

AAUW spells out its top priorities for change

By LORAIN McCLISH

This is National American Association of University Women (AAUW) Week in observance of the 190,000 members across the country working towards the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and simultaneously carrying on studies of three timely topics.

"Managing Resources for Tomorrow," "Families Facing Change," and the AAUW's on-going study on "Committee on Women" are priority items, second only to the ERA ratification, by members both nationally and locally.

"Managing Resources for Tomorrow" is especially timely, says Vivian Henderhan of the local branch, "as we begin to make the hard decisions necessary for allocation of our scarce resources."

"Modern technology has enabled us to use the world's resources potential in such an infinite number of ways at such a relatively inexpensive manner that when the events of the past few months threatened our accepted way of life, it became one of the prime areas needing our focus of study," she says.

The local branch works for a complete knowledge of the subject by asking the right questions on the energy problems through study, research, education, insight, concern and action, she adds.

STANDARD FORMAT for AAUW, after all such studies is to identify the problem, research the material, become aware of the economics involved, and the political bargaining which must be done in order to accomplish any significant changes.

"Alternate fuels, solar energy, clean air, water and nuclear power have been studied to date," Mrs. Henderhan says.

"Hopefully we will find other groups who have similar concerns so we will be prepared in the future to have an

impact on the policy makers."

As for "Families Facing Change," Mrs. Henderhan says, "Our Farmington members feel that one of the elements of life today which has the strongest impact on changing family life is the role of the working spouse-mother-partner."

"So some of our special meetings have focused on topics such as upward movement of women in business, industry and professions, and the management of finances."

One of the high points in this discussion series will come on Monday, March 24, when investment counselor Isabel Smith will advise members

about tax-saving strategies.

This meeting will be open to all interested women in the area, who are asked to call Doris VandenBelt, 851-4674, ahead of time for an invitation.

THE ON-GOING AAUW's Committee on Women concerns itself with the advancement of women, and helps to identify and resolve issues in the areas of education, economics, society, law or politics.

"One area of study undertaken this winter has been financial planning for women," Mrs. Henderhan said. "A second will be undertaken in depth when Laura Callow, Michigan

co-chairwoman for ERA speaks to us on this issue in April, another open meeting."

Mrs. Callow is scheduled to speak April 29 in First Presbyterian Church on Farmington and 11 Mile roads.

The Farmington Branch AAUW is made up of 140 members who meet at 1 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of every month. The group's combined purpose is to enhance the status of women and serve the community.

Membership is open to all women who hold at least a bachelor's degree from a four-year accredited institution. Membership inquiries will be taken by calling Carol Malzone, 591-0181.

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Unsung hero

Meet Rita Mosshammer

By LORAIN McCLISH

Rita Mosshammer is the mother of three children, grandmother to three, an active member of New Horizons, Community Living Center, the First Presbyterian Church of Farmington and the Farmington Area YMCA. She also heads up the volunteers who work in Southfield's Providence Hospital.

She was nominated six times for the Unsung Hero Award.

One of her nominators, Nancy Downie, describes her by saying, "She is always there to listen, to comfort and to counsel her friends of all ages; to support a widow, to babysit for a young mother, to talk to a teenager, to befriend a child."

Mrs. Mosshammer describes herself by saying, "I am a house frau at heart who could probably do very well hired out for day work."

"I'm also a woman's libber, a direct descendant of a woman's suffragette on my mother's side. I'm also a Cancer and we're very sympathetic people you know. Also very tenacious."

THE COMBINATION of sympathy and tenacity will pay off in large measure this spring with the manifestation of two dreams she has put her heart and mind to over the past few years.

Community Living Centers, a network of homes spread throughout the area which maintain a family home environment for mentally retarded adults is her major interest.

This month, the organization under her presidency, will see another house occupied with another group of adults that might otherwise be institutionalized.

Simultaneously, Community Living Centers is now within grasp of its ultimate dream of making certain that all persons who become residents in one of the homes will have perpetual financial care.

While this factor is being firmed up with the lawyers, the Farmington YMCA, another long-time dream, has become a reality, and will open the doors of its new complex April 1.

"I'm a V person," Mrs. Mosshammer said of the hours she has spent as one of the movers and shakers of the building and planning committee. "I grew up with the Y in Detroit. It was good for me when I was growing up and I know

Rita Mosshammer firmly believes that we are our brothers' keepers and that sins of omission are more serious offenses than sins of commission.

it will be good for Farmington."

MRS. MOSHAMMER said several times that she possesses no great talent and that her only ambition ever in life was to be tall.

"But how can you be bored?" she says. "Every day is a thrill to me. I have a great capacity for enjoyment and at least one million friends."

This may be because she firmly believes we are our brothers' keepers and that sins of omission are more serious offenses than sins of commission.

Her nominator Carol McDaniel writes, "Recently my husband and I spent three weeks in a Grand Rapids hospital with our critically ill son."

Retta, out of the usual goodness of her heart, volunteered to take in our 16-year-old handicapped daughter to live with her in order that she not miss her Special Ed classes at Farmington High

for that period of time.

"She not only provided her with a warm, loving home life, but took on the extra duties of driving her back and forth to school each day and to all her after-school activities."

"Retta phoned us nearly daily to report on the latest events in our daughter's life so as to keep us in close touch with her."

Mrs. Mosshammer's comment to this was, "I can't see that that was any big deal. It was a joy to have a teenager in the house and those people needed help now. I don't believe there is any good that comes of waiting or pondering or making any big decisions in a case like that."

AS FOR HER work in Providence Hospital, "I will give them every Friday of my life as long as I am on my feet," she said. "I owe my life to the people over there."

Mrs. Mosshammer chose her work as a hospital volunteer in the emergency room because she was a patient who entered confinement through those doors. She says of that time, "I was so scared."

She says of her work in the hospital, "I run. I hold. I help as I can and I try to reassure the frightened ones, and they are all pretty much frightened, as I was."

One of her nominators wrote that she had racked up 1,900 hours of volunteer time at Providence, but "Who counts hours?" she says. "I certainly don't."

The woman who insists she doesn't have any great talent recently showed a talent for organizing when she got a social club for senior adults under way in her church.

She refers to the members, for the most part, as "displaced parents."

Seed idea for "The Infinite Variety

Club" came when Mrs. Mosshammer's mother was uprooted from her home to live with her in Farmington.

"I realized there must be many of these parents around, living with their children and without their old friends," she said. "I just thought it would be a good idea to get them together. We have no purpose whatsoever except social, just bringing them out and finding new friends."

MRS. MOSHAMMER insists she is a liberated woman who picks and chooses the hours and whys and wheres she gives her time.

"I only say yes when I mean it," she says. "I can say no very well and I have said it whenever I feel that I don't have the time to give wholeheartedly, or when I feel I can not do justice to the job at hand."



Rita Mosshammer firmly believes that we are our brothers' keepers and that sins of omission are more serious offenses than sins of commission. That philosophy has brought her, she says, "at least one million friends." (Staff photos by Randy Borst)

New experiences

The search to combat burnout

There is a spreading phenomenon causing concern among sociologists, psychologists and educators. Labeled "burnout," it is characterized by boredom, disinterest, and depression.

Initially, it was observed among students, but it is now known that it is not limited to youth. Witnessed by industrial psychologists and career counselors among working people, it subsequently has been termed "career burnout."

Boredom, disinterest, and dissatisfaction are said to contribute to "burnout" and so to combat this state of discontent it appears that we must offer challenge, said William James, a psychologist. James said that youth has a need for engaging in real challenge and risk. As a result, experiential education and high risk recreation have emerged.

For parents seeking to provide such opportunities for a child, the possibilities are boundless, limited only by the knowledge of what's available. There are over 3,000 organizations that take as many as a half-million people each year on more than 6,000 programs and trips.

And while many parents seek guidance through national travel and leisure clubs and publications, others turn to a former Kingswood School Cranbrook Student, Susan Klingbeil, a native of Farmington, now a resident of Grosse Pointe.

Often, said Mrs. Klingbeil, a structured school setting cannot offer this type of learning. However, there is an opportunity to create such an environment during one's leisure and school vacations. Summer is a perfect time for a child to develop and excel in another setting.

THE CHILD CAN DEVELOP new interests, skills, independence, environmental awareness, and freedom of expression as well as sharpen social skills, including communication, cooperation, and leadership. Personal development frequently carries over to the school setting and may even rejuvenate and revitalize interest.

Summer "experiences" provide opportunities for a fresh start, according to Mrs. Klingbeil. Unlike the other nine months, or school year the individual is under 24-hour approved leadership. He also experiences living closely with a small group of people, and is exposed to young adults who serve as role models with positive ideas and attitudes.

Mrs. Klingbeil explained that once she recognized the value of her own summer camp experience she wanted to allow others an opportunity to have similar experiences. After starting her own leisure consulting service she made it her business to be knowledgeable about available camps, programs and trips. For the past 25 years, she said, she has been trying to match the person's interests, needs and skills with individual programs geared to his needs.

As an aid, clients are asked to choose 10 top interests from a list that contains 280 possible activities. There are basics such as tennis, canoeing, swimming, sailing, riflery, riding, nature, archery, boating and crafts.

Among the sports activities there are football, soccer, tennis, golf, basketball, ice hockey, snorkeling, field hockey, lacrosse, and figure skating.

THE LIST ALSO CONTAINS related

activities, dramatics, opera, television and radio production, chess, and voice, photography, stage workshop, weaving, ceramics and leather and metal work. Courses not widely available in all schools, but offered during the summer of a short term basis include archeology, chemical engineering, computer science, creative writing, criminal justice systems, junior statesman, reading skills, foreign languages, study trips, and typing.

Still others include outdoor activities such as ranch chores, wilderness camping, survival training, technical rock climbing, spelunking, pack trips, fishing, back packing, bicycling, flying, and hiking.

These are only a sampling of the available offerings, said Mrs. Klingbeil. She also offers a wide range of study and travel programs, in addition to a counselor placement service for those 18 years of age or older, or with one year of college.

Although she recognizes the value of specialized programs, Mrs. Klingbeil feels that a child should not specialize too early. Instead, she advises a general camping experience for exposure to many different activities. There is plenty of time to specialize or try something later, she advised.

"IF A CHILD SPECIALIZES too early, he may become bored with a program and may not want to go to camp at all. This could be a form of burnout. But, if a child starts with a general camp, this provides a broad foundation and there are so many different directions that he can pursue each following summer," she explained.

Of interest to older teens, young

adults and adults is high adventure risk recreation. Mrs. Klingbeil noted. The increased demand for such recreation, she said, is because, "More people are looking for activities which will test themselves. They also want a self-actualizing experience."

"Many find this through risk recreation which often challenges the forces of nature and encounters elements of uncertainty. Challenge can be found as close to home as your local park or a far away as trekking in the Himalayas. The choice is yours."

Mrs. Klingbeil pointed out her daughter, Martha, 27, as an example of someone seeking adventure. Martha had a solid background of general camping in Vermont, attended Hurricane Island Outward Bound, and has done weekend backpacking in Michigan, the Adirondacks and the Berkshires.

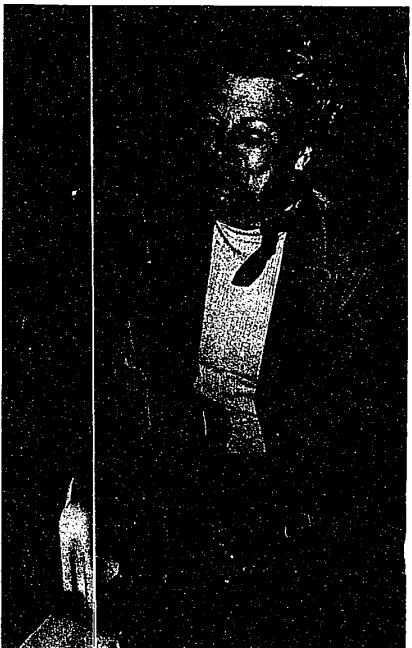
Was it "career burnout" that drove Martha to quit a job in New York City and spend three months in the wilds of Alaska?

During that time, with three friends, she covered 10,000 miles, backpacked in McKinley National Park, hiked in the Brooks Range, and met native Americans who taught her to shoot geese and catch salmon with a net.

Then, they chartered a bush plane and were flown 350 miles north of the Arctic Circle to begin a canoe and kayak trip down three rivers. During the month it took to complete the trip they never saw another person.

"BEARS AND EAGLES, YES; people, no," said the proud parent who

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Susan Klingbeil's own camping experiences a quarter of a century ago led her to develop a leisure consulting firm. Now, she is advising her clients on all forms of activities which can enrich the enthusiasm with which they undertake the more mundane activities in life.