

Pro-choice activists up for tough year

■ **WORKSHOP:** Training at Saturday's workshop included campaigning and organization skills

By Sara Johnson
Freelance Reporter

The Oregon division of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League hosted an activist training workshop Saturday on the campus of Willamette University in Salem. Attended primarily by pro-choice volunteers, the workshop focused on readying the volunteers for a tough election year.

Attendees chose from a variety of workshops and discussions central to the pro-choice movement. Workshop leaders helped participants develop a pro-choice message, acquire campaigning skills and learn how to work effectively with volunteers.

The volunteers joined in panel discussions on topics ranging from a woman's bodily integrity to men's rights and the quality of life.

Late-term abortions proved to be one of the hottest topics of debate. Currently, the Oregon Citizens Alliance is collecting signatures for an initiative that will most likely appear on the November ballot. This ballot measure would ban second- and third-trimester abortions except when needed to save the woman's life.

Workshop organizers countered this initiative with facts. According to pamphlets distributed by the league, less than 1 percent of all abortions are per-

formed after 24 weeks.

Furthermore, only three doctors in the United States perform abortions during the last three months of pregnancy. Pro-choice activists view the OCA's initiative as an attempt by the legislature to take women's right to choose away.

In an effort to maintain the legal right to safe abortions, the league is working to build a strong volunteer base not only for the 1996 election, but for the future as well. "Elections come and go, but the base needs to be steady," panelist Georgia Biesterveld said.

Marcia Latta, a Lane County field organizer for the league added, "Without volunteers, Oregon NARAL is nothing."

Biesterveld explained that the league needs pro-choice volunteers to counter statements made by pro-life activists. "[Pro-life activists] are willing to say whatever it takes to get their message across ... The statements they use are emotional and not [always] accurate. We need to promote a rational discussion about this issue."

The pro-choice stance seems close to extinction. In Oregon, 32 of 60 seats in the House of Representatives vote pro-choice, producing a three-vote margin.

Many of these seats are up for reelection this year, meaning the vote on this issue could go either way. For this reason, activists on both sides consider campaigning essential.

Kitty Piercy, a state representative for District 39 and former president of Oregon NARAL,

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encourages people, especially college students, to get involved and to be knowledgeable on all issues during the election.

This includes voting on even the smallest of positions, such as school board elections and knowing which candidates support pro-choice legislation. Piercy contends that student leaders set the tone for a campus.

"I believe strongly in involving students in the responsibility and action [during a campaign]," Piercy said. "Also, they are really fun to work with."

Grace Smutz and Sarah LaChappelle, the co-directors of Students for Choice at the University, attended the workshop. SFC is working on a local level to organize a strong core of consistent volunteers for the pro-choice cause.

Currently, SFC is writing a Pro-Choice Buyers Guide to be distributed throughout the community, naming local businesses and business owners who support the pro-choice movement. "I like what we are doing, but there is still so much more to do," said Smutz.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

■ **The United Way of Lane County** has several volunteer opportunities open to the public. Among positions open this week are drivers for people who have limited mobility, tutors for at-risk youth, fossil study helpers to assist the UO Museum of Natural History and child care volunteers. For more information, call 683-9000.

■ **The League of Women Voters of Lane County** is sponsoring a public forum on Measure 20-56, the Sheriff's Levy. Featured speakers include Sheriff Robert McManus and Corrections Consultant Lawrence Salmory. The forum will take place today at 7:30 p.m. in Harris Hall, 125 E. 8th Ave. For more information, call 343-7917.

■ **The Cascade Policy Institute**, a Portland-based think tank, will sponsor their 1996 Better Government Competition. Up to \$30,000 in honoraria will be rewarded to the best formal proposals that address cutting Oregon regulatory red tape or improving a state or local welfare program. To receive the official guidelines, call (541) 224-1737.

■ **The Jacobs Gallery** is currently accepting proposals for visual art exhibits for the period November 1996 through August 1997. Interested artists should contact the gallery for a prospectus and entry form. Proposals must be received by the gallery no later than March 1 at 5 p.m. For more information, call 687-5087.

■ **The Lane County Metropolitan Sports Commission** is seeking citizens to fill a vacant at-large Commission member position. The Commission's purpose is to create and market athletic facilities that will attract local, regional, national and international events to the Lane County area. All citizens are encouraged to apply. For more information, call 726-3785.

■ **Temple Beth Israel** will sponsor a children's carnival on Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 2550 Portland Street. The carnival will feature game booths, a children's costume parade and Purim crafts and food. Adult admission is \$1.50, children's admission is free. For more information, call 485-7218.

ET ALS

MEETINGS

Southern Willamette Earth First! will meet today at 3 p.m. in EMU Suite 1. For more information, call 346-4356.

NPCSC will sponsor a NPCSC Planning Meeting at the Multicultural Center today from 4 to 5 p.m. For more information, call 346-4207.

Anti-Aryan Coalition will meet at the Multicultural Center tonight from 7 to 9. For more information, call 346-4207.

MISCELLANEOUS

ESCAPE Field Studies will sponsor Outdoor School Interviews today from 3 to 5 p.m. in the ESCAPE office EMU M-111. For more information, call 346-4351.

Women's Center will sponsor a Women of Color Support Group at the Multicultural Center today from 4 to 5:30 p.m. For more information, call 346-4207.

Multicultural Center is sponsoring a Men's Workshop from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Multicultural Center. For more information, call 346-4207.

Career Center will sponsor a Career Center Services Orientation today from 4 to 4:30 p.m., Campus Interview Orientation today from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., and a Workshop on Internship Options today from 1 to 2 p.m. in Room 12 Hendricks. For more information, contact Room 244 Hendricks or call 346-6001.



OPEN FORUM

February 29, 1996 · 6:00-8:00 P.M.
Ben Linder Room (EMU)

The Open Forum will include: a brief presentation of market survey results; opportunity for public to comment on results and needs during construction

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