



Betty Friedan, author and feminist, told ERA ratifiers she's angry at Florida's rejection of the ERA and will "do what needs to be done" to see that it's passed.

Equal rights

Vision of the past; focus for the future

By SHIRLEE IDEN and LOUISE OKRUTSKY

It may have rained on their parade, but 2,000 delegates to the NOW (National Organization For Women) national convention came to Detroit with purposeful goals and stuck with them undaunted by the weather or the detractors.

A cold, pelting rain fell as about 1,000 women and male feminists gathered in Detroit's Grand Circus Park and marched the half-mile to Kennedy Square.

With a decade of image building and growing behind them, this convention chose to focus sharply on the battle for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).

"Hey, hey, ratify the ERA," they chanted, and then gathered round to hear the luminaries of their movement—Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, former Congresswoman Martha Griffiths, and NOW President Karen DeCrow.

"Ladylike tactics are at an end," Ms. Friedan said. "States are having elections in 1978 and we will campaign to defeat legislators who voted against ERA."

ERA HAS BEEN ratified already by 35 states and requires the approval of three more before 1979 in order to become part of the Constitution.

Ms. DeCrow pointed out that NOW members today are united in their belief that political action is necessary to fight the battles of the feminist movement.

Ms. Friedan agreed that the movement is now unified.

"Our disagreements are with the busloads of people coming in here to disrupt our ERA rally," she said prophetically at an early morning press reception.

She lashed out at Phyllis Schlafly, the leader of HOW (Happyness of Women) an opposing group. "Make your husband think he's a great guy and a wonderful man even if you know he's a schmuck. That's what Mrs. Schlafly would have you do," she said.

Ms. Friedan also criticized the media's role in the ERA battle.

"Where are your investigative reporters seeing whose money is sending Mrs. Schlafly to state after state to

speak against ERA? Where are your Woodward and Bernsteins?" she asked.

Ms. De Crow chose to vent her anger at President Jimmy Carter whom she accused of footdragging on ERA. "There should be a blitz like the energy blitz," she said. "He's not using the power he has. He should tell women that he will not rest until ERA is law."

In a later interview, Ms. Steinem pointed out that women haven't even been able to trust legislators.

"STATE LEGISLATORS are not always democratic at all," said the Ms. Magazine editor. "Even when we try to vote in people who are pro-ERA in the legislatures, they've turned around and voted against it."

"The major accomplishments of the women's movement have been in raising issues," she said. "Now we all support these issues and there is little dissonance. Abortion legislation has saved the lives of women and the bread-and-butter issues have improved life."

The anti-ERA philosophy was put forward at the Kennedy Square rally by a group of demonstrators from HOW. They oppose the NOW stand on abortion and the ERA.

HOW director Pat Barbour said the proposed amendment would take away laws protecting women and the family structure.

"We don't believe in this equal rights stuff," she said. "What's it going to do to child support payments and what's going to happen when women are forced into the military? We don't want equal rights — we want protection."

AREA WOMEN marched with their NOW sisters and were enthusiastic about the conference.

Joanne Snider of Bloomfield Hills said the conference was an education for those who attended and focused at

tention on the issues important to women.

"I don't know any other organized way to reach the government," she said.

Ms. Snider said she's interested in affirmative action programs for women and was disappointed that more blacks did not participate.

"I want to find out the status of women in business, and how affirmative action programs can be carried out in a non-violent method. NOW addresses all problems and there is a token expression of affirmative action in Oakland County, but businesses there give it little actual preference."

She said the superstars in NOW such as Ms. Friedan and Ms. Steinem are an inspiration. "Nothing would ever happen if there weren't any superstars. I don't feel so isolated because of them."

Jane Hagen of Southfield said passage of ERA must be a priority item for now. Another item she thinks is vital on the feminist agenda is the problem of the displaced homemaker who loses her identity after a divorce.

Ruth Prescott Jeffries of Bloomfield Hills was the Oakland County coordinator for the 10 delegates at the convention. She would like to see more women involved, especially suburban homemakers on welfare.

"WE WANT to protect women who are under house arrest in the suburbs," she said. "We want to get them out of the house, not only in terms of violence that might be done to them, but to get them out from under the paternalistic society that exists in the suburbs."

She also is interested in attracting more black women to the Oakland County NOW movement, but concedes it won't be easy.

Other Oakland delegates and their husbands took part in presenting seminars, manning the child care room and serving as press aides.

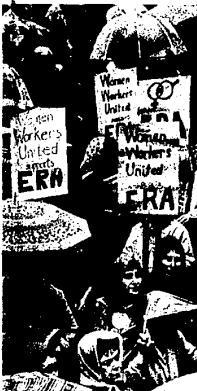


Farmington Observer

Suburban Life

Thursday, April 28, 1977

(F1D)



Hey, hey, ratify ERA

Backing the superstars of the feminist movement who gathered in Detroit for NOW's 10th national meeting, about 1,000 men and women walked in a chilling rain from Grand Circus Park to Kennedy Square to show their support for the equal rights amendment. Umbrellas were a necessary shield against the rain. Nida Donar of Bloomfield Hills and Janet Heidrich of Birmingham (at right) hold a drenched sign whose letters were running. The unidentified woman at the far right smiled while sporting a sassy sign calling NOW members nagging, ornery women. Other signs charged that ERA would bring homosexual marriages and put women on the battlefields in future wars. Barbara Rose Collins, a Detroit member of the Michigan Legislature, drew cheers when she told the crowd that the same people who oppose equal rights for women oppose equal rights for minorities. "God have mercy on their soul," she said, "because we can't afford to."

ERA has had its setbacks, but NOW members believe as Gloria Steinem said: "It's not too late for ERA."



Staff Photos by Gary Friedman



Oakland feminists put it together for NOW

By ARLENE VANDERLEUN

Tapping the talents of many Oakland County feminists, the national NOW (National Organization For Women) convention met in Detroit last weekend to review its first decade and map out the future.

The focus was sharply on the battle for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) during rallies, discussions and seminars.

Conference delegate Sue Temerowski, a Southfield security guard, was pleased with the depth of support for ERA.

"The rally was a direct outcry of the people," she said. "We're all going to be coming together and showing how we feel about women in society."

Ms. Temerowski was a delegate and also served on the publicity committee and as chairperson of the program book committee. She has been selling ads in the book to local businesses for about a year and arranged guest appearances on local TV stations for leaders of the feminist movement.

"Workshops and seminars on subjects ranging from women and poverty to the male feminist perspective were on the agenda and involved some Oakland County women."

Sue Waid of Rochester used her training as a nursery school teacher in Wayne State University's child care center, to assist in the conference child care room at the Detroit Cadillac Hotel.

A LARGE room full of toys and

playthings and space to romp was provided free for delegates and their youngsters. It was staffed by volunteers.

"Child care is much needed," Ms. Waid said. "It enables the parents to do things like attend this conference."

Beverly Hills attorney Allyn Ravitz conducted a workshop entitled Sexual Harassment on the Job—Must a Woman Succumb to Succeed, drawing heavily on her experience as legal counsel to the metro Detroit chapter of NOW.

According to Ms. Ravitz, sexual harassment ranges from innuendos to brushing against a woman at the water cooler to an employer demanding sex in exchange for a job. Many women are embarrassed and don't know what to do, said Ms. Ravitz.

This problem cuts across all class, age and racial lines, she said. "It's not just young and pretty women who are harassed."

The Beverly Hills attorney who practices law with her husband, Frank Eaman, discussed solutions including filing a sex discrimination suit, pressuring unions to take a stand against sexual harassment and "urging women to join hands for moral and evidentiary support."

Birmingham delegate Barbara Tessitore, a full-time homemaker, believes "the feminist movement is not directed solely toward the so-called career woman, and we must dispel that myth."

She presented a workshop directed at homemakers or household managers, a term she prefers.

MRS. TESSITORE manages a household for her husband, Gary, and two young children. She has been active in the feminist movement for five years.

"We both married with traditional ideas about male-female roles," she said. "But my husband has been supportive and I consider him a feminist."

She believes the feminist movement should be credited with giving respect and dignity to the job of homemaker but that further legislation is needed to give Social Security rights and pension rights to homemakers.

She plans to continue in the movement even after she and her family move to Europe in June. "I'm looking forward to joining an international feminist organization."

Bringing in the male point of view, Michael Whitty of Birmingham discussed male liberation in a workshop on the male feminist perspective. Whitty is a professor of labor relations at University of Detroit.

Both he and his wife, Gail, support the women's movement. Whitty sees the feminist issue as part of the "human rights movement" that has seen increasing sensitivity to the needs of blacks, women and the aged.

"I've been in the human rights movement for 10 years," he said. "The rituals are changing and roles for people should be individual, not based on sex. Stereotyped roles don't contribute to growth."

Whitty believes that male liberation will give men a "second lease on life," as they are released from stress associated with rigid roles.

