

Become a Member of PNFPN

Ever stop to consider what would be possible if more people understood the gift God gave us in our cyclic fertility? If you are excited about bringing knowledge of this tremendous gift to others, please join us. You can share more of your talents by agreeing to be listed in our directory.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Profession or association with NFP: _____
(Clergy, laity, couple, health care professional, promoter, pro-life advocate, etc.)

Are you a member of an organization that provides instruction in NFP?

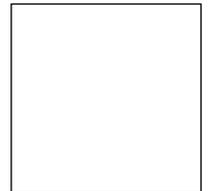
(Archdiocese Family Life Office, C.C.L., Family of the Americas , or other)

Would you agree to have your name, address and phone # listed in a directory for PNFPN members only? Yes No

Any additional information or comments _____

Mail to: George and Eileen Finnin
3842 Lywiski Road
Collegeville, PA 19426-1025

Life Cycles
P.O. Box 220
Jenkintown, PA 19046



Life Cycles



SPRING 2002

The newsletter of the Philadelphia Natural Family Planning Network (PNFPN)

What is the Augustine Foundation?

By Elena Bucciarelli Perri

The mission of the St. Augustine Foundation to evangelize about Natural Family Planning is an important one, especially the work it is doing to educate two key audiences – clergy and OB/GYNs – about this vital information. “The main mission (of the foundation) is to follow the teachings of the Magisterium and evangelize (with) the message of NFP,” said Dorothy Dugandzic, full-time administrator of St. Augustine Foundation. “We mail out books and videotapes about NFP. I travel to all the NFP conferences around the country. We usually have a display table there for the St. Augustine Foundation. We teach Natural Family Planning.” John Fitzgerald, a pro-life lawyer in Yonkers, N.Y., established the nonprofit organization about six years ago, Dugandzic said. The foundation reached out to clergy and OB/GYNs by sponsoring a conference for them last November in New York. “We wanted to try to get the clergy and the OB/GYNs to work closer together on the issue of Natural Family Planning,” she said. “The people in attendance were representatives from a variety of pro-life organizations from the tri-state area— New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. A

lot of them didn't know a lot about NFP and came to learn more about it. We had several priests speaking; we had speakers from all over the country. We had several OB/GYNs also speak.”

Some of the topics included Theology of the Body, Creighton Medical Model of NFP, How the Clergy and OB/GYNs Can Work Together and Effectiveness of NFP Methods. Approximately 70 people attended the conference, which was held at Church of Our Savior in Manhattan.

One unique aspect of the foundation is its ability to provide free videotapes or audiotapes of the conference and other NFP educational materials to clergy and OB/GYNs. “A lot of things that go on with NFP around the country are all voluntary,” Dugandzic said. “There's a lack of money in many of these organizations, and I think we're just fortunate at this point to be able to finance some of this. I already see some of the fruits coming in from getting some of this (material) out on a complimentary basis. We had on the back of the brochure a whole list of complimentary materials available to OB/GYNs and clergy. I got quite a few requests for all those materials, so it's just another way to get the materials out there, which a lot of organizations aren't able to do financially, to distribute them for free.”

She noted that the information is being disseminated at a faster pace because it's being offered complementarily. Feedback

A Message from your President:

I finally saw that ad. It was 9:45 on a Sunday evening, during the commercial break for the Winter Olympics. You know which one I'm talking about. The young, healthy-looking, upwardly mobile couples in romantic scenes without children exhibiting various courtship behaviors. The music is playing in the background as the voice-over says “If you're going to be on the Pill, isn't it better to take the one that gives you clear skin?”

This ad is obviously targeting young single women, especially teens with their concern over facial blemishes. While the commercial's narration does mention some of the untoward effects of hormonal contraception, the camera and music beckons provocatively.

Ahh, if only.... If only the PNFPN had a couple of million dollars. Excuse me while I muse.

The music playing in the background is from the pop group DB Boulevard. The female vocalist is singing “There's a better way, a better point of view”. Young, healthy, obviously married couples, many with children, are shown in a variety of family scenes. The voice-over asks “Tired of fighting your fertility as if it were a disease? Want to live in harmony with your body? Want to have the best

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Life Cycles

The newsletter of the Philadelphia Natural Family Planning Network (PNFPN)

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PNFPN logo: Elena Cippola

Life Cycles is planned as a quarterly publication. Articles may be submitted to Barbara Rose at PNFPN P.O. Box 220, Jenkintown, PA 19046, Phone: 215-885-8760
www.PNFPN.org.

Life Cycles can be viewed online at www.pnfpn.org

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Welcome New Members

Carl & Joanne Fritz - West Chester, PA

What is the Augustine Foundation?

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about the conference was very positive, Dugandzic said. "Everyone was very happy," she said. "It was probably the first NFP conference of its nature and of its size in (our) tri-state area. No one has ever attempted it before; I don't really know why. A lot of priests who came were very happy that they could just network with other priests who feel the same as they do about this issue. They were happy about the support."

The conference also helped educate people from pro-life organizations about NFP. "I don't think they saw the real importance of promoting NFP in connection with the whole abortion (issue)," Dugandzic said. "A lot of them are working with anti-abortion groups, but contraception is really the underpinning of all that stuff. They were enlightened to see that they need to go home and do something about the contraception issue, too."

The foundation plans to continue distributing video/audiotapes and hold an annual NFP conference. Dugandzic said another goal is to create a newsletter as a way to stay connected with conference participants. "We're very interested in trying to outreach to medical people, doctors and nurses, to try to get more of them trained, especially in the medical model of NFP in this tri-state area," she said.

For more information about the St. Augustine Foundation, call 1-877-554-4637 or send an e-mail to: augustinfp@hotmail.com.

A Message from your President

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possible family planning available with no drugs, no harsh chemicals, no life threatening side effects? Call the Philadelphia Natural Family Planning Network. Get healthy. Get off the Pill."

Sure it's pie in the sky. Or should I say heavenly? But is it really that unattainable? And who is to say it cannot happen if we inspire the right people. Keep promoting NFP, keep building this network with dedicated members, and above all, keep praying. With God, all things are possible.

Sincerely,



Letters

Dear PNFPN,

With the arrival of each edition of Life Cycles comes the reminder to myself to send a note to you. I want to congratulate you on the superior quality of the newsletter and for the work that you do in promoting NFP. I profoundly believe, as the Billings have suggested, that NFP is "knowledge that every woman ought to have" to promote her own health and well-being. I always read (Life Cycles) cover to cover because it is just so good! Keep up the outstanding work!

Sincerely,

Linda Lewis, Quakertown

Membership Profile

As promised in our last issue, we are sharing with you our interview with Dr. Brigida de Guzman-Cam, the second obstetrician/ gynecologist in the Philadelphia region, to declare her practice NFP-only. Dr. de Guzman-Cam is a 1962 graduate of the University of St. Thomas in the Philippines and has practiced medicine for 34 years. She currently practices at Delaware County Memorial Hospital.

Life Cycles: We understand that you are new to an NFP-only practice. Would you share your conversion story with us?

Dr. de Guzman-Cam: I'm new to the NFP-only practice. Yes. It took me several years to convert to an NFP-only practice. My conversion took place in St. Rita of Cascia on Broad Street in Philadelphia, during her feast celebration. I hadn't been to St. Rita's and I always wanted to go, and Dr. Tiongson, my colleague, asked me to accompany her. They were having a confession at the time, and so I went. I told the priest that I was an ob/gyn and that I still prescribed oral contraceptives. You should have heard this priest. He really yelled at me. Thank God, the confessional was really private, and I don't think anyone else heard it. He then asked me why I couldn't stop prescribing and didn't I know that it causes (chemical) abortions and everything else. I said yes, I do. I was afraid of not prescribing because I am afraid of losing patients. It was quiet for a few seconds and then he said: "So you are honoring the mighty dollar, instead of the Almighty God." And that really hit me. I said "You're right, that's what I'm doing." He then said "I cannot really absolve you unless you promise me that you will stop prescribing the Pill." Fear really struck me and I thought to myself "I'm really going to hell now." Then I thought, "Okay, I really have to promise and I have to do it now". So I said yes, I would stop. The next day, I told my staff no more oc (oral contra-

ceptive) prescriptions from here on. Ever since I have not prescribed it unless it is for medical reasons, such as endometriosis.

Life Cycles: What have your confessors told you in the past?

Dr. de Guzman-Cam: They always told me that I am sincerely sorry for my actions and that there would be a day that I would get the courage to completely stop. They were encouraging, they were supportive of my slow conversion, and they would always absolve me. It got to the point though, that I knew that I would only be in the state of grace for a few hours, because the next day in my office there would be a patient requesting a prescription. That was a bad thing. But every time I confessed it the priests were very supportive.

Life Cycles: What did the insurance company say when you informed them that you would no longer prescribe contraceptives?

Dr. de Guzman-Cam: I did not have to inform the insurance company of my decision. However in the process of the sale of my practice, and to be employed by the hospital, I told them that I had become completely pro-life. I do not prescribe any form of contraception, mechanical or chemical (oral or injection), and I don't perform tubal ligations and don't perform abortions. It was not a problem for them. They said I could practice the way my conscience dictates.

Life Cycles: Do you practice alone or with any partners?

Dr. de Guzman-Cam: I'm a solo practitioner. I don't have any partners. I will be sharing an office with another obstetrician/ gynecologist come March 28 this year. This doctor is not an NFP-only physician, he will be prescribing pills and other forms of contraception. However I have made sure that there won't be any advertisements regarding contraception in

the office. It will appear as an NFP office. He can only give out his contraception pills during his office time.

Life Cycles: What do you say to new patients who ask you to prescribe the Pill for them?

Dr. de Guzman-Cam: I inform them of the fact that oral contraceptives do not completely stop ovulation. Fertilization can still occur and oftentimes, implantation (of the fertilized ovum) may not. So in the process of taking the oral contraceptives on a regular basis, chemical abortions are possible. For that reason I do not prescribe the birth control pill.

Life Cycles: What are some of the pressures facing Catholic medical students if they declare that they too wish to practice without prescribing contraceptives?

Dr. de Guzman-Cam: They will have a lot of pressure from patients who will say that the decision to take ocs and other forms of contraception is really on them and that they have to deal with God directly. They will argue that the physician only has to perform his medical duties to assist the patient with her decision.

Life Cycles: How do you think we can support NFP-only physicians?

Dr. de Guzman-Cam: Life Cycles can help support NFP-only physicians by spreading the word.

Life Cycles: Why did you join the PNFPN?

Dr. de Guzman-Cam: To be with people with the same view, so I can stay the proper course.

Dr. de Guzman-Cam's office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 am to 2 pm Wednesday from 1 pm to 6 pm

To make an appointment call (610) 626 - 7534

Home monitoring of urinary hormones. Can it assist couples that use NFP?

By Mary Schneider, RN

The fact that a woman is fertile for a limited number of days is getting increased attention now with the advent of new technology. There appear to be a number of products and devices available that claim to be able to detect the fertile window of a woman's reproductive cycle. Ads in popular magazines are touting the wonders of identifying the fertile phase of a woman's cycle and market it specifically as the answer to a sub fertile couple's dreams. Are these home monitoring products all they are cracked up to be? And should couples throw their NFP charts out the window and let the computerized devices do all the calculating for them?

Before answering any of these questions, it is important to keep one thing in mind. No home fertility- monitoring product used by itself has been proven as an effective method to avoid a pregnancy. In the US, the FDA has only approved of products that aid in achieving pregnancy. However, if a device can detect the "fertile window" to achieve pregnancy, then why can't it also be used to postpone or avoid pregnancy? Indeed, some products are finding their niche as an additional fertility indicator for couples who wish to space the births of their children. While there are a number of products being researched and marketed world wide, this article will focus only on urinary hormone monitoring and specifically on the products that are commercially available in the United States.

Home urinary monitoring technology was the direct result of research by the World

Health Organization in the 1970's. Scientists discovered that the hormonal byproducts of urinary oestrone-3-glucuronide (E3G) and urinary LH (lutinizing hormone) were present in the urine during ovulatory cycles (WHO, 1983). So confident were the researchers with their findings that they even declared E3G to be quantitatively "the most important parameter" in predicting the start of the fertile window. (Adlercreutz, 1982)

The first product, introduced to the market was the luitinizing hormone (LH) home monitoring kit or ovulation detection kit. These kits are comprised of test strips that change color in a urine sample that contains LH. They are sold in either packages of five or ten strips and are available at most major drug stores without a prescription for around \$20-40. Researchers have found that, when LH occurs in the woman's urine, ovulation can be expected within the next 36 hours +/- 30 minutes (Zinnaman, 2001). The couple wishing to achieve pregnancy then times their marital relations to occur when LH is detected in the woman's urine.

While the product is marketed to couples wishing to achieve a pregnancy, it is assumed that they have little or no knowledge of NFP. The package insert gives instructions to assist the couple to test during the fertile phase by using a calendar rhythm formula.

The only FDA approved fertility monitor available in the United States today is the ClearPlan Easy Fertility Monitor (CPEFM). Unipath Diagnostics Co. in Princeton, New Jersey manufactures the CPEFM with its home office in England (www.clearplan.com).

While the CPEFM can detect the LH in a woman's urine sample, it also detects the E3G in women with cycle lengths of 21-42 days. It utilizes disposable urine sticks which are read by the monitor that is roughly the size of a Palm Pilot. The

monitor costs around \$200 and the average cost per months of test sticks is \$18.

Every day the woman turns the monitor on and it will show her if she needs to test or not. Initially it will ask for a test on the 6th day of the cycle and every morning after until the LH is detected. The woman can expect to test between 10-20 days each cycle. A first morning urine sample is required and the woman will either hold the test strip in the urine stream (for no more than 3 seconds) or she can collect the urine and dip the test stick. She then caps the stick and puts it in the machine and waits about five minutes for the monitor to read the stick and determine if E3G or LH is present. If E3G is present the monitor will show "high" and when it detects LH it will show "peak fertility". The monitor is very user friendly and allows the woman a six hour window of testing time, three hours on either side of the time from when she first set the monitor on the first day of her cycle. Because the monitor has a memory chip, it will tailor its request for test strips according to past cycles. Thus it will ask for a test before or after day 6 depending on whether the woman has a short, long or regular cycle.

A group of German scientists looked at the effectiveness of the CPEFM in detecting ovulation in a population of normal and healthy women. They compared the monitor readings with transvaginal ultrasonography and blood hormone measurements. (Behre, et. al., 2000). Fifty-six women between the ages of 18-39 participated in this study. 149 cycles were collected from the women, and 135 of them detected peak fertility by the CPEFM. Of those 135 cycles, "ovulation never occurred before the CPEFM peak fertility." In 91.1% of the cycles, ovulation occurred during the two days of the CPEFM peak fertility and in 97% of the cycles, it occurred during the two days of peak fertility plus the one following day of high fertility. In about 76% of the cycles, ovulation was confirmed by ultrasound

on the second day of peak fertility.” (Behre, et. al.,2000).

At Marquette University, College of Nursing, Institute for NFP Dr. Richard Ferhing is comparing the results of the CPEFM to mucus signs. Couples eligible to participate in the research are those who have chosen to avoid or space their next pregnancy for one year. The goal of the study is to analyze data from 250-300 couples, specifically looking at the effectiveness of the CPEFM in conjunction with cervical mucus monitoring in aiding couples to avoid pregnancy.

As a NFP practitioner and research assistant, it has been my experience that the additional objective measure of urinary hormones helps to decrease a couple's anxiety. Couples who exhibit anxiety the most are those who have “grave and serious reasons” to avoid a pregnancy. We recently had a couple in this situation who were in their mid 30's with three children. The wife was found to have breast cancer and underwent surgery. She was informed by every physician familiar with her case that she had to be placed on hormonal contraceptives during her 5 year treatment with Tamoxifen. (Tamoxifen is a drug which severely disrupts the mucus pattern and causes severe birth defects). As the couple had been using NFP before to space children, they thought they would have to abstain from marital relations for the next 5 years. They were referred to the Institute for NFP by a NFP-only physician and were instructed in the use of the CPEFM and the Marquette Model of NFP. They are now very confident with identifying the fertile window and have not become pregnant during her cancer treatment.

The CPEFM, as expected, has proven useful in cases of pregnancy achievement. Couples usually in their mid 30's are often referred to the Marquette University, College of Nursing, Institute for NFP because they wish to achieve a pregnancy.

One woman that was referred to us was experiencing approximately 14 days of mucus before her peak in each cycle. After learning to use the CPEFM, this woman was able to narrow the number of days in her fertile window. The couple more accurately pinpointed the time when they were most likely to conceive. After just two months of charting using the CPEFM, the woman became pregnant and gave birth to a healthy baby girl.

There have been anecdotal reports in the literature of couples discontinuing the use of NFP after their desired family size. As the woman gets closer to her perimenopausal time, she may become less confident in her ability to identify the fertile phase of her cycle. If with further research, the CPEFM proves to be a reliable indicator during this time of a woman's life, it may even motivate couples to continue using a natural method of family planning throughout their reproductive years.

Urinary hormone monitoring certainly hasn't replaced NFP charting but it appears to be valuable adjunct in determining the fertile window. Advertisements for ovulation detection kits and the CPEFM only contributes to the lay public's understanding that the fertile phase of a woman's cycle is recognizable. It is hoped that further research and increased awareness on the part of the general public will place natural methods of birth regulation in better light with the medical community and family planning advocates.

About the writer:

Mary Schneider received her BSN from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and completed the NFP Practitioner and Educator program through the Pope Paul VI Institute. She currently teaches couples the Marquette Model of NFP through the Marquette University, College of Nursing, Institute for NFP.

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- Behre, H.M., Kuhlage, J., Gabner, C., Sonntag, B., Scheim, C., Schneider, H.P.G. and Neischlag, E., (2000) Prediction of ovulation by urinary hormone measurements with the home use ClearPlan® Fertility Monitor: comparison with transvaginal ultrasound scans and serum hormone measurements. *Human Reproduction* 15:12:2478-2482.
- Wilcox, Allen J., Dunson, David and Baird, Donna Day. (2000) The timing of the “fertile window” in the menstrual cycle: day specific estimates from a prospective study. *BMJ*, 321:1259-1262
- Zinaman, Michael (March, 2001) Clearplan, Persona and High Tech Fertility Monitoring, presented at the 21st Century Natural Family Planning Conference. Milwaukee Wisconsin.
- (Dr.Zinaman is a Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Director of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility, Loyola University, Chicago)

The "Net" works

FERTILITY APPRECIATION CLASSES SCHEDULED

A mother/daughter fertility appreciation class is scheduled for March 12, 2002 at the Sacred Heart parish located at 4th and Jasper Street, Camden, NJ. The program focuses on the change that adolescence brings and it offers moms and their daughters a chance to hear the Catholic viewpoint regarding the gift of fertility. Please call Mary Ann Chezick at (856) 756 - 7900 ext. 6314 or email : camden-njnfp@cs.com

NFP CLASSES SCHEDULED

Pennsylvania

March 6, 2002; Orelan, PA

The Family of the Americas will sponsor a class in the Ovulation Method of Natural Family Planning at 7:30 PM. After initial introductory class, private counseling available with certified instructors. For more information please call (215) 885 - 8766

March 7, 2002; Wynnewood, PA

A Sympto-Thermal Method NFP class by the Philadelphia Family Life Office will be held at St. Charles Seminary, Overbrook, PA. For directions and registration call the Philadelphia Family Life Office at (610) 660-9002.

March 8, 2002; Media, PA

A Sympto-Thermal Method NFP class sponsored by the CCL will be held at the Nativity BVM parish in Media. This is a series of four classes with additional dates of April 5, May 3 and May 31. Classes begin at 7:00pm. Call Joe and Maria Hare at (610) 544 - 2349.

March 22, 2002; Paoli, PA

A Sympto-Thermal Method NFP class sponsored by the CCL will be held at St. Norbert Parish in Paoli. This is a series of four classes with additional dates of April 19, May 10 and May 31. Classes

begin at 7:00 P. M. Call Michelle or Chris Szupica at (610) 408 - 8447.

April 3, 2002; Huntington Valley, PA
A Sympto-Thermal Method NFP class by the Philadelphia Family Life Office will be held at Holy Redeemer Hospital. For directions and registration call the Philadelphia Family Life Office at (610)660-9002.

April 23, 2002; Philadelphia, PA

A Sympto-Thermal Method NFP class by the Philadelphia Family Life Office will be held at Nazareth Hospital. For directions and registration call the Philadelphia Family Life Office at (610)660-9002.

April 24, 2002; Orelan, PA

The Family of the Americas will sponsor a class in the Ovulation Method of NFP at 7:30 pm. After the initial introductory class, private counseling will be available with certified instructors. For more information please call (215) 885-8766..

May 2, 2002; Langhorne, PA

A Sympto-Thermal Method NFP class by the Philadelphia Family Life Office will be held at St. Mary's Hospital. For directions and registration call the Philadelphia Family Life Office at (610)660-9002.

June 7, 2002; Wynnewood, PA

A Sympto-Thermal Method NFP class by the Philadelphia Family Life Office will be held at St. Charles Seminary. For directions and registration call the Philadelphia Family Life Office at (610)660-9002.

New Jersey

The following classes listed are sponsored by the Camden Diocese. Each course is taught in a series of four classes spaced about one month apart. A complete set of materials is available at the first meeting and pre registration is requested. Infants are welcome. For information call: (856) 756 - 7900 ext. 6315 or email: camdenjnfp@cs.com

Thursday, March 21 in Vineland, NJ; 7 - 9:30 PM

Thursday, June 13 in Wildwood, NJ; 7 - 9:30 PM

Kudos

To George and Eileen Finnin for spending their Tuesday night photocopying, folding, and stapeling over 100 Life Cycles newsletters and PNFPN directories.

To our founding members who developed the PNFPN physician brochure entitled *NFP, safe, healthy, effective*. In February, this very brochure was selected by Mr. Steve Koob of One More Soul to be distributed to over 1700 women at a conference in Cincinnati.

Volunteer Opportunities

The PNFPN:

Volunteers needed for booths at the following events.

Mind Body Spirit Expo's evening with Dr. Andrew Weil at the Marriott Hotel, Philadelphia April 18, 2002

Human Life International Convention at the Marriott (Airport) on May 24 - 26, 2002

Please call Barbara Rose at (215) 884 - 2922 if you can assist.

Seeking a coordinator for the NFP information line. Duties include updating PNFPN phone receptionists with NFP class information and arranging their on call schedule every three months. Please call the information line at (215) 885 - 8766 .

Seeking staff writers for feature articles and interviews in its official newsletter, Life Cycles. If you believe you can assist in this ministry, please call the information line at (215) 885 - 8766 .

Seeking assistance in web design for PNFPN site. If you have this experience please contact Barbara Rose at (215)

884 - 2922 or e-mail at barbararose@acninc.net

Seeking volunteers to assist with mail lists. Candidates must be computer literate but we will provide training in the use of Microsoft ACCESS or compatible program for data management. Please call George Finnin at (610)489-4940 or e-mail to gfinnin@icdc.com.

The Family Life Office of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia:

Seeking volunteers to be trained as instructors of NFP, especially those with Spanish language skills. Also in need of couples to give positive witness to marriage preparation groups. For both of these ministries please call Lisann Castagno at (610) 660 - 9002

The Diocese of Camden:

Seeking volunteers for their Diocesan/ Parish Pre-Cana teams and for their Mother-Daughter/Father-Son Fertility Appreciation Programs. If you'd be willing to donate a few hours a year, please call Mary Ann Chezik at (856) 756 - 7900, ext. 6314.

Opportunities for Education and Training

Events sponsored by the CCL:

Physician Seminar in Cincinnati, Ohio

with 11.25 Continuing Medical Education Credits March 15 -17, 2002.

Clergy Seminar in Cincinnati, Ohio April 2 - 4, 2002.

Contact Ginny Niehaus for both events at: (513) 471 - 2000

The Couple to Couple League Convention will be held June 23 - 26 at the St. Gregory's University in Shawnee, Oklahoma. See the website:www.CCL2002.com.

Events sponsored by the Billings Ovulation Method Association - USA:

NFP Teacher Training at the following dates and locations:
April 3 - 10 in Atlanta, GA
May 1 - 5 in St. Cloud, MN

For more information, please contact Sue Ek (651) 699-8139 or boma-usa@msn.com

Events sponsored by the Family of the Americas:

Ovulation Method NFP Instructor training course in Oreland, Pennsylvania will begin April 3, 2002. This six week course will be held on Wednesday nights from 7:30 to 9:30 PM. For further information and registration call Barbara Rose at (215) 884 - 2922

Our Ongoing Appeal

God bless you for your generosity

\$ 5 \$ 10 \$ 15 Other: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please send your contribution to PNFPN, P.O. Box 220, Jenkintown, PA 19046. The PNFPN is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization.