

Furthermore, say some Eugeneans, women worked hard for the right to vote. "If young women understood that women's right to vote was wrenched from unwilling male hands perhaps they would be less likely to give it up," said Karen Luna, manager of Eugene's feminist bookstore, Mother Kali's Books. "I think it is hard for young people to look at pictures of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her 'sisters of suffrage' with their high collars and gray-haired buns and realize that these were tigresses who took a battle to the streets."

NEW VOTERS

Concern about the present political climate has caused many single women to register for the first time. "There are things I don't want to live to see," said 24-year-old Erin Rose Turner of Eugene, "and I need to vote against them." Several of Turner's friends choose not to vote for ideological reasons, she said, "and I would like to see their votes in this election."

Wendy Kai, 29-year old single mother, cites her recent viewing of Michael Moore's film, *Fahrenheit 9/11*, and hearing Dennis Kucinich speak this spring as motivation to vote in November. "My son Elias is really into G.I. Joe," she said between waiting tables at Morning Glory Café. Kai said she was "horrified" watching the military recruitment scenes in the film. Although the issues of import to her may never be addressed, Kai said, "By not voting I support the system. I think that voting in numbers is one way for change to come about."

Desser agrees, noting that 22 million

votes "can absolutely make a difference in a country where 600 votes decided the last presidential election." If single women voted at the same rate as married women, there would be six million more ballots to count.

On the other hand, 21-year-old Jen Lokajickova just registered for the first time but she is not planning to vote. "I don't have any proof that my vote counts," she said.

To engage women who feel alienated from politicians and distrustful of the electoral system, the most effective voter registration and mobilization drives reach non-voters on a personal level while encouraging the message that "your vote counts." Groups that do this put voting in the single woman's cultural context.

Mother Kali's Books is registering customers from their front desk and at the Eugene Pride Festival. Luna invited New Voters Project representative Terra Sorensen to train Mother Kali's staff on voter registration. "Our intention is to get as many voices heard as we can," Luna said.

In an effort to target single women, NVP canvassers work with women's community centers such as Mother Kali's and Womenspace, stand outside grocery stores and attend festivals. Mothers can be particularly pre-occupied, Barker said. "Sometimes I'm talking to a woman with a baby in one hand and groceries in the other," he said. He gets right to the point. "I tell them that if they vote, things will get better."

NVP intends to register 18,000 young Eugeneans by Oct. 12. Barker is full of energy and excited about the project. "We're talking to everyone we see," he said from the 300-square foot office he shares with 15

other NVP employees. The organization is involved with several local churches, the UO Student Vote Coalition and other Eugene groups. At the Oregon Country Fair, NVP registered 880 people.

The San Francisco-based Sequoia Leadership Center is opening an office in Eugene under the direction of Jen Rygas, who worked on Kitty Piercy's successful mayoral campaign. The organization sends volunteers door-to-door to speak with unregistered single women. "What works best is meeting women face-to-face," Sequoia Director Andrew McGuire said. "First we are going to register single women. Then later we'll go back to them, doing a get-out-the-vote campaign."

Holly Knight describes herself as the "self-appointed coordinator of the Eugene MMOB." She laughs at the lingo, but Knight is serious about Mainstreet Moms Oppose Bush and doing all she can to elect John Kerry.

"Kerry is a candidate worth fighting for," Knight said, pulling out a homemade brochure that includes Kerry's voting record ratings from such groups as the League of Conservation Voters (96 percent), NARAL and Planned Parenthood (100 percent), the NAACP (100 percent) and the National Education



'THERE ARE THINGS I DON'T WANT TO LIVE TO SEE, AND I NEED TO VOTE AGAINST THEM.'

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