

Jong tells Planned Parenthood audience women's rights are being taken away

By JUDITH DONER BERNE
SPECIAL WRITER

Feminist author Erica Jong remembers girls who disappeared from her New York City high school class into the wilds of New Jersey, \$250 and a hidden pregnancy in hand.

"Sometimes they came back bleeding. Sometimes they were hospitalized."

"That's why we must tell our daughters and our granddaughters what those days were like," she implored the more than 350 people attending Thursday's eighth annual Planned Parenthood fundraising luncheon at the Ambassador Hotel in Southfield.

"One of the saddest things for our daughters is the amnesia of history they suffer from. We face the problem of undoing the ignorance of our own history."

The fund-raiser, held under tight security, comes at a critical time for Planned Parenthood of Southeast Michigan. A bill that threatens state funding for Planned Parenthood clinics has been passed by both houses of the Michigan Legislature and sits on Gov. John Engler's desk.

"Once again we're under

attack," said Planned Parenthood CEO George Stokes, a Rochester Hills resident. "Let your voices be heard and urge your governor to do the right thing and veto it."

Four politicians in Planned Parenthood's very tight corner were introduced. They were: Former Gov. Jim Blanchard running for the Democratic nomination for governor; state Rep. Pan Godechaux running for the Michigan Senate; Birmingham school board trustee Shelli Weisberg, running for Godechaux's seat; and David Fink, challenging U.S. Congressman Joe Knollenberg.

Jong is no Jonglyne come lately to Planned Parenthood. "Speaking for Planned Parenthood is a no-brainer," she explained. "I started donating to Planned Parenthood when I got out of college." She has also served on its advisory council.

She made literary and social history 30 years ago with her first novel, *Fear of Flying*. Written in 1973 at the height of the women's movement it was an explicit account of a woman exploring the full range of her sexuality. She is the author of

eight other books and seven volumes of poetry.

Today, it looks as if women have sexual freedom, but they don't, she told the audience. "We have an overt display of sexuality but behind it is deep sexual hypocrisy. Programs like *Sex and the City*, and girls bearing their midriffs and wearing rings in their belly buttons give the cosmetic feeling of freedom. But the underpinnings are being snatched away."

"It's the unfinished revolution," she said. "All of you in this room are courageous pioneers. It's hard to fight for a cause that people think has already been won. Girls think they are already free. They don't understand that great forces are conspiring to take away the rights they already have."

She urged women who care about reproductive rights "to recapture the language that Right to Life has stolen away. You are the most pro-family people on the planet," she said. "You are advocating that a child come into the world as a miracle for parents who are prepared to be parents."

Jong described her own difficult decision to have a baby at 36 as a life-altering experience.

"Reproductive rights made me able to have a child when I was ready." Daughter, Molly Jong, 24, has written her own first novel, *Normal Girl*. It describes the battle of a young New York City woman to overcome too much money, promiscuity, and drugs.

Although she was fighting a cold, Jong graciously stayed to chat with anyone who approached her and to autograph copies of her latest work, *What do women want?*

Planned Parenthood public affairs director Sandra Gillis found it "refreshing" that Jong gave "a hardball message at what she could have considered 'a women's luncheon.'"

"I thought she did a wonderful job," said Naomi Fox from West Bloomfield.

"She's a little tamer than I expected," added Mary McHale, a Grosse Pointe resident. "I remember reading *Fear of Flying* in those wild times."



Fight for rights: "It's the unfinished revolution," Erica Jong says of the issue of women's freedoms.



Adding a personal touch: Monte Nagler "lives" with numerous photographs in his home - his as well as many others. Here is one from Nova Scotia that proudly hangs in his house.

Living with photographs a gratifying choice

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As students in my photography classes all know, I'm constantly stressing the importance of having photographs hanging in their homes or offices. I firmly believe that anyone with an interest in photography can greatly benefit from what I call, "living with photographs." Begin with some of your own pictures. I know that all of you

have some favorite slides or prints tucked that you can't wait to get out and brag about whenever a friend or relative stops over. Well, why not permanently display these favorites? Perhaps it's that dramatic sunset you just took on your last vacation or it's the shot of your child that captures that special expression of childhood delight.

Whatever the case, it's easy to get pictures up on the wall. Just take those prized slides and negatives to your photo dealer for the enlargements. Any 35mm shot will blow up fine to 11 by 14 without losing quality. Many dealers local frame shots, even large discount stores will stock pre-cut mats and frames that require minimal effort to assem-

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ble. You'll be proud of that special grouping of your favorite pictures and will be grateful you took the time to assemble them.

As your interest in photography increases, you'll find yourself wanting other photographs to "live with." It may be that memorable shot you fell in love with at the art fair or that striking poster you couldn't resist at the bookstore. Well, why not purchase them? Often, a modest investment of dollars will pay off in big dividends of satisfaction.

You'll also discover that "living with photographs" will keep your level of photographic interest and excitement high. And hav-

ing pictures to look at constantly will serve as a teaching device...the more you look, the more your knowledge and understanding of photography will increase.

People I know who "live with photographs" tell me how beneficial it is and how their pictures help keep the "creative juices" flowing and their appreciation of photography growing.

Try it for yourself...you'll be glad you did. "Living with photographs" is gratifying indeed.

Monte Nagler is a fine art photographer based in Farmington Hills. You can leave him a message by dialing (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. His fax number is (248) 644-1314.

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