Cher Ami:
The Unofficial Newsletter of the JSU Sociology Program
Welcome to the Spring 2016 edition of the sociology program newsletter. This publication is the beginning of the move towards ‘public sociology’, specifically to make sociology accessible to the public and applicable to social problems. In this edition you’ll find student and alumni articles, quotes, art, and a summary of opportunities for involvement in departmental sponsored student groups (The Sociology Club, WISE, and JSU Students for Equality).

We want this newsletter to be valuable to you so please, please, please, share your feedback, suggestions for improvement, and above all else, your WORDS by submitting articles/musings/images (length flexible from a few sentences to several pages [above 10 pages would need to be justified]). The articles may be in the form of papers you wrote (e.g. for a class, or blog) musings (e.g. insights you gained from sociology, responses to specific questions, or a relevant or hot topic; we may share interesting statistics or research within the field, images you create or find that have a sociological message. Finally, a special thank you to all the people who contributed to this issue. We as a program and discipline thrive because of people like you.

Direct any questions/suggestions and/or submissions:
Cher Ami Editor: Dr. Tina Deshotels at tdeshotels@jsu.edu
Centrifugal forces are forces that act as a net. These forces ultimately connect the people of a country. This force can be common cultural practices or even patriotism/nationalism. A current example of a centripetal force in act today is Nepal’s election of its first female president, Bidhya Bhandari. A country unified to elect a woman as president. This in itself is a surprising fete, especially when many countries around the world including our own do not view women socially or politically equal to men. It is quite substantial.

Centrifugal forces are those that controversially rip apart a nation, or at least throw them at odds with one another. Centrifugal forces cause the formation of factions, or in some cases just larger divisions between already established groups. A current example we can see of this in the U.S. is the issue of voting rights. Republican state politicians all over are changing policies and purposefully locking out voters likely of voting democratic. Not only is this probably the highest form of discrimination we can imagine in a supposedly democratic nation built on the very right to vote, it is also a heinous race crime and attack on the poor. We are now becoming a nation truly ran by the rich and the white. DMV closures are posing as a centrifugal force dividing our state and country even further in terms of republicans versus democrats. [If you are not sure why DMVs are important in this argument, Alabama is one of the states that requires certain forms of photo IDs to vote.] If people cannot readily access a photo ID, or they have to drive a whole hour to obtain one, how feasible is it that these people, many who are poor, will be able to? Our numbers of poor are a lot higher than people think. Some people do not have cars. Some people work 2 or 3 jobs and don’t have time to make the trip. The closing of these DMVs was a strategic move against Democrats. If you don’t believe me, check out a map of the Alabama counties that voted democratic in the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections. Now look at a map of the counties with recent DMV closures thanks to our ‘good ole boy’ Bentley. What do we see but a substantial pattern? Now look at a map of the Black Belt counties. How it is that most of the Black Belt Counties (Counties in Alabama with 75% or more minorities), 10 out of 12 to be exact, are facing DMV closures.
Cher Ami: The Unofficial Newsletter of the JSU Sociology Program

Featured Story

Centrifugal vs Centripetal Forces

By Megan Jordan

Are we going to settle for the sad excuse that, “oh Alabama is getting poor, those counties don’t have enough funds to keep them open, because they’re too poor, right?” Well no, even if that case was true, is that ground to take away access to a fundamental right such as voting. Are the poor no longer worthy?

Sounds a lot like the historical issue of literacy tests to vote. Has Alabama reverted back to the “good ole” days of the ‘separate water fountain era’? Are we fine with the poor being marginalized? Will anyone speak up for change? Is voting not vital to Americans anymore? Or should we just unveil the truth that money runs the world now, forget about justice, equality, and freedom.


Southern Food Mart * is currently the fifth largest supermarket chain in the United States. Southern Food Mart employs over 48,000 associates in 518 stores. The company operates in the following states: Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Georgia, and Louisiana.

The goal and purpose of this organization first and foremost is to sell groceries and other household goods for a profit. However, the origination does pride itself on customer service and understanding core values such as friendliness and working together as a team.

One important issue at hand today is how Dixie Grocery's labor force is gendered. The answer is simple; Southern Food Mart is dominated by males in almost every way. Recently, there has been a shift in the roles that women can hold within the stores, but once we start talking about corporate positions, the lack of gender diversity is far too noticeable. When we look at how the differences in gender can affect your position in the corporation, we can distinguish the gender stereotypes by the actual departments. For example, positions such as a meat cutter or an overnight stocker are often held by men. Dairy and frozen food positions are all held by men because it is just assumed that the cool conditions and manual labor of the positions are unwanted and intolerable by women. The seafood department is run by men because Southern Food Mart knows that fish is something that women do not associate with, especially when it is raw.

However, departments where food is actually being prepared, or customer service is heavily relied on, women tend to be more associated and accepted. For instance, the bakery department is the only department in the store that is ran by a woman. Looking back at what Kimmel tells us, this reinforces the stereotype that women are here to do the cooking or baking, while the men handle the more strenuous activities. Customer service is the department that I am most familiar with. Here we see that the male to female ratio is much more even. Regardless of this, the positions within the customer service department also show that certain jobs are set aside for the men and certain jobs are set aside for the women. The women are hired in as cashiers and the men are usually hired in as what we call baggers. This reinforces the roles masculinity and femininity when taking into consideration the duties of each position.

The cashiers stand in one place the majority of the shift and have no part in any physical activity with the exception of picking up a case of water every now and then. The baggers on the other hand, are required to retrieve the buggies off of the parking lot, load customer’s groceries into their car, and take out the trash. Now, the reason Southern Food Mart places men in this position so that women do not crumble like bread from pushing something under 50 pounds on wheels. Baggers are also assigned nightly duties that involve lifting crates of milk and tea, which ultimately is viewed by Southern Food Mart as something that should be done by men because of the masculinity of lifting. (cont. on next page)
Baking and Bagging: Southern Food Mart As Gendered Organization

By Mathew Juricich

Southern Food Mart * is currently the fifth largest supermarket chain in the United States. Southern Food Mart employs over 48,000 associates in 518 stores. The company operates in the following states: Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Georgia, and Louisiana. The goal and purpose of this organization first and foremost is to sell groceries and other household goods for a profit. However, the origination does pride itself on customer service and understanding core values such as friendliness and working together as a team.

One important issue at hand today is how Dixie Grocery's labor force is gendered. The answer is simple; Southern Food Mart is dominated by males in almost every way. Recently, there has been a shift in the roles that women can hold within the stores, but once we start talking about corporate positions, the lack of gender diversity is far too noticeable. When we look at how the differences in gender can affect your position in the corporation, we can distinguish the gender stereotypes by the actual departments. For example, positions such as a meat cutter or an overnight stocker are often held by men. Dairy and frozen food positions are all held by men because it is just assumed that the cool conditions and manual labor of the positions are unwanted and intolerable by women. The seafood department is ran by men because Southern Food Mart knows that fish is something that women do not associate with, especially when it is raw.

However, departments where food is actually being prepared, or customer service is heavily relied on, women tend to be more associated and accepted. For instance, the bakery department is the only department in the store that is ran by a woman. Looking back at what Kimmel tells us, this reinforces the stereotype that women are here to do the cooking or baking, while the men handle the more strenuous activities. Customer service is the department that I am most familiar with. Here we see that the male to female ratio is much more even. Regardless of this, the positions within the customer service department also show that certain jobs are set aside for the men and certain jobs are set aside for the women. The women are hired in as cashiers and the men are usually hired in as what we call baggers. This reinforces the roles masculinity and femininity when taking into consideration the duties of each position.

The cashiers stand in one place the majority of the shift and have no part in any physical activity with the exception of picking up a case of water every now and then. The baggers on the other hand, are required to retrieve the buggies off of the parking lot, load customer’s groceries into their car, and take out the trash. Now, the reason Southern Food Mart places men in this position so that women do not crumble like bread from pushing something under 50 pounds on wheels. Baggers are also assigned nightly duties that involve lifting crates of milk and tea, which ultimately is viewed by Southern Food Mart as something that should be done by men because of the masculinity of lifting. (cont. on next page)

*Pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity
Perhaps the mostgendered aspect of Southern Food Mart’s corporation is their hierarchy. Again, male domination is essential when looking at their corporate ladder. My store is a part of the Birmingham district. The Birmingham district has 12 stores that all operate under the district manager who is a male. Each one of these stores in the district has a store director who is male. When we move past the district manager, we look at the regional vice president, who is also a male. There are 6 regions that Southern Food Mart operates under and all of the 6 Regional Vice Presidents are male. Also, throughout the regions you have what are known as Regional Sales Managers, and Southern Food Mart has one Regional Sales Manager for each department in the store. For our region, we only have one female sales manager and she is over the bakery. The only other regional representatives for my region who are female are the community relations director and the regional finance manager. The Chief Executive Officer for Southern Food Mart and the Vice President of Store Operations are also male.

The rational for division labor within Southern Food Mart is something that is obvious but often not talked about. The company as a whole is not going to come out and say that these jobs are for men and these jobs are for women. However, I believe that the root cause of gender-typing within Southern Food Mart comes from the way we hire. We are not hiring based on one’s qualifications for a position, we are hiring based on whether or not we think this body can perform a certain task. I say body because I feel like the company is basically fulfilling the current needs of a store instead of hiring for long term purposes. I can almost tell you when an interview is being done, that if it is a women being interviewed, she will be either hired into the bakery or as a cashier. Southern Food Mart justifies this blindly, and because it is something that is deemed as normal, the division of labor becomes invisible. Women are placed in these positions of baking and preparing foods because they are constantly being labeled as someone who should already have these skills because they are women. The men are usually put in the positions often deemed as too much for women to handle, and we justify this by allowing ourselves to believe that men are more dominant than women, or that the men are doing the women a favor by performing these manual labor tasks.
Gender inequality is something constantly being upheld at Southern Food Mart. The company fails to break these gender stereotypes because it cannot change something as simple as its hiring process. What is keeping these processes in place is the fact that people are blind to them, therefore they remain invisible. In order to address gender equality at Southern Food Mart, the corporation needs to start at the beginning. When someone is being hired into this company, the last thing that should be considered is whether or not existing stereotypes of that person’s gender is going to affect how well they perform in a position.

The “genderedness” of Southern Food Mart is something that should be addressed in order to improve relations amongst employees and their supervisors. One of their key slogans is, “Three banners, operating as one team,” but to me, opportunities to grow as a “team” fail to exist when some of your key components are being generalized based on their gender.

As a freshman, I vividly remember signing up for an introductory sociology course, that at the time, I thought would be one of the “forgotten” courses I took to fulfill my general education requirements. However, it was in this class that I was introduced to several new phenomena that I was not familiar with before taking this course…. [They faculty are] a type of “professor of the people,” meaning that [they] take complex sociological concepts, theories, and social occurrences, and effectively dissected them by way of text, videos, pictures, course assignments and activities, into a language that even sociological newbies like myself could understand.

Every time I went to class I [was] ….pushed to think critically and outside of what we had been socially conditioned to think…. I made the life changing decision of declaring sociology as my major.  As I continued my academic journey, I continued to see how [the faculty] worked to push the boundaries of learning. This included using the circular classroom method in which we placed our desks in a circle around the class and engaged in an egalitarian discussion with her versus the traditional hierarchical lectures found in many classes. This method and mentality currently informs my teaching practices because this pedagogical decision showed that she did not simply see us as “empty buckets” to be filled with knowledge but individuals who brought knowledge and experience to the classroom and this is exactly how I want my students to feel.

Upon leaving Jacksonville State University and pursuing my master’s and now my doctoral I have come to find that graduate coursework, teaching, and research are not major challenges for me as they are for some of my classmates. This is because [the faculty] worked endlessly throughout my undergraduate career to push me to become a critical thinker who could understand and assess social phenomena from multiple perspectives and apply theories and concepts independently. As a teacher, [they] taught me to enter a classroom each week with the passion to teach, a patience to listen to the voices of my students, a desire to challenge their assumptions, and a drive to recruit more scholars to sociology. As a researcher, [they] introduced me to the intricacies of conducting qualitative research which was vital for my master’s thesis and will be essential in my dissertation work. So, ultimately through being taught and mentored by [the JSU faculty] I have come to know I am an academic who belongs in sociology and a scholar who will work to be an educator that does work that is informed by current social issues, research, and activism.
I remember my sociology classes for “capturing and holding my attention and challenging me to think critically…. [They] encouraged me to ‘think outside of the box,’ but to think about the box as well…. classes were very interactive and… encouraged students from many diverse backgrounds to respectfully discuss a myriad of socially sensitive problems that we face in society today. [I was] inspired to research issues for myself and to locate scholarly articles and unbiased resources…. lectures were clear, concise and relevant. [Professors] were approachable and available, provided clarification when we needed and expressed clear expectations for learning and performance in…. classes.

It has been five years since I graduated from JSU and to this day, I can still clearly recall some…. lessons and continue to use the basis of those lessons in my current professional position in the Office of Diversity at the university of Alabama in Huntsville as well as my previous position working with the Alabama Department of Human Resources.

For more information about career options in sociology see:
http://www.jsu.edu/sociology/careers.html
Sociology Alumni Spotlight:
On to A Career

Ceandra James, Class of 2014
Career Readiness Transition Instructor, Gadsden Job Corp

The sociology faculty have “proven to be both excellent instructors and true student mentors and advocates. [They have] excelled with tactful teaching styles and raised them to a higher level by utilizing expertise, creativity and dedication to their job.....[The faculty have] several strengths, which they use to promote education and creativity within classes. [They] organize and promote events for students and have also showcased numerous guest presenters to the campus.

[The] strongest assets are their attention to detail, positive work ethic, and ability to connect and interact with both the students and colleagues, ensuring employable connections. As a result of the impact [the faculty] made on my life as a student, I myself now teach at the Gadsden Job Corps Center, where I myself use some of the same dynamic teaching styles that [the faculty] used such as; oral communication presentations, problem solving, team building and group project exercises. [The faculty] presented many innovative ideas to further motivate and support student’s development and career growth. Many of [sociology] students now have gone on to earn Master’s degrees and Ph.D.’s due to their encouragement and guidance.

For more information about career options in sociology see:
http://www.jsu.edu/sociology/careers.html
Cher Ami:
Art as Social Commentary

By P. Tank

About P. Tank:  P. graduated as a sociology/psychology double major in 2006. she is a semi self-taught artist by night and an early childhood educator by day. Most of her art is as beautifully random as she is; everything from manga to paintings reflecting my deep heritage. My piece involving Huey, goes far beyond fan art. It instead, extends from the now voiceless souls lost due to inhumanity, through a character best known for his very vocal, very bold, political outcries...
Becoming an early childhood educator some, has sometimes had me questioning my sanity.  But as chaotic and hectic and draining as it can be sometimes, there are some MAJOR silver linings and “wow” moments from time to time. For example, recently I was presented a great moment to conduct an impromptu social experiment on my class through a very unconventional way. This particular day at work had turned sour about an hour before I was set to leave work (...management). I must admit, I was fuming. I did what I could to mask my feelings in front of my students, but I had to remind myself of something I find myself constantly saying to them; *Don’t deny your emotions.*

But what could I do? Throw things? Kick and scream?

Walk out? Although a few of these options were viable in my eyes (and would probably both horrify and delight of my students), I opted to get creative to get my increasing anger out: I decided to conduct an experiment on how emotions are expressed outwardly in young children if given a medium to act as their outlet; the opposite of what I was doing with my emotions. Pulling up YouTube, I searched for instrumental hard rock (yes, it was the mood I was in) and wrote four basic emotions on the white board: happy, sad, angry and scared. I gave them paper and some color mediums and I asked the class to “draw their feelings”. Yes, it may sound cliché, but the results were astounding.

For the next fifteen minutes, every kid listened intently to those throbbing baselines and screaming chords, bobbing their heads and furrowing their tiny brows and, in their moments, they drew and they slashed and they poured out their emotions onto their pages. I then asked the kids to share their work, based on one of the words they related to while hearing the music. What I found most fascinating was their use of color. If a kid said that they were feeling happy while listening to the music, the colors were vibrant. If they noted that they were sad or scared, the colors were darker and there was more white space on the page. As I asked each child to describe their picture, they shared proudly, it seemed, and their expression became cathartic to me.

We as humans, even at a young age, can find the strength to be honest with how we are truly feeling and, express ourselves in a healthy way, given opportunities and outlets in which we could be expressive. They, it seemed, found comfort in their classmates encouragement and hopefully better understood that it was OK to feel the way they were feeling.

This was an interesting look at what we are taught about our emotions; how to view and suppress our emotions (especially based on gender) as opposed to accepting and releasing our emotions in a healthy way. If we can see our emotions and use this to learn about who we are through them and, then let them go, we could develop deeper societal bonds in the future.
Megan Jordan is a sociology major with an anticipated graduation date of July 2016. She is currently a member of Phi Kappa Phi, Psi Chi, and Phi Eta Sigma. She is also the Founding Vice President of the National Society of Leadership and Success here at JSU, an honor society totaling 1250+ JSU students since the society’s charter in 2014. Megan also served as an SGA Senator 2014-2015. Megan’s interests are broad and include environmental studies, media and culture, and race relations. She is currently working with Dr. Erin Rider on an iPad Initiative Study that examines the effect of iPad use in teaching in relation to student performance. Dr. Rider and Megan will present this study this April at the Southern Sociological Society’s conference in Atlanta, GA. Megan is also working on a music content analysis exploring the social problems of sexuality assumptions and messages popular music portrays. Not only are her interests in contemporary media, but also in historical aspects as well; she is also currently working on a study with Dr. Rider and Dr. Lockett on racial inequalities within the Anniston Area regarding the Freedom Riders Bus Bombing just a few decades ago. Last but not least, Megan has partnered with Dr. Tina Deshotels on Deshotels’ previous study, in conjunction with Alumni DaJuan Ferrel (see page ___) on body hair in relation to gender norms, racial norms, and beauty norms. Megan will present this study at the Mid-South Sociological Association Conference in the Fall. In addition to her research projects Megan has also served as a research assistant for Dr. Sarah Donley and Dr. Erin Rider, and very much enjoyed the learning experience and skills these professors gave her the opportunity to gain.

After graduating, Megan plans to take a year off before pursuing her Master’s Degree in Environmental Sociology to travel with her musical group, BlvckLvbel Music Group, doing shows and filming their journey. She also hopes to do a variety of volunteer work during this time, and possibly volunteer abroad. Megan became interested in Sociology after taking Dr. Erin Rider’s Intro to Sociology class her first semester at JSU. Megan was initially a psychology major, but Intro to Sociology blew her away so much, she decided to make it her second, but primary major. She says “Sociology takes all the ideas, behaviors, and problems of the world and puts a magnifying glass on them to say ‘Hey! Here they are! What does this say about our society and culture?’” Megan views sociology as the most meaningful science, one that can cause monumental change in the world and the way we see the world. Megan sees sociology as her bridge to reveal truths and seek change in society to all in all….. make the world a better place.

For more information visit
http://www.jsu.edu/sociology/
I have recently graduated with my BS in Sociology and it was the absolute best thing I have ever done for myself personally. Before I started my journey in Sociology - I had some pretty heavy blinders on..... things were either black or white and that was it. I always felt that things happened because they are supposed to and the bad guys were always bad and the good guys were always good. I grew up believing that boys should play with trucks and girls should play with dolls. The class that changed my life was "Theories in Gender". After learning how "gendered" our society is really opened my eyes and everywhere I go now.....I SEE IT!

I wish that more people wouldn't think of Sociology as "Society's version of Psychology".....it is so much more. I firmly believe everyone should take Sociology courses in order to be a better human being; more caring, understanding, and socially aware of our actions. I am now in Graduate School at JSU for Clinical Mental Health Counseling and I am so glad that my Undergrad Major was Sociology because of all the knowledge I now have of people, group, society, cultures, and norms. Sociology changed my life for the better and I am so proud to be a JSU Sociology Alumni!  

Tricia Nelson
Going into university, I thought maybe I would go into the arts. Study literature, work on my writing, work on my art. I thought I could turn my hobbies into something marketable. Then, I had to grow up. Things happened that forced me to grow up and I realized that picking apart literature to the bare bones like a vulture wasn't going to give me the answers I wanted. Things were bad, and I wanted to know why. Art wasn't going to give me those answers, so I turned to science. None of the natural sciences were going to give me answers. I wasn't going to find out the answers to my burning questions about why the world was the way and why people were the way they were by staring at the (admittedly impressive) cleavage on a chunk of plagioclase feldspar. Lines of code working in computer science or math wasn't giving me the explanation I wanted. I turned to psychology, figuring maybe if I learned why my mind was doing crazy things I could figure out why bad things were happening. I thought by learning human behavior, and diseases of the mind, I could figure out why people did the things they did and why the world was as crappy as it was. My life was crappy, my friends' lives were crappy and the news was full of death, and destruction and corporate greed sucking up natural resources and killing off all the silky sifaka lemurs. To my disappointment, psychology just made me more miserable. Hearing from esteemed professionals, my professors, about all of the therapy and treatment that I had in my future, hearing them talk about the mentally ill as if they -- we, them, me-- were inhuman wasn't exactly uplifting. The theories they lectured on seemed so bleak, and left no hope for things getting better. I thought it would help me understand what was happening to me, and why the world was the way it was. I wanted proof: a reason, some numbers, some data—some kind of proof.

Even though I started out at the university studying the arts, ironically enough my very first class in a college classroom after years of living under a rock as a homeschooler was Intro to Sociology. Just that one class turned me on my head. First, I was offended, then I shrugged it off as one of those things that you just learn for the test and then let it float off. But I kept coming back to sociology classes because they always seemed to be about the things I was interested in. I declared sociology as my minor, and those classes were a welcome escape from other classes because I always seemed to learn more about what I was interested in during those classes and always seemed to come out in a better mood, and in deep thought about things I actually wanted to think about. The homework didn't feel like work, like other homework did; it felt like I was learning things I could actually use. That's why it was an escape: it didn't feel like work. At some point, I couldn't take it anymore. Then, one day, a little voice in my head told me what I needed to do. I got up, left the class and went to the sociology department. I changed my major to sociology and suddenly, things started making sense.

So why study sociological theory? There were so many answers. Answers for everything. Theories upon theories that explained any questions that I could have had about the world. Sociology explained everything where the other sciences, art, therapists, religious counselors and everything else I had tried couldn't. Sociological theory was giving me the answers I to the questions I had, and the peace I needed. To be honest, it wasn't a soft landing but I didn't need a soft landing. It was more like falling to earth face first, but the dirt tasted so good.
Sociological theory turned my world upside down, or maybe it turned it right side up. Even though I was seeing how ugly the world really was, I was seeing it the way it truly was. And the thing about sociology is that it leaves room for change. The theories are all about the systems that dictate our behavior and how we can change them for the better. Feminist theory explained why inequality between genders existed. Critical race theory explained the structural reasons for racial inequalities. Sociological theory shows the world is bleak but also knows that it can change, after all it has changed. Sociological theory makes sense. The things I learn are applicable to life, and I find myself being able to take what I learn outside of the classroom and apply it. Watching movies wasn't just for fun anymore, it was a chance for me to analyze what it meant about society (much to the dismay of anybody who tries to watch television with me now). My job as a sales person wasn't just a crappy retail job anymore--it was a fountain of potential observation and analysis. I didn't feel like I lived under a rock anymore. "Senseless" violence even had a reason (structural influences that encourage violence in order to prove a person's masculinity, for example, is one reason for "senseless" violence). Even if it sucked, at least it made sense. Sociological theory made me feel like I had crawled out from under my rock. I could see the gaping flaws in society, and the lies that I had been taught, through looking at all the theories like feminist and critical theory, research and statistics collected by sociologists. Through this research I learned things like gender is a social construct, there's no such thing as a "welfare queen" (unless you apply that to major corporations and then maybe it's "welfare king") and what I had been taught, what I had unthinkingly absorbed was all wrong. Indeed, absorbing information without critically thinking is all wrong. It is what kept me in the dark. The light outside compared to the darkness under my rock burned my eyes, but at least I could see.
On Friday, January 23, 2015, U.S. District Court Judge Callie Granade ruled that Alabama’s ban on same sex marriage was unconstitutional, and ordered the state's probate offices to begin issuing marriage licenses to same sex couples. For most of the LGBT community in Alabama, this ruling came as a complete shock. There had been little coverage of the case in the news. The joke had always been that we would be long dead before Alabama saw same sex marriage.

Some of us in the Calhoun county area quickly realized that, were marriage licenses to be issued the following Monday at the probate office in Anniston, the couples may need some support. We used social media to put together about a dozen people who were willing to be at the probate office that next Monday morning, just in case. We knew this was not going to be a popular decision in Alabama, and we worried about backlash. We didn't want any couples to experience any ugliness, or, if they did, we at least wanted them to see that not everyone in the area was opposed to their marriage. We wanted them to see some friendly faces.

Alabama conservatives were also caught off guard but wasted no time in mobilizing a response, beginning with an emergency two-week appeal of the decision, so that on Sunday night it was announced that no licenses would need to be issued on the following Monday.

In the two week waiting period we continued to spread the word that same sex couples would need support in our area. What started as a couple of friends soon turned into more than a hundred locals, including not just LGBT people but many straight allies as well. On the cold, rainy morning of February 9 about fifty people were at the Calhoun county probate office in Anniston when it opened, holding signs of congratulations. Unfortunately Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore had issued his own “order” to all of the probate judges of the state, warning them that the decision by Judge Granade did not overturn Alabama’s ban on same sex marriage. Although several counties did issue the licenses on February 9, Judge Alice Martin of Calhoun county did not. Several couples, including Melissa Angle and Vickie Miles, were turned away. So our rally which had been intended as a celebration turned into a protest with news coverage. The nation was watching what was going on at probate offices across Alabama.
Throughout the confusion of the orders and the threats from certain political leaders, more and more people in the community joined us in our fight for marriage equality. There was opposition, of course, in families and workplaces and churches across the state. Many, it seemed, were certain that same sex marriage in Alabama would usher in the end of times. It was expected that people would soon be marrying their pets, or their toasters. The most often heard cry was that “family values” were under attack.

Amid the publicity, Governor Bentley issued a memo to the probate judges informing them that they would not be punished if they decided to issue the licenses. By Wednesday of that week, Judge Martin changed her mind and decided to issue. Once again a group of supporters gathered outside the probate office, this time to celebrate. Several same sex couples received their marriage licenses that day, including Melissa and Vickie, and one couple got married right in the parking lot.

The community also witnessed people coming together in support. Several local people got ordained so that they could perform weddings, knowing that it might be difficult for same sex couples to find an officiant. Florists, bakers, and photographers contacted our group to let people know that they would be happy to provide services for any couple that needed them. Our little group grew to over three hundred. We met new friends. The world didn't end.
Although the U.S. Supreme Court addressed same sex marriage in June of 2015, there are still eleven counties in Alabama which are not issuing marriage licenses to anyone. There are still places in Alabama where same sex couples cannot risk holding hands. Many LGBT people in Alabama are still closeted because of the well-known fear of losing their jobs. A good friend of mine was fired recently from his teaching job when a parent dug into social media and found out he was gay. We're not there yet, but we're a little closer.

I was privileged to attend the wedding of Melissa Angle and Vickie Miles in Alexandria last March. As the minister asked the couples' promise to support his moms realized that family values and support each other. Thanks to the marriage equality ruling, Calhoun county has more families who are better able to love and care for their children. They have some legal protections that they did not have before. For most Alabamians nothing has changed, but for some Alabama families, marriage has allowed them to become official, and to become that much more a part of the community. I am proud to have been a part of the Calhoun County Marriage Equality group, now known as Equality Calhoun. I am proud to be part of a community that will stand out in the rain to support people who want nothing more than the same rights their neighbors have always enjoyed. I hope grandchildren the story of the threats and the hate. little closer.

Jan Bunten holds a degree in pharmacy from the University of Georgia. She worked as a pharmacist while raising her four kids then moved to Alabama to pursue a Masters in History at Jacksonville State University. She is a member of Anniston/Gadsden Pflag and Equality Calhoun. She currently lives in Jacksonville with her daughters and enjoys political activism, philosophy, and generally making the establishment uncomfortable.
The sociology club, under the guidance of Dr. Patrice Lockett and Sociology Club President Alex Burroughs, is working to bring several opportunities for students this semester. They kicked off the semester with a voter registration drive just in time to vote in the primaries. The club will hold other voter registration drives for the general election. In addition, the club is planning several workshops, and field trips. First, starting Monday February 8th, the Sociology Club will be conducting a voter registration drive for students, faculty and staff in Brewer Hall Room 309.

One workshop slated for this semester is ‘How to Write a Resume” and in particular, how to incorporate the skills you learn in your sociology classes into your resume.

The Sociology club is planning a field trip to Anniston to visit the site of the upcoming Freedom Riders Park, the “Other Bus” and other historic sites.

Finally, the club is coordinating students and faculty to attend the Southern Sociological Society Meetings in Atlanta GA on (April 13-16). See http://www.southernsociologicalsociety.org/annual.html for more details.

For more information visit
http://www.jsu.edu/sociology/
For the fourth year, WISE JSU will be participating in One Billion Rising. This global event uses creative endeavors to bring attention to the devastating harm being done to women and girls throughout their lifetime. This year, WISE JSU organizers will be hosting a variety of social justice awareness workshops. These workshops will explore social change and activism using poetry, art, theatrical performance, and self-care. WISE JSU will also host workshops dedicated to exploring the divine feminine, healthy relationships, and address the importance of understanding the dynamics of abuse in later life. For more information about the workshops and to learn how to register- please visit the Women’s Issues Support and Empowerment or the One Billion Rising Northeast Alabama Facebook pages.

About One Billion Rising: “One Billion Rising is the biggest mass action to end violence against women in human history. The campaign, launched on Valentine’s Day 2012, began as a call to action based on the staggering statistic that 1 in 3 women on the planet will be beaten or raped during her lifetime. With the world population at 7 billion, this adds up to more than ONE BILLION WOMEN AND GIRLS. On 14 February 2013, people across the world came together to express their outrage, strike, dance, and RISE in defiance of the injustices women suffer, demanding an end at last to violence against women. On 14 February 2014, One Billion Rising for Justice focused on the issue of justice for all survivors of gender violence, and highlighted the impunity that lives at the intersection of poverty, racism, war, the plunder of the environment, capitalism, imperialism, and patriarchy. For the third year of the campaign, One Billion Rising’s global coordinators chose the theme of “Revolution” as an escalation of the demand for justice, and to build upon the massive efforts of communities worldwide that also looked at the roots and causes of violence as part of their call for justice. On (or around) 14 February 2015, millions of activists in over 200 countries gathered to Rise for REVOLUTION, to change the paradigm, demand accountability, justice and systematic CHANGE. We are rising to show we are determined to create a new kind of consciousness – one where violence will be resisted until it is unthinkable. In 2016, the theme of Revolution continues with a call to focus on marginalized women and to bring national and international focus to their issues; to bring in new artistic energy; to amplify Revolution as a call for system change to end violence against women and girls; to call on people to rise for others, and not just for ourselves.”

For more information contact faculty advisor tdeshotels@jsu.edu,
Like us on Facebook WISE: Women’s Issues Support and Empowerment or follow us on Instagram (WISE JSU)
Opportunity Knocks: WISE
(Women’s Issues Support and Empowerment)

One Billion Rising Workshops:
Feb 12 TBA: The Sustainability of Our Practice: Why Self Care Matters Trace Fleming and Sean Creech
Feb 16 @ 6:00 PM 212 Brewer Hall: Self Empowerment Theatrical Performance by Nicki Swindle:
Feb 17 @ 2:15 PM 330 Brewer Hall: WISE JSU Healthy Relationship Workshop: by Dr. Patrice Lockett,
Dr. Erin Rider and Dr. Tina Deshotels (ends at 3:15)
Feb 18 @ 6:00 PM TBA: One Love Escalation
Feb 19 TBA: Grounding Yourself by Julie Skinner
Feb 24 @ 2:15 PM 330 Brewer Hall: Activism and the Divine Feminine: by Dr. Tina Deshotels
Feb 24 @ 5:00 PM 617 Wilmer Ave Anniston AL: Poetry in Motion: TBA
Feb 26 @ 8:00 AM Brewer Hall Elder Abuse Dynamics
For more information about events visit (and/or like) Facebook page: One Billion Rising Northeast Alabama

The purpose of WISE is to Through education and activism we seek to connect individuals with solutions to the problems we face in order to create a more balanced world where women's issues are addressed, women are supported in their endeavors, and empowered to make changes in their lives and ultimately society.

Members work towards that goal in many ways. In addition, to participating in One Billion Rising, WISE is also, with the help of the JSU Sociology and Social Work Department and Student Affairs, conducting a “Rape Culture Awareness Flyer Campaign” which features several different flyers and posters that educate the student body at JSU about rape culture and how to build healthy relationships. To that end, please help us spread the word by picking up flyers and posting them ALL OVER CAMPUS!! You can pick up flyers outside of Dr. Deshotels’ office (305 Brewer hall).

Finally, WISE also conducted a “We Can Do It” photo shoot with feminist photographer Sean Creech. We will be creating posters to display on campus celebrate all the things women can do.

For more information contact faculty advisor tdeshotels@jsu.edu,
Like us on Facebook WISE: Women’s Issues Support and Empowerment or follow us on Instagram (WISE JSU)
Students for equality is a student organization, for anyone above the age of a high school freshman, who is for the equal treatment of all regardless of race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or any other historically marginalized group.

The mission of JSU students for equality is to promote diversity and inclusion for individuals of all sexualities and genders as well as other historically marginalized groups. Our goal is to help retain and recruit these students while enhancing their experiences through cultural programming, workshops, support groups, education and social events.

We are working on getting a group t-shirt made. For activities this semester we plan on having a few movie nights, a bake sale or two, and possibly an event to tie-die t-shirts (the details are still in the works). All movie nights will be open to anyone on campus. If you have any questions feel free to email Jillian Salas at Jsalas@stu.jsu.edu

For more information contact faculty advisor tdeshotels@jsu.edu or student leader at jsalas@stu.jsu.edu