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(F11C)

## Testimony called

# Sexual harassment on the job is on its way to the courts

By LORAIN McCLISH

A 30-member citizens' group which believes that sexual harassment on the job is not a personal problem but one that should be solved by society is now ready for public hearings on the matter.

The Task Force on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace asks for women, speaking either as individuals or as representatives of agencies or businesses, to share awareness of such incidents with testimony during the hearings set in the Detroit area Wednesday, May 9.

Briefly, sexual harassment is when someone makes you think you'll get into trouble or lose your job if you don't give in to their sexual advances or put up with their sexual remarks and actions.

The task force cites the following documented examples that have happened in Michigan:

• Molly works in a factory and wears an apron filled with bolts for the assembly line. Her supervisor checks the bolts by reaching into the apron and feeling around. He does not check the aprons of male workers. He also waits until Molly is alone in the cloakroom and backs her up against the wall. When Molly protests, he says he's being friendly and she shouldn't be uncooperative or she'll lose her job.

• Joann has a job in the skilled trades. The men on the job whistle and hiss when she walks by and yell out what they'd like to do to her when she's alone. Pornographic pictures get pasted onto her locker, and objects from a local sex shop are attached with obscene notes to her work bench. Her supervisor says if she can't take a little fun she should get out.

• Karen's professor offered her an A if she'd sleep with him. She talked to the university's review board and things were straightened out, though no discipline was given to the professor.

When she took her first job, her boss asked her to stay late, while his arms were around her. Then he asked her to bring completed work to his apartment. Now she is frightened about complaining. Because of her college experience, this may give her a record as a troublemaker.

• Susan works in an insurance office and has to travel to other cities with her boss. He wants to share a hotel room "to save the company some

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— Janet Good,  
Michigan Employment  
Security Commission



JANET GOOD

money." When Susan refuses, he tells her to smarten up or he'll give her a poor rating on her next job review and demote her back to a clerical job. In the meantime, he doubles her workload and complains that she just can't keep up on the subject.

VICTIMS RANGE from young to old, from executives to unskilled workers, from married to single, and can be attractive or not.

So far the task force is not certain why a certain person is singled out for sexual harassment while co-workers are left alone, but Janet Good, a Farmington Hills resident, gives her feelings on the subject.

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"The women I've interviewed are the workers who need their jobs most desperately, and the women who are the least likely to scream."

Mrs. Good represents the Michigan Employment Security Commission on the task force. Another area woman, Patricia Hill Burnett, a Birmingham resident, represents Gov. William Milliken's Michigan Women's Commission.

The task force, which has been meeting since October 1978, is co-sponsored by Michigan Department of Labor's Office of Women and Work and University of Michigan Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations.

Its membership is made up of those representing labor unions, state government, private enterprise, education and women's groups.

"THE PURPOSE of these hearings is not to prove that the issue of sexual harassment is real," said Hilda Patricia Curran, director of Office of Women and Work.

"We want to discover if there are gaps in the coverage available to women. And, if so, what are they. So we can make recommendations to the legislature for laws that will fill these gaps."

Ms. Curran continued by saying that, like rape, most sexual harassment goes unreported because the victims are somehow made to feel ashamed of what has happened to them.

The task force emphasizes that provisions will be made for those women who wish to testify anonymously.

Testimony will be taken from 1-4 p.m. in City County Building auditorium, 2 Woodward, and from 7-9 p.m. in Solidarity House, 8000 E. Jefferson.

Scheduling of testimony will be done by Sylvia Gomez, who can be contacted by phone at Office of Women and Work, (517) 373-9475.

Women wishing to put a statement in writing may write that office, 309 N. Washington, P.O. Box 30015, Lansing 48909.



## Some guidelines for victims

By LORAIN McCLISH

The Task Force on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace has some guidelines and suggestions for women who experience sexual harassment on the job, or who have been victims.

Members of the group follow these suggestions with some preventative measures that can be put into use for those who are not yet victims.

• Make sure that the harasser knows you do not welcome these advances. State your objections clearly. Don't just hope the problem will go away.

• If the harassment continues, put your objections in writing and ask for a written reply. Tell your co-workers what is happening to you. Ask if they have had similar problems with your harasser. Keep a log of incidents. You may need these notes if you have to go to court.

• If initial efforts fail, go higher. Use grievance procedures. Write to your supervisor's supervisor. Ask for written answers to your complaints. If you are shrugged off, go higher and exercise every right you have to appeal.

• If you lose your job, get demoted, have your work assignments or hours changed, lose a promotion, or suffer other consequences because of your refusal to give in, contact the Michigan Civil Rights Department, 1200 Sixth St., Detroit 48226; 256-2570.

• If you have been laid off, fired, or forced to quit because of sexual harassment and you are filing for unemployment benefits, be sure to tell your contact person at Michigan Employment Security Commission (MESC) that you were sexually harassed.

• If you have any trouble filing your claim, call the MESC's Equal Employment Opportunity division at 226-7636,

located at 231 W. Lafayette, Detroit 48226.

• If you witness sexual harassment on the job, encourage the victim to take action, then be courageous enough to offer testimony.

• Don't be forced into going along and accepting sexual harassment as the way things are, or as a joking matter.

• Find out if your company or union has a specific policy against sexual harassment. If not, work toward getting one.

• Talk with your co-workers about things like appropriate dress on the job, joking around about sex, personal relationships on the job or other subjects that higher-ups may try to use against you if you are ever a victim of sexual harassment.

## Garden club sale of handcrafts is May 8

Handcrafted items, all hand-fashioned and each original, will go on sale at the combined boutique, luncheon and fashion show, set for Tuesday, May 8, by North Farmington Garden Club.

Members work all year to create the indoor and outdoor accessories for the club's main fund-raiser which is headed this year by Ruth Falahie, Judy Behmer and Norma Henderson.

Luncheon tickets are sold out, which is not unusual for the prestigious fundraiser that always has a faithful following, but there is always room for browsers and shoppers before the noon lunch and after the fashion show.

Fashions this spring come from Claire Kelly of Northville.

The doors open at 10 a.m. for the boutique housed in Orchard United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road north of 13 Mile Road, for shoppers to view about 50 different types of useable and ornamental craft items.

Admission to the boutique is without charge.

Funds raised through the sales will perpetuate the club's on-going service project, which is the beautification and continuous care of O.E. Dunkel Junior High School grounds.

Sue Babcock has been elected as the North Farmington Garden Club president for the coming term. Her vice presidents will be Ann Hiner and Virginia Hale.

Other new officers are Marion Tanton and Jan Tiberio.



Colorful ribboned bows put the final touch to handcrafted accessories by Barbara Orchard (at left) and Florence Smith, as members of North Farmington Garden Club complete items that will go on sale May 8. There is no admission charge for browsers in the boutique that opens at 10 a.m. in Orchard United Methodist Church.



## At the Fun Fair

Check out of prizes underneath the Lollipop Tree is school grounds, at 11 Mile and Middlebelt roads. Sr. done by Mary Meier, Dick Abowd, Sister. Nancy Thompson and Sandy Makowski. The quartet is working toward Our Lady of Mercy High School's Fun Fair, set for Friday through Sunday, May 4-6 on the