

# the natural news

Quarterly newsletter of the Australian Council of Natural Family Planning

Tel / Fax: (02) 9452 5244

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Autumn 2003

## Barbara Gross Award 2002 — Dr John Casey

*The following is the full speech of Dr John Gallagher delivered at the Annual Conference in October. In his speech, Dr Gallagher paid tribute to Dr John Casey for his years of service with NFP and presented him with the Dr Barbara Gross Memorial Award.*

At the commencement of my extolling the merits of the recipient of the Dr Barbara Gross Memorial Award to persons who have made an outstanding contribution to the natural family planning movement, and in particular to the Australian Council of Natural Family Planning (ACNFP), I would like to pay tribute to Barbara Gross in whose honour this award was established.

Barbara was an extraordinarily gifted woman, personality-wise and intellectually, a wife, mother, scientist and counsellor. She had a deep love of God and His Blessed Mother. The distinguishing feature of her NFP apostolate was her determination to establish the practicality and credibility of natural family planning. Her scientific studies demonstrating effectiveness of breast-feeding in postponing the return of fertility were outstanding and proved the scientific credibility of the use of natural family planning during breast-feeding. She had fond memories of Bellagio where the LAM was first promoted.

So as to indicate the role of the recipient of the Award for the year 2002, I take you back to *Humanae Vitae*, sections 26 and 27 and to what followed.

Pope Paul VI's appeal to married couples committed to the practice of natural family planning to create an apostolate to teach and guide other couples in the practise of natural birth regulation resulted in the formation of national NFP organisations world-wide. But these were quite different in structure to what had existed before. The post-encyclical national organisations placed the responsibility of NFP teaching and client services in the hands of committed men and women from all walks of life and, largely, away from medical professionals and hospital clinics in whom that responsibility had previously resided. The wisdom and success of such a universal decision for a predominately lay teaching force, I have always



Dr John Casey, Susan Berg and Dr John Gallagher.

believed be one of the marks of the Holy Spirit pervading the NFP apostolate.

Another such mark of the Holy Spirit was the response to Section 27, wherein Pope Paul appealed to doctors and medical personnel to acquire knowledge in this field of birth regulation so as to provide couples with wise counsel and healthy direction, such as they have a right to expect. The outcome is history. Every country produced medical personnel and members of the teaching, counselling and behavioural professions, moralists and theologians, who recognised and then met the educational challenge set by the decision for a lay teaching force, by contributing their time and expertise as resource personnel for teacher training courses, researchers and evaluators, and consultants to the national organisations. The outcome was the provision of natural family planning services of the highest standard. Helped by such professionals, the ACNFP has trained its teachers to give couples wise counsel and healthy direction, such as they have a right to expect.

It might be appropriate now to mention the Australian doctors who answered the call of Paul VI and to whom the Australian NFP movement is indebted.

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from the president

Tom O'Donnell

MY name and face may be new to many of the teachers and members of ACNFP, but my NFP background is that I am a founder member of the Perth centre, which was established in 1968 where I taught NFP at St John of God Hospital before moving to the present office in the heart of the city.



I have only been available to nominate for a position on the ACNFP Executive in the past eight years, and during this time I have served as Vice President for four of these years, and before that I was an active member of the COSP Committee in Canberra representing ACNFP interests.

The 2002 Conference was a great success and I am sure with all the interest and enthusiasm portrayed over the weekend, all of you left with new ideas, and information acquired from the interesting sessions and workshops presented. Notes from the various speakers at the conference will be printed in this newsletter over future issues.

I congratulate the Conference Committee on a great weekend. The program, the venue and organisation of the weekend were excellent.

**Challenge for 2003:** At the 2002 Conference AGM it was decided that we must keep up with technology and the promotion of NFP through the World Wide Web, and so I am pleased to announce that the Executive have decided to launch our own NFP website with each centre posting its own infor-

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Mrs Rose Robertson of Sydney and Mrs Maree Thompson of Rockhampton at the 2002 Conference.

# Looking to the Future

by Saskia Ebejer

The “theme” of the conference speaks volumes about all the aspects of the weekend we spent together. Understanding and learning to face the challenges that we come up against in our work was the thread that was woven through all the presentations, social and spiritual activities.

From both the comments and general discussions of the weekend and later, I believe that we are ready now to see the reality and the difficulties of our work and we are most definitely better equipped for the future thanks to the wonderful program and overall spirit that pervaded the weekend.

From the opening address and the panel of enquiry on Friday night and the Saturday presentations which included LAM, Promotion, Endometriosis, Premarriage and Family Life Education and ending with Mass celebrated by Archbishop Pell, followed by a wonderful meal and entertainment, through to Sunday’s agenda starting with IVF and

then a discussion on the ‘Spirituality of Infertility’ led by Fr Gleeson, I can truly say the weekend sought to fulfil all the needs of the participants.

We were also able to look at the new promotional material, finding that it is testament to the moving forward of our organization into uncharted waters.

The presentation of the new Executive closed the conference and made us realise that changes must occur for us to step into the future.

On a personal note I found all aspects of the conference both challenging and fulfilling and I came away from the weekend with a stronger conviction of my commitment. This has renewed my dedication to the NFP ministry and I know that other teachers feel the same.

Thankyou to the organisers, ACNFP, your dedication to professionalism and your caring for each of us is nothing short of exemplary, you are the reason we will continue to grow and strive towards spreading the NFP message into the future.



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mation. This will be your site so it will be important to promote the site individually informing people who, where and what we are. This should mean a greater increase in client numbers for all in the forthcoming years. Every effort should be made to advertise the website in as many media outlets as possible, perhaps starting with your local parish bulletin.

I wish to express my appreciation to past President Susan Berg for the dedication she has shown over the past four years as President of ACNFP. In her term as President we have seen a new-look newsletter develop under the guidance of Chairperson of the Promotions Committee, Marita Franklin, and her committee. Susan has also spent the past four years as one of our representatives on the NFP Board and was partly responsible for a great deal of the promotional material that we now have. I am delighted that she has decided to continue as a member of the Executive for the next two years.

Launching the NFP Board’s generic NFP promotional material took place towards the end of 2002 with the latest advertising campaign appearing in selected magazines over the next months. Hopefully this will raise the public awareness of NFP. The other promotional material, posters and bookmarkers were also distributed to the centres for your use when promoting NFP in your centres.

It is important to monitor the results of this advertising campaign, so please let the Board know how it is working for you.

ACNFP has a responsibility to continue giving support to the natural family planning teachers. In 2002 the ACNFP Policy and Standards Document was updated and it is planned to update the Training and Resource Manual as funds become available.

As Archbishop Pell stated at the Conference Mass, NFP teachers possibly have one of the most difficult jobs to do.

Hopefully launching our own web site will make us more visible to a greater number of prospective clients and make our ‘job’ easier.

I wish each one of you a happy and successful year. God Bless.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom'.

Tom

## Executive Committee

### *The new ACNFP Executive Committee was elected at the 2002*



#### Tom O'Donnell, President

Tom was involved as a founding member of NFP in the Archdiocese of Perth since its inception, teaching couples from 1968 – 1974. Tom, a retired school teacher and cabinet maker, has kept an active interest in NFP at both local and national levels, serving four years on the Executive and representing ACNFP on the ACSWC-COSP committee for a period of three years. Tom is married to Ann O'Donnell, Director of NFP services in Perth, and is Promotions Officer in a voluntary capacity for the Perth services. Still keen on woodwork, Tom is writing a book on new routing techniques and travels parts of Australia giving demonstrations on the use of the router at various wood shows.



#### Noelle Melrose, Vice-President

Noelle enjoys promoting the good news of NFP in the Central Queensland area. She has been Co-ordinator of NFP at Centacare Rockhampton, and a member of the Teacher Training Committee since 1992. Noelle says she loves the challenge of spreading "the best kept secret" (NFP) to community groups and delivering FLE programs in schools.



#### Susan Berg, Secretary

Susan was President of the Australian Council of Natural Family Planning for the past four years and has now taken up the position of Committee Secretary.

Susan has been involved in the welfare sector since 1984. She has an extensive background in senior nursing positions, including seven years in theatre nursing – in Australia and overseas – and was officer in charge of triage nursing in the Australian Army Reserve from 1979-1981.



#### Evelyn Brien, Treasurer

Evelyn has been a teacher of natural family planning for 21 years and has been the Manager of Natural Family Planning Services, a Centacare program in the Archdiocese of Sydney and the Diocese of Parramatta for just over three years. Before this Evelyn worked as Family Life Education Coordinator and Centre Leader in the Parramatta Centre. She has been a member of the executive of the ACNFP for four years as Secretary and is currently Treasurer. Evelyn has been State Trainer for ACNFP for NSW for two years. She has been married to Michael for 31 years and has four children and two and a half grandchildren.



#### Ann O'Donnell, Chairperson Teacher Training

Ann is the founding member of NFP services in Perth (1968) and has been its Director since 1983. Joined ACNFP in 1974. 1984 - became a member of ACNFP TTC, and was accredited as a Trainer of Teachers 2 years after; then elected Chair of Committee in 1992 & 1994. Appointed ACNFP Trainer for Western Australia, Ann's experience ranges from introducing Programs (e.g. 'Pre & Post Menopause') to specialist programs in the Philippines and Pakistan to assisting with various Research Programs and Publications and too much more! Ann is married with four grown sons.



#### Marita Franklin, Chairperson Promotions

Marita Franklin is the Director of Catholic Communications in the Archdiocese of Sydney. She joined the National Executive in October 2000, as the Chair of Promotions. Since its inception, the Promotions Committee has undertaken the production of *The Natural News*. "I believe that Natural Family Planning is worth promoting and that it has a great deal to offer young single women as well as couples," she said.

# ACNFP Conference 2002



Conference participants.



ACNFP  
acros



Evelyn Brien, member of the Conference Organising Committee.



Wendy Cronk  
of Hobart.



Paul and Felicity Roux of Perth, with daughter Kate.

Dr John Gallagher  
honouring Dr John Casey.





FP Conference brought together professionals from across the country.



Willa Whitewolf, Jan Crombie and Diane Copeland of Port Macquarie.



A perfect opportunity to share teaching tips and stories.



Symbolic passing of leadership – Susan Berg (past President) and Tom O'Donnell (newly elected President).

Special thanks to all those involved in organising the Bi-annual Conference, including the Conference Committee: Susan Berg (Convenor), Anne Nicey, Evelyn Brien, Carole Price, Carol Maher, and Sharon Young. Thanks also to Paul Roux for his invaluable technical assistance.

# Promotions Snapshot

THE National NFP Program promotions from the Board 'SHE'S A NATURAL' is in full swing:

- 1) Ads in *Good Medicine* and *Pregnancy and Birth* magazines.
- 2) 100 magazines with ads in have been posted to women's health and community health centres.
- 3) Posters of ad mailed to each NFP centre.
- 4) Bookmarks of 'She's A Natural' mailed to all NFP centres.
- 5) Stickers posted out to NFP centres.
- 6) Name of logo for NFP Program promotion material to have wording 'Natural Fertility Services' added to all promotional material.

There will be more promotion news in the coming months.

## Feedback on National Promotion Response to *Good Medicine* Advertising

By Angie Knighton

My mind was still whirling with the possibilities and the scope of promotional opportunities available after the excitement of having just attended the National ACNFP Conference in Sydney. The presentation of the new promotional material was very encouraging to me as a newly accredited educator of NFP on the Central Coast. The Central Coast is a largely untapped and fast-growing area with young families, and the new promotional material could only be an advantage to me in my aim to educate NFP to the wider community.

It was very encouraging to receive a call the following week from a young woman who had read the new promotional ad in *Good Medicine* and was able to get in contact with me through using the 1800 number.

My client, who we shall name Sue (not her real name), had been pleas-

antly surprised that she wouldn't have to travel to Sydney for an appointment. The information I gave her over the phone was just what she wanted to hear. Sue had been using the contraceptive pill for 10 years and had "had enough" and didn't like "the way it made her feel". She was looking for a natural method to use to avoid pregnancy. Sue was very eager to make an appointment, which was arranged for the following week.

I enjoyed my Initial Instruction with Sue. It worked out that she had used the last of her pill prescription and was ready to start charting. As a new Teacher it was a very satisfying experience to supply her with the information to empower her to take responsibility of her own fertility. Sue was made aware that all might not become too clear in her charting for a couple of months because she was post pill but she just seemed to be happy and keen to learn, having found a healthy alternative.

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**Queensland:** Terry Bennett, John Simpson, Des Dooley, David Sullivan.

**New South Wales:** Leo McMahon, Kevin Hume, John Casey, John Gallagher, Ron Spencer, Barbara Gross PhD, Harry Tindale, Ken Rawle.

**Victoria:** John and Lyn Billings, Dr Bennett, Jim Brown, Henry Burger, Bob Gallbally, Dr Summerville, Ian McIsaac.

**South Australia:** Graham Anderson, John Kerin.

**New Zealand:** John France, John Crowley.

I come now to the person chosen by the Executive to merit the Dr Barbara Gross Memorial Award for the year 2002. That person is Dr John Casey.

John was born in Brisbane and educated in country convent schools and Downlands College, Toowoomba. He graduated in Medicine with First Class Honours at the University of Queensland in 1956. In 1963, after a long residency at Royal Brisbane Hospital, he went to Middlesex Hospital in London. In 1965, he was awarded a PhD for medical research in Endocrinology by the University of London. He continued further postgraduate studies at the McGill University, Montreal, Canada. In 1967, he returned to Australia as a qualified Endocrinologist and was appointed as Staff Endocrinologist at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, a position he held for 10 years. In 1977, he entered private practice, being the first private endocrinologist in Sydney.

Probably John's most important contribution to Medicine was the development of a novel treatment for acute diabetic ketoacidosis. With colleagues at the Garvan Institute he demonstrated the efficacy of a low dose insulin infusion to reverse this severe metabolic disruption and this has now become established worldwide as the standard treatment for this common medical emergency.

John's close interest in reproductive endocrinology led to his involvement in the NFP movement. He attended the Ovulation Method Workshop held at St Margaret's Hospital in Sydney in 1973, which at the time was the largest gathering of NFP personnel from all over Australia. This meeting expressed the need for the formation of a national NFP body, which eventually occurred with the launching of the ACNFP in 1975.

In the field of NFP research, John was responsible for a research project at the Garvan Institute at St Vincent's Hospital, demonstrating a close temporal relationship between the peak day of the mucus symptom and the day of ovulation as determined by accurate measurements of the critical hormones in the blood, namely oestradiol, progesterone, LH and FSH. The conclusions from this research were presented at an international meeting in Detroit in 1977.

John's range of involvement in NFP has been long and extensive. He was coordinator of the Department of Natural Family Planning at St

Margaret's Hospital, Sydney; a member of the Research and Evaluation Committee of both the Sydney and Australian Council of Natural Planning; a key lecturer at every Teacher Training Course conducted over the last thirty years by the ACNFP and the Sydney NFP Services organisation, as well as a consultant in editing articles in the Newsletter and teacher training manuals. In 1996, in recognition of his long service, he received from the then President, Margaret Frater, a Certificate of Appreciation for 25 years service to the ACNFP.

Not known to many would be the contribution John made to the mounting of a successful lobby by the ACNFP on behalf of the Australian NFP organisations for an increased share of the Federal Government Family Planning Grants.

John, you have certainly merited the Dr Barbara Gross Memorial Award for your services to the ACNFP and the Australian Natural Family Planning apostolate. We present it to you as a mark of our highest esteem for you personally, a sign of our respect for you as a specialist physician who responded to the call of Pope Paul and a credit to your Church, and to mark our deep appreciation of your outstanding contribution to the work of ACNFP. John, with the acclamation of all here present, be pleased to accept this Award, together with our grateful thanks.

**Dr John Gallagher**

# Promoting Motherhood...

*"The mother is like an oasis, she is depended on by so many people for so much. Care for the source. The world is a better place when the source is healthy."*

Being a mother is not an easy task, and these days, adjusting to the world of full time motherhood from the world of work is no mean feat.

Carmen Pedroni, a mother of four who presents regular talks on motherhood, is well aware of the problems that all mothers face, and has put together a program to promote the importance of the mother's vocation.

Her brochure *Motherhood* offers insights into the problems women find in the 'Transition Phase' from the work-force to home life, actually making the Change, and the ongoing issues that mothers face today. She says that in the past women became wives and mothers, and employment outside the home was not an option that was encouraged or one that seemed practical. Now, she says, women tend to establish their careers before they have children, and many who do leave 'the world of work' to engage in full-time motherhood continue to measure their success in devices from the "work world". Result?

A frustrated mother who feels like a second-class citizen.

Carmen's theory on the Transition Phase in itself is worth printing in full:

World of Work	World of Full-time Motherhood
• Boss in control	• You are in control
• Financially independent	• Financially dependent
• Time is money	• Time is free
• Interact with adults	• Interact with kids
* Productivity measured, performance assessed	• Performance never assessed (?)
• Structured routine	• Flexible environment
Indicators of Success	Indicators of Success
• Pay cheque	• Children saying 'I love you'
• Bonuses	• Hugs, kisses
• Performance Reviews	• Feeling happy and relaxed
• Praise	• Having time for self
• Perks – company car, office, travel	• Enjoying being with your children
• Clothes	• Being comfortable with yourself and your choice

For a copy of the 'Motherhood' brochure or for further information, contact Carmen: Lot 3 Lindsay Rd, Mission Beach Qld 4852. Phone (07) 4068-9589.

## Promoting NFP and Motherhood at the Local Level

*Carmen Pedroni is based at Mission Beach, Queensland, and has been teaching NFP for two years. Keen to expose an awareness (at least!) of NFP to as many people as possible, she has sent copies of the following letter to her local GPs. Carmen says that a number of other teachers interested in similar local-level promotions might find this a useful template to work from.*

### Letter to Local Doctors...

Dear .....

I am writing to you to introduce myself and to let you know of the services I am able to provide to women and/or couples in our area.

My name is Carmen Pedroni and I am the Natural Family Planning Teacher in our local area. I have been using NFP myself for 8 years and have been teaching NFP for 2 years. I have personally used NFP both to achieve and avoid pregnancies. I have also used the LAM method whilst breastfeeding to space all 4 of my children.

I am trained and able to help women/couples in the following situations:

- Women who want to monitor their cycle having stopped taking the pill or other hormonal contraceptives.
- Women / couples who are wanting to keep track of their cycle in the hope of achieving a pregnancy.

• Women who are experiencing perimenopausal symptoms and desire a greater understanding of what is going on in their bodies.

• Breastfeeding women who want to use the Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM). LAM can be successfully used by breastfeeding women during the first six months after the birth of their baby.

• Couples / women who wish to avoid a pregnancy and employ a natural method of family planning for religious or health reasons.

• Teenage and pre-teenage girls (accompanied by their mother) who wish to learn more about menstruation and the nature of their own cycle.

I believe that for women to make a truly informed choice regarding their fertility they need to be exposed to all of the options/information. Obviously Natural Family Planning is not a choice that appeals to a large proportion of

women, however, there are many women I think that would greatly appreciate being made aware of its existence and the fact that there is a trained teacher living in the local area.

The service operates as follows: clients ring me and make an appointment. The cost of the Initial Instructions is \$55.00 (includes information booklets and a thermometer). All follow-up consultations are free. Generally, clients need 6-12 months of guided support before they feel confident enough to chart alone. During the initial instruction clients are taught the Sympto-Thermal Method of NFP, which involves charting a daily waking temperature and mucus systems.

Should any of your patients require, or need information on my services I would be grateful if you could inform them of the services that I can provide, and that I am available in their local area.

Yours sincerely, Carmen Pedroni.

## ACNFP SERVICE



www.ozemail.com.au/~acnfp  
email: acnfp@ozemail.com.au  
(02) 9452 5244

### National Toll-Free

1800 114 010

### ADELAIDE

Ph. (08) 8210 8200  
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Ph. (07) 3252 4371  
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### CAIRNS

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Fax (03) 6278 1005

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Fax (08) 9221 3497

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Ph. (07) 4927 1700  
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Ph. (02) 9390 5156  
Fax (02) 9261 3019

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# Condom Woes

Felicity Roux  
NFP Services Perth WA

14TH February: Valentine's Day, and now also National Condom Day. As this deluded logic goes: romance equals sex, therefore on the romantic day of the year, there'll be more sex and therefore surely the responsible thing to do is to remind all male Australians to put their condoms on.

Sadly, this campaign could lead to condom woes for female partners. Recent research has concluded that its sample of sexually active women who were directly exposed to semen were happier. The study divided its sample of women into groups according to how often their partners wore condoms. Their mood was then assessed against their scores on the Beck Depression Inventory. The results were remarkable:

1. 'Not only were females who were having sex without condoms less depressed,
2. 'but depressive symptoms and suicide attempts among females who used condoms were' directly in proportion to how consistently the couple used condoms every time they had sex

The researchers believe that these results are due to the presence of hormones in semen, which are known to affect mood:

testosterone, oestrogen, follicle-stimulating hormone and prostaglandins. Their evidence shows 'that the vagina absorbs a number of components of semen that can be detected in the bloodstream within a few hours of' exposure to semen.

The study does not consider the role of the cervical crypts versus the vaginal walls, and therefore does not consider the use of other barrier contraceptives. Nor does the study consider the situations in which semen is compromised with spermicides or vasectomy.

From a spirit-body perspective, it is worth reflecting upon the significance of semen. On a genetic level, sperm are the summary of a man: who his father was, who he is and who his children might be. Viewed this way, semen is the supreme gift a man can give, because it is himself. A woman's intuition knows this deeply. Whilst the above research studies her psychological side effects of his withholding himself, it does not consider the spiritual impact of how she could be left feeling less than worthy of receiving his gift. Finally, a spirit-body perspective also demands consideration of the final act: semen treated as a nuisance by-product to be discarded, condom and all, to pollute the earth. What repercussions could there be for this?

National Condom Day ... I don't think so.

**Notes** All quotations taken from the Abstract of the study entitled *Does Semen Have Antidepressant Properties?* **Source:** *Archives of Sexual Behavior* Vol 31 Number 3 Pages 289-293 **Authors:** GG Gallup Jr, RL Burch, SM Platek from the Department of Psychology Faculty University at Albany State University of New York **Publisher:** Plenum Publishers.

## ACNFP Website

A note of appreciation to Paul Roux, who has put a great deal of time into preparation of the ACNFP web page.

Ideas for a domain name are being sought from ACNFP members. Please send your ideas for the domain name, and any suggestions you have regarding the site, to the Chair of Promotions (media@sydney.catholic.org.au), any Executive member (see contact details, left), or Tom O'Donnell (tomodonn@wa1.quik.com.au). To view the sample site, contact Tom O'Donnell — website will be online very soon.