

Women eye advocacy agenda

BY BRIANNA BISHOP
STAFF WRITER

Access to health care, pay equity and aging are the most important issues facing women in the county, according to an agenda passed by members of the Orange County Women's Agenda Assembly on Thursday night.

Representatives from organizations in the county and surrounding areas attended the assembly at Cedar Ridge High School to look at issues presented in the draft agenda of N.C. Women United, a statewide advocacy organization supporting equal rights for women.

Those in attendance at the assembly decided on the three most important issues out of the 13 addressed in the organization's draft agenda.

"The agenda assembly is an opportunity for women of Orange County to come together and discuss women's issues, and specifically how they affect the women of Orange County," said Caroline Wood, vice chairwoman of the Orange County Commission for Women.

The assembly was an inviting

way for women to get involved at the most local level, she added.

Wood said women often get diverted by what is happening nationally and forget they have a voice at the local and state levels.

The assembly began with a speech from Ann Johnson, an advocate on issues related to aging.

"To see the kind of cooperative activity of women representing a variety of issues come together and fashion a priority agenda was a very rewarding experience," she said.

Various experts spoke to the crowd about each of the issues listed in the agenda.

After a vote yielding the assembly's top five issues, members broke into small discussion groups, each led by a facilitator. Another vote then was held, narrowing those issues to the top three.

The group's picks reflect new attitudes about the broadening definition of women's issues, Wood said, as well as the belief that women have the power to create change.

A generation ago, not many women thought it was in their

power to effect change in these issues, she said.

But today, Wood added, women are increasingly aware of their power to bring about change.

"I think that so many of the issues we are dealing with tonight are related to each other," said Margaret Barrett, executive director of the Orange County Rape Crisis Center.

The assembly was a great way for people with different perspectives on issues to come together, and provided women with a greater awareness of how they can affect public policy, she added.

Emily Adams, director of education for the central North Carolina chapter of Planned Parenthood, said that the event involved many issues that affect women and families and offered participants the chance to hear other people's opinions.

"I think what's really great about the assembly is it allows us to delve a little bit deeper in the issues," Adams said.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

Southeast savors taste of sensual Latin dance

BY EMILY FISHER
STAFF WRITER

When Jason Laughlin dances the Argentine tango, he doesn't have a rose clenched between his teeth.

"(That's) a ballroom cliché," he said.

Laughlin and his wife, Gülden Özen, pioneered the Durham-based group Tangophilia, which held its fourth regional tango weekend Oct. 9 and Oct. 10.

The ballroom is where Laughlin and Özen started seven years ago, and their affection for the Latin dance grew into the creation of the community organization in 2002.

Originally offering a small selection of tango classes, Tangophilia has expanded to include a variety of public lessons, practices — or practicas — and social dances.

Dances and musical performances are scattered throughout the state and Southeast, all revolving around the dance they love.

"It's so addicting, I get withdrawal when I'm not doing it," Laughlin said.

He doesn't get withdrawal often.

There is a practice or social dance, known as a milonga, almost every weekend, and other Tangophilia events are held throughout the year, some of which occur in the couple's Durham home, known affectionately as Casa de Tango.

During the regional tango weekend, the house was filled with the sound of tango music as dancers, called tangueros, wandered in and out to practice their steps in the house's living room-turned-dance floor.

Laughlin distinguished Argentine tango from ballroom tango and from other Latin and social dances in its improvisational and communicative elements.

Ballroom tango, an offshoot traced to Victorian England, consists of a basic step sequence and is somewhat representative of what the word "tango" conjures in most people's minds — an impassioned

couple with arms clasped forward, striding back and forth dramatically across the dance floor.

"It's only in (Argentine) tango that you have to lead and follow every single step," he said.

The dance itself appears to be a simple combination of three steps: forward, back and side. But a flowing movement is achieved when the man — typically the leader — leads with his torso, and the woman actively listens to the subtle communication to move her feet in time.

Laughlin compared the dance with a conversation, in which both dancers must play active communicating and passive listening roles.

"When you've got that dialogue, the simplest movements become imbued with meaning," he said.

Tango is an urban phenomenon, a culmination of African and European influences. Its birthplace is Buenos Aires, Argentina, though tangueros are found in every major city in the United States, Laughlin said.

Although he doesn't dance himself, tango pianist Mariano Castro said the dance is a creative outlet for those who otherwise don't get to express themselves in such a way.

"It's very close and sensual," Castro said. "Americans and Europeans aren't normally as close."

The sentiment was echoed by other dancers. "The connection between partners is unparalleled," said Asheville native Bruce Boggs.

The opportunities for these connections are growing daily — Tangophilia's events range from fewer than a dozen people to hundreds, and the crowds are always diverse, Laughlin said.

The majority of tangueros in the Triangle area are in the young to middle-age professional demographic, though he said he has seen everyone from teenagers to 75-year-olds.

Both Laughlin and Özen said



COURTESY OF TANGOPHILIA

Jason Laughlin, Tangophilia's founder, dances with a partner. Tangophilia is a community group that offers public lessons.

their goal is for the Triangle to have a network of tango musicians as well as dancers.

Laughlin also spoke of the intimidation many people feel about social dancing.

"Men especially come in with social phobias," he said. "In tango, dancing is manly — the leader's role is fairly macho."

Andy and Farnoosh Brock, two of Tangophilia's teachers, started learning tango for their wedding.

"I was more worried about the dance than our wedding vows," said Andy Brock, half joking.

Laughlin said he and his wife are working hard to spread awareness about Tangophilia and reaching out to younger people, especially college students.

"Recently, there's a young crowd getting into it — it's such a global passion," Özen said.

Her husband agreed, adding playfully, "Why would people not be dancing when they could be dancing?"

Staff Writer Adam Rodman contributed to this story. Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.

Walk raises \$67K for education

BY DAN SCHWIND
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

People from across the state and even the country took part in Saturday's Walk for Education and Race for Education.

More than 3,000 people took part in the annual fund-raiser for the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Public School Foundation, including 210 runners who took part in the first-ever 5K Race for Education.

David Huntoon, foundation treasurer, said that as of Sunday evening, the race and walk had raised about \$67,000: \$23,000 in corporate sponsorships and \$3,000 to \$4,000 in T-shirt and raffle ticket sales.

The exact amount of money earned was not known and Nancy Zeman, chairwoman of the walk, said they would not have the final numbers until next month.

Zeman said the public school foundation began the 5K this year, hoping to encourage more partici-

ipation from high-school students.

"We were hoping to get the older kids involved, and we were successful at the middle-school level," she said. "We also know there are a lot of runners in the community."

Zeman said she was thrilled with the turnout for both events but was particularly surprised by the turnout for the Race for Education.

"I would have been happy with 100 people," Zeman said. "I was impressed with the number of people, especially for a first-year event."

Mike Aldrink of Tampa, Fla., finished first in the 5K event. He said he came to Chapel Hill to take part in the event because he is moving to the area and wants to help out local schools as best he can.

"I always like to do anything I can to help," he said. "This money all goes to a good cause."

Aldrink also said that he would like to work in the area and that he is glad to see how much support the community gave to its schools.

"I'm a teacher, and I love seeing people help out like this," Aldrink said. "It builds momentum. We need more stuff like that."

Jewel Marlowe of Goldsboro said that she was also glad to see so many people come out for the race and that she expected the race to get bigger if it's held again next year.

"I think it's for a great cause, and it's nice to see so many people come out for this," she said. "I anticipate even more people coming out next year once the word spreads."

Last year, about 3,000 people took part in the Walk for Education and helped raise more than \$97,000 for local school systems. Zeman said the foundation hopes to break the \$100,000 mark at next year's event.

"We'll have to see what the thoughts are," she said. "I think this is a great turnout for our first year."

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