

womanifesto

Newsletter of the MSU-Bozeman Women's Center
October/November 2006

USE YOUR VOICE!

By Betsy Danforth

Tuesday, November 7th is Election Day, and though you may not think it is important to vote in this midterm election, please do think again. In many ways, midterm and local elections have more effect on our lives than national presidential elections. Decisions are made at every level by those candidates we vote into office. This year, Montanans will choose a U.S. Senator, a Congressional seat, and several Montana House seats. We encourage you to use your voice and get out there on the 7th and VOTE!

According to Montana Women Vote, voter turnout has been decreasing in the U.S. for the past few decades and presently, only about 30% of low-income women are registered to vote. Many women don't see politicians as caring about or effectively legislating around the issues that impact our daily lives. Though many of us are frustrated by the electoral and legislative process, we do need to recognize that we can affect change through voting, lobbying, and political activism. Single votes have changed history and in a state as sparsely populated as Montana, your voice can indeed make a difference.

Montana Women Vote is a statewide, nonpartisan coalition formed in 2000 to educate and mobilize women to become active in the democratic process. They point out that nationwide, 22 million women who were eligible to vote did not cast ballots in the 2000 election. According to the U.S. Census, 9.9 million registered female voters of all marital statuses did not vote in 2000 (compared with 8.8 million men). Women often feel that our voices don't count. The U.S. Senator and Congressional seat you vote for will help decide how much money federal programs (such as Head Start, Social Security, Medicaid, child care and health care services) are granted each year. They may also propose changes to the U.S. Constitution. The Montana Representative you vote for (in your House District) will help enact state laws in areas such as taxes, education, child care, and

conservation of natural resources.* If we don't take the opportunity to vote, we won't have a say in decisions that effect our every day lives. Many Montana races are decided by two percentage points, which can be less than ten votes.

Many younger people, including students, aren't sure where or how to register to be eligible to vote in their first election after turning 18 years of age. The process is simple. Montana Women Vote, the College Democrats, and various other student organizations are tabling around campus to register voters before this election. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the number one reason cited by non-voting men and women for skipping the polls in 2000 was that they were too busy or had schedule conflicts.** Whether you are out of town or not, filling out an absentee ballot is always an option. As a registered Montana voter, I just got information in the mail last week about this option; it's one that takes minimal effort and time and still gives you a voice without the inconvenience of going to the polls. League of Women Voters' President Weix noted that the single most important factor in whether a registered female will vote is whether or not her friends and people she knows vote.** So get out there and set a good example for your friends!

Learn about the candidates; each of them has a website with political information, statements, biographies, their stances on the issues, as well as updates about political events and debates that you can attend in order to become an informed voter.

As University of Montana student Rye Bolinger noted: "it doesn't seem like the political system is working for the people, so people are choosing to drop out instead of act up."** Dropping out sounds a bit like giving up...doesn't it?

*from the Montana Women Vote.org website

**from the *Missoula Independent*, 9-23-04

Nationally Recognized Speaker Visiting MSU to Discuss Rape Prevention

Brian Kassar, *Men Stopping Rape*
Erin Jemison, MSU VOICE Center

Too often, rape is seen as a “women’s issue.” Women are largely in charge of its prevention. Women are “supposed” to protect themselves from it happening to them. Communities should arm their women with outdoor lighting, whistles, mace and self-defense classes. It’s time to end the myth that the best thing we can do to prevent rape is to teach women to protect themselves. This is an abdication of responsibility by many others who can play an important role in the prevention of rape: men. If we operate under the paradigm that rape is a “women’s issue,” how do we help men understand their stake in rape prevention?

We often think of rape happening to random women or occurring outside our circle. The reality? Men will have friends, partners, daughters and family members who are among the 1 in 4 women who will be raped in their lifetime. Rape fosters a distrust of men and perpetuates a stereotype that all men are violent and sexually aggressive. Over 50% of marriages where a woman has been raped end

in divorce. Men are victims of sexual violence: approximately 1 in 6 men has experienced sexual abuse or rape, and 10% of reported rapes involve a male victim.

Most men are not rapists and treat women with respect and have healthy relationships with their friends/partners. Yet very few men are actively involved in the prevention of rape or dating violence. It’s not considered “manly” to speak out against violence towards the women that they are taught to chivalrously protect, partly because men receive mixed messages about how to treat women. Men are taught to be respectful and take care of women, while also learning that male bonding means talking about sexual exploits or objectifying women. These confusing messages can paralyze men

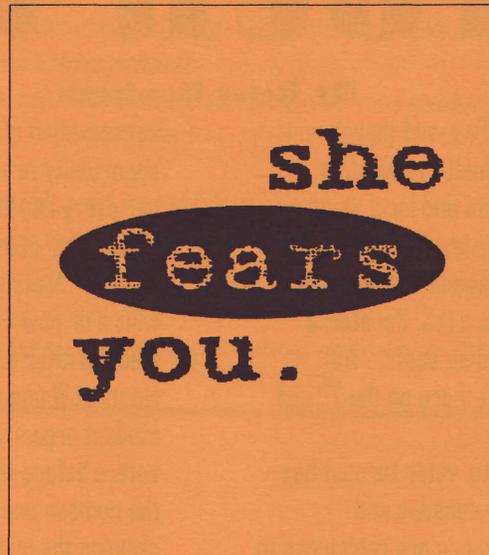
who may want to help but fear losing face. “I don’t have time” becomes a catch-all reason to avoid involvement in an issue that is difficult, angering, and potentially uncomfortable for men, and a reason to avoid looking at how our own behaviors or attitudes may reflect negative cultural messages about how to treat women.

Men often think, “I’m not a rapist, so, I’m not the problem.” This may be true and obviously, the majority of men don’t commit rape, yet rape is still an enormous societal problem. Men need to become engaged in educating others about rape prevention. We often hear phrases like “man up” or “suck it up” used to spur men into action in the sports arena; perhaps it’s time to “man up” in the arena of violence prevention as well.

What can men do? Talk to one another about the topic. Listen to women’s experiences. Get involved with community events that address these issues. Be respectful towards women—even when they aren’t around.

At MSU, you can volunteer with Men Stopping Rape and learn how to educate other men. **You can also attend “She Fears You” on Tuesday, October 17 at 7pm in Ballroom A of the SUB.** “She Fears You” is a nationally recognized presentation identifying what all of us have to gain from ending violence against women. It invites both men and women to be active in changing the culture that supports and condones rape. Please join us in working to end violence against women in our community.

Note: Keith Edwards, the creator of “She Fears You,” is providing a faculty and staff training on Tuesday, October 17 from 9:00-10:30am in SUB 275. Please call 994-7069 for more information. Be sure to check out his website@ www.menendingrape.org



Don't That

Cancel Class!

staff and educators from the VOICE center facilitate provocative and interactive presentations on a variety of important topics, including:

Gender Issues

Rape Culture

Sexual Assault

**Relationship
Violence**

Stalking

**Men's
Involvement in
Prevention**

**First Responder
Training**

Instead, provide valuable information to your students...

These are issues that affect us all. This information is helpful and useful to students of all backgrounds and academic majors.

Worth Your Time?

Absolutely! We are able to tailor presentations to meet your specific needs depending on the academic discipline, material currently being discussed in class, or specific issues of your group or organization.

For more information about the program or becoming a Peer Educator call the Outreach Coordinator at 994-5682 or visit www.montana.edu/voice

Beauty as a Relative Concept

Larry Kirkwood Presentation & Exhibit

Monday, Oct. 16, 2006

MSU Strand Union

Exhibit

7 AM-9 PM

11 AM-2 PM Union Market

Presentation

Ballroom C, 7-8:30 PM

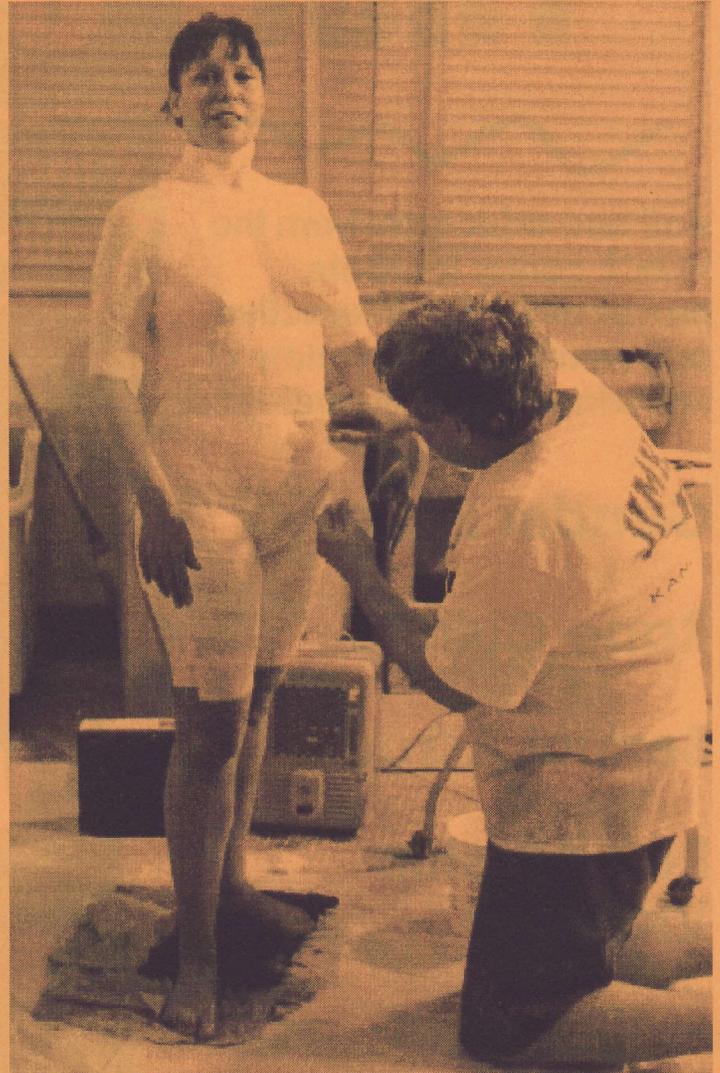
The Body Image Project:

The Body Image Project, started in 1993 by artist and cultural critic, Larry Kirkwood, uses art to show what human beings really look like.

Kirkwood asserts that these finished casts taken directly from people's bodies can change the way we look at ourselves and perceive others.

"It affirms the fact that the way we look physically is okay. If change needs to occur, it is from the inside out and not the reverse," says Kirkwood.

"...people feel that they are worth less as a person if they do not measure up to an arbitrary standard... That standard is based on a false premise and is taking away people's self-esteem, to the detriment of all of society."



Sponsored by: MSU Extension Food and Nutrition, Montana Nutrition and Physical Activity Group, MSU Women's Center, MSU Student Dietetic Association, and other interested partners.

**For more information contact: Lynn Paul, EdD, RD, 994-5702
email: lpaul@montana.edu**

To request a disability accommodation or to inform us of special needs, please contact MSU Extension at the number above.



**MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY**

EXTENSION

Local Women's Resources:

The Network Against Sexual and Domestic Abuse (24-hour Shelter & Crisis Line), 586-4111

Bridger Clinic, Inc. (Reproductive Health Care), 587-0681

Career Transitions, Inc. 388-6701, careertransition.com

Child Care Connections, 587-7786

HELP Center (24-hour crisis line), 586-3333

MSU Police (24-hour emergency), 994-2121

MSU Counseling and Psychological Services, 994-4531

MSU Student Health Services, 994-2311

MSU VOICE Center (Victim Options In the Campus Environment), 994-7069 (24-hour crisis line)

MSU Women's Center, www.montana.edu/wwwwomen, 994-3836

Montana Women Vote! Project, (406)543-3550 (Missoula),
montanawomenvote.org

Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG), 723-7251 (Butte),
252-5440 (Billings)

PRIDE, www.gaymontana.com/pride, 1-800-610-9322

QSA (Formerly Q-MSU): Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender,
Questioning, and Allies Student Organization, 994-4551

Women's Voices for the Earth, 585-5549

QSA (Queer Straight Alliance) Update

QSA is a campus based student organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, and transgender students, staff and community members, and allies in Bozeman. Weekly forum meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday evenings, and a variety of bi-weekly social programs are also held throughout the academic year. Forum meetings provide an opportunity to discuss topical issues pertaining to the perception of sexual identity in the Gallatin Valley, meet others, and become the catalyst for social change in Bozeman. Social programs like coffee and bowling nights offer those interested the opportunity to meet with others that are similarly minded, and help to form a strong LGBTQ-allied community in Bozeman.

October 11th is National Coming Out Day and we will sponsor a panel discussion over the noon hour in the Northwest Lounge in the SUB, and that evening, we welcome Debra Davis who will present the talk "Readers Rainbow: An Evening With a Transgender High School Librarian" in the SUB Ballrooms. On Saturday, October 14th, we will host our first dance of the year in the SUB Ballrooms @ 9:00 p.m. The theme is "Oz: No One Has Escaped. Yet." You must be 18 + to attend and 21+ to purchase alcohol with a valid photo I.D.

All LGBTQ students and community members are welcome at our confidential meetings as well as parents, friends and allies. To find out where meetings are or to get more information about coffee nights, bowling events, and pizza nights, or about QSA in general, contact us at 994-4551, or e-mail us at qsa-msu@googlegroups.com, or visit our website at www.qsamsu.com.

Don't forget about our Fall Sack Lunch Seminars!

Noon to 1:00 p.m., SUB 106E

October 18: *The Intersection of Prejudice and Violence Against Women*

This seminar will be presented by the MSU VOICE Center, the Diversity Awareness Office, and the Network Against Sexual and Domestic Violence.

October 25: *Healing the Whole Person: Five Element acupuncture*

This seminar is offered by practitioner Liz Garen of the Great Turn Healing Center and will focus on this genuinely holistic form of acupuncture.

November 1: *Authentic Feng Shui*

Join Elizabeth Thomas, Feng Shui expert practitioner, for this discussion of the traditional ancient Chinese art and science that identifies and harnesses potent energies.

November 8: *Wellness Chiropractic*

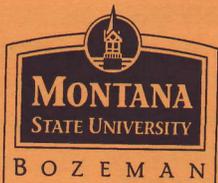
Drs. Justin and Kim Anderson will explain the concept of True Health and how to achieve a better quality of life by becoming informed about all of the body's functions and ways to maximize its potential.

November 15: *The Politics of Breastfeeding?*

Marianne Donch is back with this wonderful presentation about the politics surrounding breastfeeding and the ways in which this practice is undermined by the formula industry.

November 29: *Living With AIDS*

In recognition of National HIV/AIDS Awareness day, we bring you this panel of folks living day to day with HIV/AIDS.



Women's Center

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Return Service Requested