."

Faxes to Lombardi from the American Medical Student Association, the National Abortion Rights Action League, the National Coalition of Abortion Providers, North Florida Women's Health and Counseling Service (where Continued on page 10...)

A policy which stopped Gainesville-based UF medical residents from any moonlighting will also be changed, and those residents will now also be allowed to moonlight if they can get approval from their program director or department chair.

Betty Armistead, president of South Brevard NOW speaks at a rally in Jacksonville to pressure the UF medical school to allow medical residents to perform abortions.

Abortion ...Continued from page 1 ...

many abortions are performed by UF residents) and calls and letters from many more individuals and organizations were also not a factor in the decision, according to Lombardi.

No, UF's change of heart only coincidentally followed the passage of a resolution by the Florida State NOW which pointed out that UF was violating accreditation standards by not providing abortion training for all its medical graduate students. "Be it resolved," stated the resolution "that NOW will actively demand that UF's Gainesville medical school bring its policy in line with that of the guidelines of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the regulations of the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education, program guidelines that require abortion training for OB-GYN residency programs."

UF had planned to ban abortion moonlighting by its medical students based in Jacksonville as of July 1. They would still be allowed to do abortions in Jacksonville, but it would put a stop to their travel to clinics in other counties (not coincidentally, those that don't have many abortion doctors available to them). With this policy, licensed doctors who were in the residency phase of their training would be told what they could and could not do on their own time based, as far as local feminists could determine, on the threat that anti-abortion protesters would injure or kill one of them. Two doctors who provided abortions for women in Pensacola have been shot and killed by anti-abortion activists, along with an escort for one of the doctors.

But, being accused of buckling to terrorism was not a factor in Lombardi's decision, by his own report. According to the Gainesville Sun (7/18/96), Lombardi stated that the ban was contemplated "Because of concerns that the doctors might be too exhausted to do their medical school work after traveling to and from abortion clinics."

In its resolution, Florida NOW states that UF should start to provide training in abortions to all its obstetrics and gynecology residents.

Jenny Brown
Dear Readers,

Our abortion rights are on the chopping block again. Every time we turn around it's the same old song. You would think the anti-abortion opponents would learn that women aren't going to put up with this. At issue again is the "intact dilation and extraction" (D&X) procedure. President Clinton vetoed an earlier ban on this procedure passed by the U.S. House and Senate. Supporters of the earlier ban are now trying to override the veto. During the next few months legislators who voted against banning the procedure are being targeted by anti-abortion foes in their re-election races.

Because anti-abortion foes have had so little success with an outright ban on abortion, they are now trying to target specific methods of abortion. "Dilation and extraction" (D&X) is not new or very different from dilation and evacuation (D&E), the most common second trimester abortion procedure. The difference being that an intact fetus is removed. Whether a D&E or D&X procedure is used depends on what is best for the woman considering her medical circumstances. For some women, D&X is the safest procedure which can be used.

Contrary to the rhetoric D&X has an excellent safety record and is not something new. In fact the procedure has been used since the 1700's and D&E is the more recent procedure. As of now, when performing an abortion a doctor can or may decide that D&X is the safest procedure. If D&X is made illegal, a more risky procedure will be the only option. Banning a safer medical procedure and using a more dangerous one can only result in unnecessary complications, including, death for women who need the procedure.

Some opponents of the D&X method have gone so far as to say it would be better if women were to have labor induced or be given a caesarean section. Both labor and caesarean sections have a death rate of more than nine times that of D&E or D&X abortions. This is an example of how little regard anti-abortion forces have for women's lives. Politicians and anti-abortion foes are not doctors and may not have women's best interests at heart. Would they tell doctors how to perform appendectomies or how to do heart surgery? Never before has Congress taken it upon themselves to decide what surgical procedure a doctor can or cannot use.

Opponents of the D&X procedure have admitted this is just the first step to ban abortion procedures in the second trimester. Inflammatory and hysterical rhetoric is being used to confuse the D&X procedure with second trimester abortions where it is also used. Opponents of D&X say it should be banned because it is a "gross" procedure. Using that logic any surgery should be banned. There seems to be a clear attempt to associate D&X with only third trimester abortions alone by saying it is rare. But the reality is that this is an attempt to ban a procedure which is also used as a second trimester procedure. A ban on D&X is a clear attack on Roe v. Wade, which allows second trimester abortions.

It is urgent that you contact your representatives Karen Thurman and Corrine Brown in the U.S. House and Senators Bob Graham and Connie Mack and tell them why a ban on the D&X procedure is wrong. The vote is expected to be very close and the ramifications are that women will lose some of their abortion rights. At our next general meeting on September 26th, Patricia Lassiter, Director of the Gainesville Women's Health Center will be bringing us more up-to-date on D&X legislation. I hope to see you there so we can take further action on this disregard for women's rights.

PENNIE D. FOSTER, Acting President
Speakout for Women’s Freedom...

Abortion

Morning After Pill

RU-486

Free Child Care

Hassle-Free Clinical Services for Women

Campus National Organization for Women

DEMANDS:

- Greater accessibility to information and services regarding contraceptive options
- A women’s clinic with the size, staff, and resources adequate for meeting the health needs of the more than 20,000 female students
- Free pregnancy tests
- Free or low-cost abortion services, both surgical and pharmaceutical
- All UF students and staff have free University provided child care

Friday, January 26, 2001
12:30pm - 2pm
Plaza of the Americas

For more information or to get involved contact Natalie at 371-6499 or campus_now@hotmail.com
Speech given by Destry Taylor, the Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action Team chair for the University of Florida Campus

I used to think that Roe v. Wade gave women the right to abortion. Nothing was given to us. The right to have a safe legal abortion in America was won by women rallying, speaking out, committing acts of civil disobedience, and most of all ORGANIZING. The laws in America were changed because of the rise of the feminist movement and the combination of the feminist perspective and the mass organizing of many people. Make no mistake, it was a long, hard, organized fight that won us the few rights we have today. Rights that are constantly being challenged by an increasingly conservative, anti-woman government. And Roe v. Wade was a compromise of what we really wanted. Now Roe v. Wade did grant most women the right to an abortion. But it made abortion an issue of privacy between me and my doctor. It did not grant me full control over my body. So in the year 2000, I still do not have the right to control my body unless the state AND my doctor say it is okay. I know all of us have heard the horror stories from women who were forced to seek illegal abortions but I think that it is important that we not forget how terrifying and awful America was before the women's liberation movement won us the right to legal abortions. My grandmother sought an illegal abortion in 1945, in Chicago, because she got pregnant by a man to whom she was not married. She almost died. That man was my grandfather and he left her when he found out she was pregnant. He later came back to her after she had the abortion and they were married. But I don't want us to get so complacent with the rights we have today, with the fact that abortion is legal, that we forget that abortion is still unavailable to many of us. The same desperation felt by women needing an abortion in the time before it was legal is the same desperation felt by me when I needed an abortion and had to struggle to figure out how I was going to pay for it or if I had lived in one of the 85% of counties who have no abortion provider without a car, or my sisters who are under 18 living in a state with parental notification laws. Abortion might as well still be illegal for us.

It was the summer of 1992 and I was preparing to attend UF and looking excitedly to the future when one night during sex it
happened, the condom broke, and I knew I was pregnant. I had never heard of the morning after pill. In fact I didn't hear about it until I came to college. If I had known about the morning after pill I certainly would have taken it. It would have saved me having to scrounge around for money for an abortion, having to miss class, and having to have a surgical procedure. But I was not told of the morning after pill in my high school sex education class or anywhere else. So here I was, pregnant, all of a sudden I saw all of my dreams come crashing down on me. I knew I needed an abortion, there was never any question or doubt in my mind about that. But my family was very poor and I wasn't able to work because I had to care for my six siblings so my mom could work, so I had no money. The three hundred dollars an abortion would cost might as well have been three million. So I came to college in August hoping to get my financial aid checks as soon as possible. I couldn't enjoy myself because I had a secret, a problem that needed a solution. I was desperate.

My financial aid check got held up and they told me it would be 4-6 weeks before I could get the money. Never mind needing to buy books and eat, I needed an abortion and I needed one fast. By then I was 10 weeks pregnant and I knew I was up against the clock. If you think coming up with three hundred dollars for a first trimester abortion is hard, try up to nineteen hundred dollars for a second trimester abortion. My boyfriend was little to no help as he had no money just like me, he would just shrug his shoulders when I asked him about it. I guess he just assumed I would take care of it. I finally broke down and borrowed the money from my Catholic dorm roommate who I had known all of one week. That was really embarrassing. I didn't tell her what I needed
the money for and she didn't ask but I think she knew.

Neither my boyfriend nor I had a car and I was too embarrassed to ask any of the new friends I had made in the last week to borrow their car. I have to say I am lucky I lived in one of the 15% of US counties that has an abortion provider because if I didn't I don't know what I would have done. Luckily there was a clinic within walking distance of my boyfriend's apartment so I called and made an appointment. My boyfriend was supposed to go with me but decided at the last minute that he couldn't miss class so I went alone. I want to say here that along with the demands to our government to stop imposing restrictions on abortions, I want men to be more supportive of us when we need an abortion. I don't want to have to argue with my partner or comfort him, I want him to support me and that includes standing there by my side when I have to have an abortion. And beyond supporting us, when we need abortion, men need to take more responsibility for birth control. I know my girlfriends and I talk about the constant battle of trying to get men to wear condoms or even take some responsibility for birth control. I mean guys, JUST PUT THE CONDOM ON, or pay for whatever birth control we use, don't wait for women to take care of it. It is sexist to let this work fall on us alone.

So I went in, paid my money and sat in the waiting room alone. The clinic staff was really nice and supportive, the abortion was over pretty quickly. I had to lie to the staff and tell them my boyfriend was picking me up because they require you have a ride home--so I could walk to my boyfriend's house. I remember such a feeling of relief and calm washed over me as I walked. I would not have to be like my mom and have seven kids and never get to travel or barely ever get to leave the house. I didn't have to give up my dreams and go on welfare or wait everyday for the child support check that never came. If I had not had the abortion I would not be here speaking to you today.

My story and the story of millions of other women illustrate why abortion rights are so strongly tied to our freedom. It also illustrates why the abortion rights we have today aren't enough. Until abortion is free, until more than 85% of US counties have an abortion provider and until it is available to all women on demand without restriction at any time in pregnancy, women will not be truly free. If we as women are chained to our reproductive organs and denied the fundamental right of complete control over
our bodies then we are not free.

That is why the issue of abortion is important to all women. That is why the struggle for abortion rights is every woman's struggle. It is about the right of women to control our own bodies. It is about a woman's self-determination of her own destiny. Women and women alone should be able to decide when and if we become mothers, and when and if we have an abortion, and when and if we decide to be sterilized. Women have a long way to go until we have complete control of our bodies. For one thing we need to get rid of the stigma placed on women who have had abortions. After I had my abortion, I noticed a change in the way some of my friends perceived me and talked about me. Now these were pro-choice friends (or so they said). But I became the token abortion girl. I was not ashamed of my decision but I began to feel different, stigmatized, not even in a bad way but still stigmatized because I chose to terminate my unwanted pregnancy. I know that a number of my friends have had their wisdom teeth extracted and no one ever said, 'Did you know she had her teeth pulled out?' But my surgical procedure became hot news. Abortion should be seen as any other medical procedure. We need to stop referring to abortion as some necessary evil, something only desperate women do because of circumstances out of her control. Let's face it, condoms break, diaphragms slip, or maybe we are tired of begging our partners to wear a condom or we are tired of always thinking about birth control. Unplanned pregnancy is a fact of life. We need to stop being apologetic for demanding our abortion rights. And we need to stop acting as if every woman who gets an abortion is sad or apologetic for her decision. I have spoken to many women who have had abortions, and I have never met one who felt anything other than relief.

The laws in America were changed because of the mass organizing of many people. We can organize today to win more abortion rights and not wait until the next wave of legislative restrictions to get out there and demand our legal rights. Abortion rights are important to all women because they are about justice for all women. Women need the freedom to decide when and if we have children without any governmental control of our lives or our bodies. We need to take a pro-abortion stand. We need to demand repeal. We will not get what we want by compromising and we will never get more than we ask for. We need to stop waiting for the next round of restrictions to fight back. It is in every woman's self interest
to fight for complete control over our bodies.

Women, the feminist movement is fighting for YOU to be able to decide when and if you will have children. We need this right! And we better work for it. We need every woman to join NOW and demand the complete repeal of abortion laws. And we need your time and membership dues to make this happen. Come get involved, join Campus NOW’s Abortion Reproductive Rights Action Team. You can join NOW at the table. Our next ARRAT meeting is on February 8th at 7pm in Turlington 2318. We will be talking about working with state and national groups to demand the repeal of abortion laws. Come help us make this happen.

Children and Parents Need Universal Childcare!

- Why are women usually, unequally burdened with most of the childcare work? How can we get men to do their share?
- Why is the financial burden of raising children fallen almost entirely on parents?
- Why are childcare workers the lowest paid workers in the nation?
- How do other countries address these problems?
- How can teachers, parents, feminists, and the community raise to tackle these problems?

Gainesville Area NOW
Saturday December 2nd, 2000 4:00pm
Seminary Lane/NAACP building 1105 NW 5th Ave
Free childcare provided.

Join us to talk about our experiences raising children and to figure out how to share the responsibility of childcare across the community, starting even participation from men. We don’t have to struggle alone on day-to-day issues, let’s work together.

Tuesday, February 6, 2001 Gainesville Sun

Sun Letter:
Women’s issues downplayed

This is in response to Colleen Kay Porter’s column (“A moral reflection on abortion as court anniversary nears,” Jan. 13).

Porter cites the 1999 Gallup Poll results. She says, “55 percent of Americans believe Abortion should be legal only under certain circumstances.” She then goes on to speak about the viewpoints of these so-called centrists.

The antichoice proponents are trying to push women back and dismantle the foundation on which women’s liberation is built. This has caused some of these “centrists” to look at their doubt instead of focus on the very important issues that affect women’s progress and social liberation.

The right to control when and if we have children is not an issue that should even be up for debate. It is a fundamental right of women to be able to control when and if we have children. As a woman, it is my right to choose to continue a pregnancy and no one else has any right to force me to do otherwise.

The real issue here is that women are not supported or valued in this society. The fight to take away our abortion rights is just a symptom of this lack of support. This issue often gets downplayed into whether abortion should be legal.

We must continue to use our energy to ensure that abortion remains legal, available and ultimately has no restrictions placed on it.

However, the issues that I believe warrant our time and energy are eliminating the oppressive social, sexual, religious and economic limitations that are placed on women’s lives.

We must work together to achieve parental leave policies, shorter work weeks, worthy wages and affordable, quality child care. This support for women will ensure that we are equally protected by the law and can make the decisions that are best for our lives and futures.

It is crucial that we start respecting parents’ decisions to stay at home with kids as doing work that is important for the continuation of our society and compensating us.

As a full-time mom, I work over 40 hours a week in the home. My job entails nursing, teaching, cleaning, crisis management, accounting, counselor, cook, and much more. Yet, I receive no wages for my work. This is sexist.

Porter refers to “abortion on demand as fitting perfectly with the popular American mindset that every problem can be solved in half an hour.”

Abortion certainly is no quick fix to the problems that women of today face, but without it, we are forced to have children we don’t want and little freedom to determine the course of our own lives.

Let us not forget the desperation that caused women to unify 28 years ago. Let us let not the 16 percent anti-choicers that Porter mentions confuse us and divide us. Let us work together to end sexism and gain full lives for all women whether or not we choose to have children.

Working with Gainesville’s Area National Organization for Women has been inspiring, helpful and fun.

You, too, can join us by calling 377-9935 or e-mail candichurchill@juno.com. We meet the first Saturday of the month from 4-6 p.m. at 1105 NW 5th Ave.

Laurie Reisman,
Gainesville
WOMEN: Are you sick of fighting with guys to pay their fair share of birth control and abortion? Tired of insurance companies not covering the care you need?

Vote YES!
For Universal Health Care on November 7th!

WHY IS IT ALL ON WOMEN TO PAY FOR BIRTH CONTROL AND ABORTION?
- 2/3 of insurance companies don’t cover birth control pills or abortion. Women of reproductive age pay more out of pocket for medical expenses than men.
- We have to pay for expensive annual exams to even get birth control pills—many insurance plans don’t cover this either.
- Abortion in the US costs $320-$1500. Our full right to abortion and birth control is being blocked by insurance companies and lack of Universal Health Care.
- The UF infirmary’s insurance plan doesn’t cover birth control pills yet over half of the prescriptions they fill are for the pill.

HOW CAN UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE BRING US CLOSER TO FULL REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS?
- Many countries already provide free care for everyone. France, Norway, England, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Finland and many others provide all the following for free: birth control, abortion, morning after pill, annual exams, pre-natal care, and childbirth.
- Men should pay their share of birth control and abortion. With Universal Health Care men would put in their fair share so we wouldn’t have to fight individually with them to pay.
- We want Universal Health Care here, which would cover everyone regardless of job or marital status so EVERY woman would have free access to abortion, birth control, annual exams, childbirth and pre-natal care.
- By cutting insurance companies' profit out of our system we would have enough to pay for all these things. We think that everyone has a right to good health care, and all women have a right to full and free reproductive care!

Women talk about our current system...

"Birth control, annual exams and abortion aren’t covered under my expensive insurance. We need a better system.”
- Brittany, a third year UF student

"My family almost went bankrupt from hospital expenses when my mom had a baby, even though we had insurance and there were no medical complications.”
- Stephanie, a UF graduate

"Under my family’s insurance I have to go home to Orlando to go to the doctor. When I can’t get an appointment I can’t get the birth control I need.”
- Natalie, a third year UF student

This November we have the chance to tell politicians we want a universal health care system that covers everyone AND provides the FULL reproductive rights we deserve!
Anononous testimony from a young woman about her coat hanger abortion in 1991....

When I was in high school in 1991, my boyfriend and I were having sex regularly and using the sponge as birth control. I guess I got one of the sponges that failed the quality control process because I got pregnant. I never took a pregnancy test, I could not afford one. After I didn't get my period for two months in a row, I pretty much knew I was pregnant. I was living with my mom and three siblings at the time. We had been evicted from our apartment so we were living sometimes with her friends, sometimes with my ex-stepdad, and sometimes in our car. For a while I was staying with a friend's family.

On a few different nights in the shower I took some scissors and stuck them up inside myself and cut myself up pretty badly. Fortunately I didn't bleed to death but unfortunately I was still pregnant. I never thought to tell my mom, I figured the stress would be too much and besides I was supposed to be the good kid. I was smart, the one with good grades and didn't want to add to the stresses and struggles my siblings and dad were already making for our family. I wanted to fix this myself. Most days I just didn't think about it, I pretended it wasn't happening. After a month or so of bouncing from place to place my siblings and I went to live with my dad in a trailer in rural central Florida. I was pretty isolated from the outside world except for school. I wasn't allowed to use the car so I probably couldn't have gotten to a clinic even if I could have stolen the money.

There was never any question I wanted an abortion but my father was ultra-religious and there was no way would help me. (In fact he and my stepmom would talk about adopting a baby and I knew if I told them I was pregnant they would force me to have it and give it to them. The thought of being an incubator for the next five months was unbearable.) I also thought Florida was a parental consent state b/c I had read so much about that in the papers.

A friend of mine was a midwife and had a lot of books on pregnancy and childbirth. I read every one of them in hopes of finding a way to abort the pregnancy. I read that an herb called blue cohosh caused early contractions was used by Native American women to induce labor. One night I took a whole bottle, again trying to cause an abortion. I am lucky it didn't destroy my liver or make me really sick. All it did was make me throw up. After that, I went back into denial and just pretended nothing was happening. Sometimes at night I could feel the fetus move inside me and I would just cry.

One day at school when I was about seven and a half months, one of my teachers took me aside and asked me if I was pregnant. I actually told her no, I have an ovarian cyst b/c I had read that can make you look pregnant. I went home determined to get this thing out of me any way I could. My family went out to dinner and I took a straightened coat hanger, boiled it, and shoved it inside of me until it ruptured the amniotic sac. I went to bed hopeful that it would all be over soon. The next day I was supposed to take my sister to the doctor's office but the contractions had started and I was in too much pain (I think the rest of my family was out running errands). The pain was the most intense I had ever felt and at times I thought I was going to pass out. I really tried to stay conscious because I didn't want my family to find me like that. It last for about eight hours the last two being unbearable. I remember taking a shower and screaming at the top of my lungs, "Get out of me." My sister came to see if I was all right and I told her a spider had startled me. Finally the baby came out and it was still moving. I had stopped up the tub so there was some standing water, I cut the cord and it stopped moving. After the placenta came out I took a trash bag and put everything inside. Later that night I borrowed someone's truck and threw the bag in a dumpster. I have never told anyone this. When I got pregnant about 7 months later I was determined come hell or high water I would have an abortion.
Joining the Battle

Public childcare
RU-486
Morning After Pill
Abortion
Self-determination for ALL women

LET'S GO FOR WHAT WE REALLY WANT*:
April 22, 2001 • Washington, DC

* From "Going for What We Really Want" by Kathie Sarachild, from Feminist Revolution. For more information, visit www.sfn.org-redstock

Men taking responsibility for birth control and raising children
Paid parental leave

To get involved or to sign up for the bus:
March for Women's Lives in Washington DC on April 1st

Join Campus and Feminists across the nation in a National Rally for Abortion Rights. To win the changes we want, we need your help. We will be traveling, speaking, and raising money for the NOW. It's never been more important. Let's go to ourinthefacedelete.jpg to get a few minutes of your time. Help us to build the Women's Information Network and expand abortion rights. We'll be planning for the March on DC and our campaign to build the Women's Information Network and expand abortion rights.

March 21st, 2001

Friday April 6th - 11:00am to 1:30pm

Campus Rally for Abortion Rights

For more information go to info.nowm.org or call (202) 690-1040.

For National Network of Women's Rights' on campus, contact the Women's Resource Center at 777-9933.

PREMIUM PROGRAMS

January 14/15, 2001

Saturday, April 21st, 11:00 am to 5:00 pm

We are planning for the March on DC and our campaign to build the Women's Information Network and expand abortion rights.