

NOW leaders muster forces for Equal Rights

By ARLENE VANDERLEUN

Last year some 100,000 women in flowing white dresses marched with their male supporters in Washington, to show support for the proposed Equal Rights Amendment.

In the next few weeks, some of these supporters will be mustering several ERA "action teams." These will carry a message to senior citizens, students and "mid-life women" who face economic hardship in the event of divorce or widowhood.

Their message will tell these women loud and clear: "You need the Equal Rights Amendment."

While 35 states (including Michigan) have already ratified the amendment, three more are needed before it becomes part of the U.S. Constitution. Congress earlier this year extended the original March 1979 deadline to June 1982. The amendment would take effect two years after ratification.

"WE ARE GOING to bring the message to increasing numbers of people," said Eleanor Smeal, national president of the National Organization for Women (NOW), which spearheaded the drive to extend the ratification deadline.

"We are not going to go away until women have equal rights under the law. Polls show that not many people know what (ERA) is about."

Mrs. Smeal envisions a time in the future when homemakers will have an employment benefits, health insurance and Social Security benefits in their own names—a time when laws will be applied equally between sexes.

Mrs. Smeal is a petite, brown-eyed, 58-year-old homemaker from Pittsburgh. She sees her metallurgist husband and two children between lobbying trips and speaking engagements around the country.

She spoke with the Observer and Eclectic Newspapers during a recent area meeting to map strategy. Among those attending the meeting were persons from NOW chapters in western Wayne County and Oakland County.

"They talked about how supporters of ERA can speak their mind to persons in unratified states. Mrs. Smeal urged ERA supporters to write letters, make phone calls and donate money. She also



Many "don't understand what the ERA is about," says Eleanor Smeal. "We want to reach mainstream women."

suggested that they refrain from traveling in unratified states.

NORTHWEST WAYNE County NOW, which draws members from Livonia, Westland, Canton Township and Plymouth, still hasn't completed its plans. But Noreen Dinnebiel, president of that chapter, did call on women in administrative and middle management jobs to "pay their dues" to the women's movement.

"Without the women's movement, they would be locked into mental jobs," said Ms. Dinnebiel.

Midwest Wayne County NOW, which has members from Wayne and Westland, will continue to focus attention on fund-raising events and educational programs on the ERA, said chapter president Jody Kaufman, of Dearborn.

In Oakland County, NOW has an outreach program that will culminate in a four-hour workshop June 16 in the Bir-

mingham Continuum Center for Education on Purdy in Birmingham. Workshops will focus on the ERA, history of the women's movement, economic concerns for women and childbearing.

Speakers will be Helen Milliken, wife of the governor, and state Rep. Ruth McNamee. Both are strong supporters of the ERA.

"We want to reach mainstream women," said Beth Eskine, of Birmingham.

Indiana in 1977 was the last state to ratify. States such as Illinois and Florida have recently defeated it. Mrs. Smeal says many people simply "don't understand what the ERA is about."

IN MRS. SMEAL'S view, what the ERA is "about" is getting language in the constitution to fight laws which discriminate on the basis of sex.

She said she considers the ERA "simplistic" in language. The simple, 24-word declaration states that, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

"We want to put women into the constitution so discrimination can be changed," she said.

Legal experts say the ERA would help end discrimination against women in public employment, where some jobs have been off-limits for women. It also would strike down thousands of federal, state and local laws which treat men and women differently.

Mrs. Smeal cited a study released this year by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. That study found 800 federal discriminatory laws.

Female students are denied equal access to education because "there are few athletic scholarships (for women)," said Mrs. Smeal.

"This is not an academic subject," added Mrs. Smeal. "This has a financial effect on every family."

Under financial considerations, Mrs. Smeal said that NOW is working on a plan to testify before Congress in favor of a "Homemaker's Bill of Rights," which would guarantee American homemakers access to education, unemployment and social security benefits and credit. This bill of rights, she said, would help the 14 million divorced and widowed women in "mid-life" who may be forced by economic necessity to take jobs after years of being out of the workforce.

LAURA CALLOW of Livonia, co-chairman of ERAmerica and a member of Northwest Wayne County NOW, said her organizations viewed the proposal "as giving recognition for non-monetary contributions of the homemaker."

One who has given hundreds of speeches in favor of the ERA, Mrs. Callow added that a 1975 study requested by the Michigan Commissioner of Insurance revealed 44 discriminatory practices used by insurance companies.

For example, women found it more difficult and more costly to buy disability insurance, she said.

"They (insurance companies) thought women were malingering (pretend to be sick to avoid work)," said Mrs. Callow.

"We're still trying to reach new groups," added Mrs. Callow. "We feel equality is a matter of time."

People "don't have time not to be involved," said Mrs. Smeal. "There are no magic solutions or buttons to push."

"How do you communicate with people?" asked Mrs. Smeal. "It's very difficult and very expensive. We hope more people make time."

Career planning offered to nurses

A program called Career Awareness for Nurses will offer creative career planning to nurses who want to break away from traditional nursing jobs.

The one-session workshop will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, June 6, at Oakland Center Building on the Oakland University campus. It is sponsored by the Continuum Center for Adult Counseling and Leadership Training.

"The right kind of career planning can help nurses to adapt old nursing skills to a new job market," said Sydney Reiter of Southfield, who trained as a nurse before joining the Continuum Center staff as a trainer and counselor.

"Nurses are basically trained for hospital work, but there are many ways to use their training both in and out of the nursing profession."

Mrs. Reiter will lead the program along with Career Counselor Jane Goodman of Detroit, who administers a Career Development program at the center under a grant from the Michigan Department of Education.

CAREER AWARENESS for nurses is based on an award-winning program

called Alternative Career Options for Teachers, which has helped more than 2,000 teachers to re-evaluate their job skills during the past two years.

The nurses program will be highlighted by speakers from a variety of career-related areas. Keynote speaker Maxine Loomis, of Ann Arbor, a professor at the University of Michigan School of Nursing, will give an overview of the options available to nurses interested in changing jobs.

She will also discuss attitudes and skills which nurses need to develop in relation to themselves and their work, including self-assertion and professional self-respect.

Peggy Saylor of Franklin, assistant professor of nursing at Wayne State University's college of nursing, will explore the educational opportunities open to those who must add new skills before changing jobs.

Those interested in Career Awareness for Nursing should contact the Continuum Center at Oakland University in Rochester or call 377-3033. Advance registration is required. The fee is \$25, including lunch.

Our Affair with Downtown

From Toronto's finest airport hotel direct to the excitement at the centre of the city. Our special package includes complimentary air-conditioned transportation to and from downtown on Saturday.

Then you'll return to the quiet luxury of the Bristol Place. Relax in your room or enjoy our indoor pool and sauna.

Our Downtown Package of \$40 per room per night (Canadian funds, tax included, gratuities extra) includes 2 Nights. Deluxe Accommodation (Friday, Saturday or Sunday), Transportation Downtown and Free Parking. \$35 per room each additional night (subject to availability).

The Bristol Place Hotel
A Super Place Hotel

950 DAVENPORT Rd. at Toronto Int'l Airport - 675-9444
For reservations dial toll free CANADA 1-800-368-4927
U.S. 1-800-828-7491 N.Y. STATE ONLY 1-800-462-7330
or 800 your travel agent

LOOK WHO'S COMING TO KID POWER SHOE WORLD

W. Bloomfield Plaza
W. Bloomfield

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN!

...IN PERSON!

Sat. June 2nd and Sat. June 9 12-6 PM

FREE! SPIDER-MAN RINGS While They Last

Now the exciting star of television, comics, and comic books can be with you every where! New Spider-Man Sneakers from Kid Power are Red and Blue—the same colors as Spider's costume—with webbing and Spider's face on the side. Run and jump like never before...in your Spider-Man Sneakers!

JUST \$15

KID POWER SHOE WORLD

6734 ORCHARD LAKE RD.
WEST BLOOMFIELD PLAZA
Hours: Mon.-Sat. 10-6 Thurs.: 10-9

ECHO PARK, INC.
IS NOW ACCEPTING
FAMILY SUMMER PROGRAM MEMBERSHIPS

Echo Park, located in Bloomfield Hills, is truly a unique recreational facility. The Family Summer Program is especially designed for full family enjoyment during the summer months—beginning with Memorial Day Weekend and ending with Labor Day Weekend. Membership entitles family members the free use of such facilities as the spring-fed lake where members can enjoy diving, sailing, canoeing, fishing or sunbathing on Echo's private beach—games and sports field—playground equipment—112 acres of hiking and nature trails—and complete picnic facilities. This beautiful 112 acre PRIVATE park, staffed with qualified lifeguards who supervise our pools and waterfront activity, is made available to members on all weekends and holidays from May 28th to September 3rd, 1979, from 10 AM through 9 PM, and on all weekdays from June 18th through September 3rd, 1979 from 4:30-9 PM.

FULL FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS ARE BEING OFFERED FOR ONLY \$300

For additional information and/or applications
PLEASE CALL 646-5590

YOU ARE INVITED TO OUR OPEN HOUSE
SUNDAY, JUNE 3rd, 1-4 p.m.

ECHO PARK DAY CAMP, INC.
4275 Echo Road, Bloomfield Hills
646-5590