

# Berkeley W Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 2

News and Resources for UC Berkeley Feminists

November/ December 2005

## Wal-Mart & Gender Discrimination

### Wal-Mart does not treat its female employees fairly

In 2001, six women sued Wal-Mart in California claiming the company discriminated against women by systematically denying them promotions and paying them less than men. The lawsuit, *Dukes v. Wal-Mart*, has expanded to include more than 1 million current and former female employees, and was certified on June 21 2004 as the largest class action lawsuit ever. It is now being appealed by Wal-Mart.

In 2001, while more than two-thirds of Wal-Mart's hourly workers were female, women held only one-third of managerial positions and constituted less than 15 percent of store managers. This is all despite women having had on average longer seniority and higher merit ratings than their male counterparts. [Neil Buckley and Caroline Daniel, "Wal-Mart vs. the Workers: Labour Grievances Are Stacking Up Against the World's Biggest Company," *Financial Times* 11, 11/20/03]

In 2001, women managers on average earned \$14,500 less than their male counterparts. Female hourly workers earned on average \$1,100 less than male counterparts. [Drogin 2003]

## Wal-Mart violates Child Labor Laws

An internal Wal-Mart audit found "extensive violations of child-labor laws and state regulations requiring time for breaks and meals." One week of time records from 25,000 employees in July 2000 found 1,371 instances of minors working too late, during school hours, or for too many hours in a day. There were 60,767 missed breaks and 15,705 lost meal times. (*New York Times*, 1/13/04)

Wal-Mart agreed to pay \$135,540 to settle child labor violation charges in January 2005 for allegedly breaking child labor laws in 24 incidents. (*Wall Street Journal*, 2/12/05)

Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell announced that the state found 11 violations in three Wal-Mart stores in the state and that 337 minors worked at the company's 32 Connecticut stores from 2003 to 2005. The probe came after the Labor Department in February said the retailer had similar violations nationwide. (*Bloomberg News*, 6/22/05)

Wal-Mart has also been fined \$205,650 for 1,436 violations of child labor laws in Maine for the period 1995 to 1998. The settlement represents the largest number of citations as well as the largest fine ever issued by the Maine Department of Labor for child labor violations. (*Bureau of Business Practice News*)

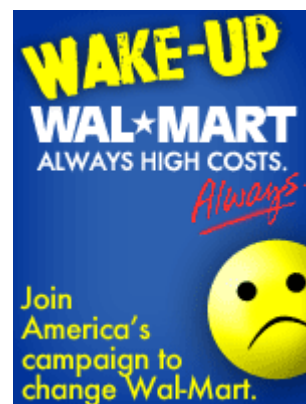
## A Substantial Number of Wal-Mart Associates earn far below the poverty line

In 2003, sales associates, the most common job in Wal-Mart, earned on average \$8.23 an hour for annual wages of \$13,861. The 2003 poverty line for a family of three was \$15,260. ["Is Wal-Mart Too Powerful?", *Business Week*, 10/6/03] A 2003 wage analysis reported that cashiers, the second most common job, earn approximately \$7.92 per hour and work 29 hours a week. This brings in annual wages of only \$11,948. ["Statistical Analysis of Gender Patterns in Wal-Mart's Workforce", Dr. Richard Drogin 2003]

## Wal-Mart destroys the environment


In October 2004, the United States sued Wal-Mart for violating the Clean Water Act in 9 states, calling for penalties of over \$3 million and changes to W-M

building codes. [*U.S. v. Wal-Mart Stores Inc.*, 2004 WL 2370700] The United States Environmental Protection agency fined Wal-Mart \$1 million, settling allegations that Wal-Mart violated the Clean Water Act with dirt discharges while building stores in Massachusetts, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. [*Wal-MartLitigation.com*].



[www.wakeupwalmart.com](http://www.wakeupwalmart.com)  
Join NOW in a film screening of Robert Greenwald's documentary, "WalMart: The High Cost of Low Prices." Date to be announced.

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# News Briefs

Activist News from around the State, Nation, and World

## All Propositions 73-80 Defeated in Special Election

52.6% of California voters said no to Proposition 73 and 42.4% voted yes. What's even more exciting are the numbers in our own Alameda County, the county most Berkeley students voted in. Here in Alameda County, Prop 73 was destroyed by an overwhelming 69.3% No, 30.7% Yes. Congratulations everyone! We all worked incredibly hard to bring a resounding NO ON 73 to the polls here in our county and in our state...and we did it!



## Do UN Peacekeepers Abuse Women?

A new report, *Must Boys Be Boys?* says United Nations peacekeepers sexually exploit and abuse women in the countries in which they serve.

Martin reports that a hyper-masculine culture on the missions encourages sexual exploitation and abuse, and that a tradition of silence has evolved with it. The majority of complaints heard by Refugees International were about expatriate men, both UN employees and others, paying for (or offering food for) sex, and in some cases raping women and girls.

The report's recommendations include increasing female representation among the UN troops and in senior management positions, setting up an independent watchdog organization and mandatory training programs on gender issues, improving access to the UN complaint process, and conducting programs to empower local women in post-combat areas.

## Alito Has Endorsed Abortion Restrictions

Gina Holland, Associated Press

President Bush's new Supreme Court nominee has a clearer track record on abortion and would become a tie-breaking vote in deciding how far the government can go to restrict women's access to the procedure.

It is not guaranteed that conservative judge Samuel Alito would vote to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the court's landmark ruling ensuring a woman's right to abortion. However, he has sharply different views from the justice he was picked to replace, Sandra Day O'Connor, and could shift the court to the right on the issue.

O'Connor has provided the fifth vote to limit government power to restrict abortions. Under her standard, limits that impose an "undue burden" on women must be struck down.

Alito's voting record is more like that of Justice Antonin Scalia, who contends the undue burden standard is hopelessly unworkable. Scalia also would like to overturn *Roe*.

As a judge on the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia, Alito voted in 1991 to uphold a Pennsylvania law that included a provision requiring women seeking abortions to notify their spouses. That case went to the Supreme Court, where justices used it to reaffirm *Roe v. Wade*. O'Connor was an architect of the decision that struck down the state's spousal notification requirement.

Abortion rights groups immediately criticized Bush's choice of Alito, who would become the fifth Catholic on the high court.

"His confirmation would radically transform the Supreme Court and create a direct threat to the health and safety of American women," said Karen Pearl, interim president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America. (see rest of article on [sfgate.com](http://sfgate.com))

## Victory for Human Rights in Africa

EqualityNow.org

Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR), a coalition of groups across Africa campaigning for the popularization, ratification and domestication of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, welcomes the 15th ratification by Togo of the Protocol on 26 October. The Protocol will now come into force within 30 days, marking a milestone in the protection and promotion of women's rights in Africa and creating new rights for women in terms of international standards.

For the first time in international law, this groundbreaking Protocol explicitly sets forth the reproductive right of women to medical abortion when pregnancy results from rape or incest or when the continuation of pregnancy endangers the health or life of the mother. In another first, the Protocol explicitly calls for the legal prohibition of female genital mutilation, and prohibits the abuse of women in advertising and pornography.

## Budget Cuts Would Take 1 Billion From CA Child Support Enforcement

The U.S. House Ways and Means Committee cut 5\$ billion for child support enforcement programs as part of a reconciliation package to be part of next year's federal budget. California, which receives the largest share of enforcement funds, stands to lose over \$1 billion in funding. The cuts would reduce state governments' ability to collect child support for low- and middle-income families. The committee also recommended that states begin charging custodial parents an annual \$25 fee for collection services amounting to over \$500.

## Upcoming Events

### November 16 and 17 – UC Regents meet at Cal

come out in your NOW shirts to show solidarity with other groups.

### November 18 – Hear Cindy Sheehan Speak

Taking on Bush's Wars at Home and Abroad Valley Life Science Building room 2050, UC Berkeley \$10

### November 18 – CR Consciousness Raising Event

The theme: Sexuality  
The place: Cloyne

**November 25** – 16 days of activism against gender violence begins and runs through December 10

### November 30- Film Screening

Come watch the Walmart film at our Wednesday meeting. Bring a friend.

### December 1 is the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual World AIDS Day!

Table on Sproul for World Aids Day.

<http://www.worldaidsday.org>

<http://womenandaids.unaids.org/>

### December 1 is also Lunafest -

Lunafest begins at 7pm in 145 Dwinelle.

### December 4 – Social Event

Field Trip to Thai Temple for brunch and shopping at Good Vibes.

### December 7 – Last Meeting

Please bring something to share for this potluck party to celebrate a great fall semester

## Take Action!

### Easy Actions You Can Take for Women's Rights

[www.Sweatshopwatch.org](http://www.Sweatshopwatch.org)



### Shop with a Conscience This Holiday Season

Take action against sweatshop corporations like Gap and Nike - Buy goods made under fair labor conditions for your friends and family.

- Fuerza Unida is a women's sewing cooperative that makes silk screen t-shirts, canvas bags, and flags. ([fuerzaunida.freesevers.com](http://fuerzaunida.freesevers.com))
- Justice clothing is a one-stop shop with the latest styles – union made. ([justiceclothing.com](http://justiceclothing.com))
- Union jeans- for everything denim ([unionjeancompany.com](http://unionjeancompany.com))
- No Sweat makes sneakers, sox, sweats, camis, yoga pants, PJs, jackets, scarvs, and more! ([nosweatapparel.com](http://nosweatapparel.com))
- Nueva Vida is a worker owned co-op in Nicaragua that makes organic camis & tie dye shirts! ([organicclothes.com](http://organicclothes.com))
- The Global Exchange store in Berkeley on College Ave. Elmwood.

### AIDS/ HIV

Worldwide, about 40 million people are living with AIDS. Of these, about 2.5 million are children. The disease causes the death of about 3 million people a year.

Today over 100,000 Californians are living with HIV/AIDS. Here in Alameda County, there are over 2,000 people living with AIDS.

Please remember to practice safe sex and talk to your partners. Free and Anonymous HIV testing is available at the Berkeley Free Clinic -2339 Durant Ave. – every weekend. For safer sex supplies visit the Tang Center.

Volunteer to stop the epidemic: AIDS Volunteer Clearinghouse –

[www.Volunteerinfo.org/avc](http://www.Volunteerinfo.org/avc)

### Meetings:

*Berkeley National Organization for Women meets Wednesdays at 6pm in 54 Barrows.*

*Women's Rights Conference meets Tuesdays at 7pm in 125 dwinelle.*

Women's Rights Conference is on February, 25, 2006. We need help with: publicity, workshops, website, poetry slam, art, and just about everything! Workshops range from feminism 101, women and violence, how to be an ally, activism, myths, and more. For details contact :[melschep@uclink.berkeley.edu](mailto:melschep@uclink.berkeley.edu).

### Campus Blood Drive

November 14 and 16 in Pauly Ballroom – sign up for an appointment by contacting Ruby Liu at (510) 773- 2402 or email at [liur@usa.redcross.org](mailto:liur@usa.redcross.org).

### How to Contact Your Legislators

Senator Boxer can be reached in her DC office at (202) 224-3553 or her San Francisco office at (415) 403-0100. E-mail: [senator@boxer.senate.gov](mailto:senator@boxer.senate.gov)

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Feinstein can be reached in her DC office at (202) 224-3841, or her San Francisco office at (415) 393-0707. Email: [senator@feinstein.senate.gov](mailto:senator@feinstein.senate.gov)

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
#331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510

## Finals Are Coming...

Remember to take care of your self by getting plenty of rest, drink water, watch your coffee and caffeine intake, eat healthy, exercise, and stay away from the sick. De-stress by

- Talking a walk
- Watch a movie with friends
- Take your frustration out by focusing on an activity that does not require too much thinking like sewing or knitting, instead of on your roommate
- Avoid cramming the night before
- Mediate by focusing on your breathing...

FROM:

*buddhism.kalachakranet.orgMeditations*

Imagine on the crown of your head a lump of gold butter. It slowly melts, and wherever it runs down over your body, all stress and tension disappears. Very slowly the butter flows over your forehead, all muscles relax... It runs down over your eyes and cheeks..., your whole face relaxes. Along the back of your head... your neck... shoulders; feel how much tension is there and let it go.... Arms and hands... the chest, belly.... Along the spine, the entire back relaxes...your legs and feet... The entire body is covered in golden butter and you radiate health. Go over the whole body again and breathe out all the remaining stress.

While breathing out, imagine that all negative energies, mistakes, and emotions leave your body with the breath. Visualize this energy as black smoke, which goes out into space and completely disappears. While breathing in, imagine that all the positive energy of the universe enters your body with the breath. Visualize this positive energy as pure white light which enters each part of your body, it pervades every cell. Enjoy this clear white light. If you feel comfortable, use every breath to inhale light and to exhale black smoke and problems. When distracted by other thoughts, simply observe them without getting involved; transform them into black smoke and breathe them out.

## Editorial:

### Why I Hate the Word 'feminazi'

*Stephani Lo*

First things first. I am a feminist.

I also have a sense of humor. I went to see Bob Saget at Wheeler a few weeks ago, enough said. But I don't think the word 'feminazi' is funny.

I could see why some people would. "haha...it's like 'feminist' except we took the 'nist' and replaced it with 'nazi'". And by some people I mean Republicans and other degenerates.

But I recently heard it being used by a fellow feminist in a women's studies class. She said something like "and I'm proud to be a feminazi." I even heard a few "good for you"s from the class. Wait—did I hear right?

This is not like the word "bitch", which women have made their own. Once used to deride overly opinionated or dominating women, it's now a term that women can embrace. There are good "bitches" and bad "bitches".

It's not even like the word "cunt", which is secretly thrilling to use. 'Feminazi' is the fusion of two distinct words—"feminist" and "nazi".

Combining two words to make a neologism is cool. That's how we got "spork" and "skort" and "brunch", etc.

But combining two words also assumes that the words are on par, that they are somehow similar. Skirts are similar to shorts; breakfast is similar to lunch.

That's why I object to making a feminist similar to the third reich. They are not similar. To say that they are is to deny history, pain, and common sense.

So let's make a vow to not use the "F" word (feminazi). You can laugh at other things. Like when someone leaves the restroom with toilet paper attached to his shoe.

## Mission Statement:

The National Organization for Women is the largest organization of feminists, both men and women, in the United States.

Established in 1966, we represent thousands of committed women in chapters throughout the state. California NOW (CA NOW) is the state branch of the National Organization for Women and works on issues that affect women and girls throughout California.

Our local chapters help feminist and activists to work together for positive change in their communities.

By joining NOW you are automatically affiliated with the state and local chapters, to help you become more informed and active.



**"Feminism is the radical notion that women are people."**

**Cheris Kramarae**

*Thank you everyone  
for making this  
semester so  
successful. We will  
miss you Brynn!*

Preview of next issue:

- Spring Semester Goals
- Vagina Monologues
- Women's Rights Conference
- New Members