

Penetrating the hidden job market

By Loraine McClellan
staff writer

The target date to begin the area's first Job Seekers Support Group for unemployed white collar workers is the last Saturday in August, in Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

"Both the government and some of

the larger companies have come in with programs for retraining or replacing the blue collar worker," said Sandi Uglow who is developing the format for the new group in cooperation with Rev. Jonathon Bomgren.

"But so far there has been no help offered to any segment of the white collar workers, to say nothing about

those in their middle years in middle-management positions who have lost their jobs."

Bomgren added, "If there is a need here for these people, and we certainly believe there is, we will provide a service for them."

"With 720,000 unemployed workers in Michigan, competition for the few jobs available is overwhelming," Uglow said. "Major employers consider an average of 240 resumes for every interview granted, while statistics show that only one in five openings are likely to be advertised or listed with an employment agency."

"Those who get jobs typically use an insider-system," she said.

SHE WILL spell out the insider-system which penetrates the hidden job market, help participants with self-evaluations, share research and encourage the sharing of frustrations, problems and successes.

There will be sessions on communication, the translation of going from one job to another and marketing oneself. The group will act as a clearing house for job information.

Overall, she terms the format, "An organized approach to finding a job."

"We'll tell what we have to offer at the orientation and then design the program to accommodate those who want

to continue in it," Bomgren said.

"But its primary function is to show job hunters how to identify and penetrate that hidden job market, that vast number of openings employers never release to agencies or help-wanted columns," he said.

"Uglow referred to a study called 'The Job Hunt,' which showed that the greater the number of auxiliary avenues used by the job hunter, the greater the job-finding success."

"So it makes sense then to know all the avenues open, how they work and what their limitations are, so the job hunters can make informed decisions and take control of their own future," she said.

"Job security is a myth," she continued. "You are not guaranteed a thing. Your company can be bought out, you could get squeezed out in a merger, your company could move and not take you with it, or just close down, and you will find yourself at (age) 50 writing the first resume in your life."

"Everyone should be realizing this so they can start taking control of their own life."

UGLOW was laid off from her job as a personnel manager a couple of months ago.

"I'm the one who had to lay off people for a long time so I know what it's

like, and I also know the higher up you go the harder it is to find a job," she said.

She also says she knows that few people who have jobs understand the problems of those who don't.

Uglow referred to loneliness, the suddenness of not having an established routine and the shock of suddenly being unemployed that can be characterized by an erosion of self-esteem.

"They take on the conviction that there is something wrong with them and that leads to low expectations, depression, desperation and, or, apathy."

"Then this self-doubt is reinforced with repeated rejections for employment."

"This is so evident in the lines where the newcomer is going to collect his unemployment check," she said.

"He is wearing good clothes because he has no other kind and he's taken a book with him so he can keep his head buried and not have to talk to anybody."

She hopes to counter the negative side of unemployment by providing a positive atmosphere for the new group.

UGLOW AND Bomgren were brought together through a neighbor or hers who is a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

She had successfully counseled the neighbor in his job-seeking dilemma through some of her own experiences working in a personnel office, coupled with some research having to do with surveys conducted regarding the unemployed.

She said she has never counseled anyone individually who is not employed now.

Meanwhile the Lutheran Church of America (LCA) was calling for a comprehensive study of the effects of plant closings on people and communities, and some methods for assisting the unemployed.

Bomgren said Uglow's strategies dovetail into the LCA's philosophy of assisting the unemployed.

"It makes a lot more sense than handing out cheese or food baskets," he said.

"It's a matter of breaking the vicious cycle of depression and not thinking rationally," Uglow said.

Introduction to Job Seekers Support Group will run from 6:30-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 27 in the church at 35300 Eight Mile.

There is no charge, but Bomgren and Uglow ask for preregistrations to give them an idea of how many persons will be there, by calling the church office, 478-6520.



Rev. Jonathon Bomgren



Sandi Uglow



Mother of the Year is dedicated to social action

By Shirlee Rose Iden
staff writer

LONG PAST Mother's Day, Bessie Berris is still glowing from the honor of being designated 1983 Michigan Mother of the Year by the Michigan Mothers' Association of the American Mothers Inc.

At the recent Spiritual Adoption Luncheon of the Greater Detroit Council of Pioneer Women in Southfield, she was honored again and reflected on her experiences in life and as a parent.

For the Farmington Hills woman, there was never a special formula for motherhood. She named three different influences: the home she grew up in and the parents she had, her own children, and sheer good luck.

Born in Detroit she was graduated from Wayne University with a degree in education. She met her husband, Gerson, at a Zionist meeting and they courted for a long time, later marrying and producing four sons and a daughter.

"I taught school for a brief time in Detroit and then had what's known as a 15-year maternity leave," Berris recalls. Her leave came to an end in 1959 when her husband died of a heart attack.

"There was nothing to do but raise my children," she says.

HER OLDEST son, Marvin, now an attorney in Southfield, was 18 when his father died. Her daughter, Rita Aston, was just 3. Charles is now a wholesale jeweler in Southfield and Howard is a dentist, practicing in Taylor Township. Her youngest son, Earl, is a cantor associated with Adat Shalom in Farmington Hills. He is about to travel to Israel to make his home there.

All of her children are "lovely people married to other nice people" says Berris, but the years raising them were a challenge.

"After Gerson died, I substitute taught for a year and then was asked to teach half days at the Hillel Day

School," she says. "It really wasn't easy. When Marvin got his driver's license, that was a big help."

After a few years she taught third and fourth grades full time at Hillel, finally completing 23 years of service there before her recent retirement.

Berris told the Pioneer Women that her parents imbued their children with a commitment to Judaism, to Zionism, to secular and Hebrew education, "in an atmosphere of love, caring, attention and hospitality."

"Life was not easy for them — immigrants with parents to care for, financial difficulties — but their interest in us and in our future was always evident."

"THEY EXPOUNDED another theory by the very quality of their lifestyle that homemaking, childrearing, productive employment and action in world affairs need not be regarded as competing activities each demanding total commitment."

"Talk about super-women. The women of that generation sure knew how to juggle things around."

And by example and by teaching, Berris was taught not to separate herself from the community.

"My parents, Morris and Mildred Kramer, were very special people," Berris says. They took her to hear Yiddish speakers, to see Yiddish theatre and to make Zionism paramount in her life.

"My parents brought Zionism into our home when it wasn't an interest of many people. It was enough in those years to just earn a living."

During the 1930s, Berris met Golda Meir when she came here to speak and to raise funds. "She would stay at friends' homes and we would get together," she says.

"She talked about her experiences in Palestine and the needs of the Jewish people there."

Years later, at an Israel Bond func-



Bessie Berris, the Farmington Hills resident who holds the title of Michigan Mother of the Year for 1983, reflects on her experiences in

tion in New York City, Golda Meir was the main speaker seated on the high dais and Berris was on a lower one.

"I WENT over to say hello to her, to tell her I was Mildred Kramer's daughter, because I knew she didn't know me from Adam," Berris recalls. "She grabbed me and hugged me, greeting me with great warmth."

"Golda always had that ability to excite people and to lead them. When she spoke, she spoke from the heart. She touched people."

Following World War II when the



dream of a Jewish homeland began to look more possible, Berris, who was active in a number of Zionist groups, began to focus more on Pioneer Women.

"I had two principal reasons for joining and becoming active," she contends. "First, it was a young group that spoke English, and second they believed in helping people in need and spread out their service all over Israel."

"We have orphan homes, day-night residences for needy youth, we help the poor and the uneducated and I believe in that philosophy."

A member of the Hanita Chapter,



life and as a parent, in her address to Pioneer Women late last week.

Berris served as president and went on to become a council officer. "Rita was born during my council presidency," she remembers.

THOUGH she had to work and chose to serve the community, Berris believes her children have never felt deprived. "When I was chosen 'Michigan Mother of the Year' I got a beautiful letter from my oldest son."

"I always tried to do everything I could while they were in school and be there for them after school," she says. Adat Shalom Synagogue nominated

her for the award with Wilma Naimark taking care of the tedious details necessary to complete the entry.

"As far as I know, I am the first Jewish mother to be chosen in 25 years," she says.

For Berris, the opportunity to speak at the Spiritual Adoption event was special because giving a hand to deprived children is right up her alley.

"Since we cannot hold them or comfort them personally (farrell kids), we can stretch out our hands to them by sending them financial assistance, comforting them by proxy."

DEBORAH BOOKER