

'Queen Bees' oppose women's lib, says study

ANN ARBOR Women who succeed in the "man's world" of work often become "Queen Bees" and try to keep other women from entering the game, University of Michigan researchers conclude.

A description of the so-called Queen Bee syndrome is made in the January issue of "Psychology Today" by Graham L. Staines, assistant study director with the U-M's Institute for Social Research, and Toby Epstein Jayaratne, ISR research associate, both U-M doctoral students; and Carol Tavris, U-M graduate who is now assistant managing editor of the magazine.

Queen Bees add a new dimension to anti-feminist sentiment, being unlike conservative thinkers who op-

pose most social change or women who find their success in home and family, the authors point out.

They contend that Queen Bees are "countermilitant" largely out of self-interest.

Whether or not Queen Bees succeed because the system needs "taken" women at higher levels, the researchers say, "many successful women relish the fact that

they are 'special,' that they have unique qualifications that allow them to get high-ranking positions normally denied to women. Non-discriminatory policies become threatening. Queen Bees do not want competition for their jobs any more than men do.

"The Queen Bee has typically worked very hard to get where she is; having gone through a difficult initiation, she doesn't want younger women to have it any easier than she did.

Studies find that if a person goes through a severe initiation in order to join a group, he or she will like that group more than if the initiation is mild."

There is another powerful reason for the Queen Bee syndrome, the article explains.

"The Queen Bee who is successful in a male-dominated field feels little animosity toward the system that has permitted her to reach the top, and little animosity toward the men who praise her for being so unique. She identifies with the specific male colleagues who are her reference group, rather than with the diffuse concept of women as a class.

Queen Bees, the authors conclude, are suspicious of the women's movement "which wants to change some of the rules of the game and to let in more players," a threat to those who are winning under the current rules.

"The Queen Bee thereby dissociates herself from the fundamental issues of equality for women, while reassuring her male colleagues

that she is not of that militant ilk."

Since the Queen Bee has succeeded as an individual, the U-M researchers conclude, she can be expected to believe that if women are second-class citizens, it is their own fault.

"By insisting that the present system is open and fair to all, and that success is a direct result of personal talent and striving," they write, "the Queen Bee allows herself the luxury of self-congratulation. She is not at the top because of favoritism or fortune, but because she deserves to be there."

The article notes that the professional woman often tries to be a superwoman and is as eager to "win" in the traditional feminine role of wife and mother as in her career.

"The great majority of the married professionals do all or almost all of the housework and child care, and tend to think that it should be that way.

"The Queen Bee may strive to succeed in the

wife-mother role as a way of reassuring herself about her femininity, to resolve conflict over success in a masculine world."

The researchers say signs that the Queen Bee syndrome is fading.

"As more jobs open to women," they conclude, "it will be less unusual to see a bright female in top positions. As the women's movement gains acceptance (half of all American women now support organized efforts to improve women's status), women will be less afraid to associate themselves with it.

"On the other hand, it is also possible that the forces of reaction—men who are smarting over what they regard as 'reverse discrimination,' various right-wing organizations, and the male-dominated political establishment—will form an unspoken, tacit coalition with the Queen Bee and traditionally successful women against the women's rights efforts. It can go either way."



AN EXERCISE BICYCLE for the gym program of the Livonia-Redford chapter of Michigan Association for Children with Learning Disabilities has been donated by Lambda Kappa chapter of Beta Sigma Phi sorority. The presentation was made recently by Terry Erickson (left), representing the sorority, to Barbara Trimark of Redford Township, chairman for the gym program which will start its next session April 1 in Bentley High School. Mrs. Trimark's son, Jerry, demonstrates the bike.

Family Y classes probe awareness, politics, decor

Women's self-awareness, politics for concerned citizens and interior decorating are topics of three special interest classes to begin during the week of Jan. 28 in the Livonia Family Y.

The eight-week awareness course will be offered Mondays from 9:30 to 11 a.m., and baby-sitting will be available. The others are on politics meeting Tuesdays from 8 to 9:30 p.m. for eight weeks and interior decorating running for six weeks at the same time.

Registrations are being accepted at the Family Y, 14555 Stark.

Fagey Ross, group leader from the Oakland University

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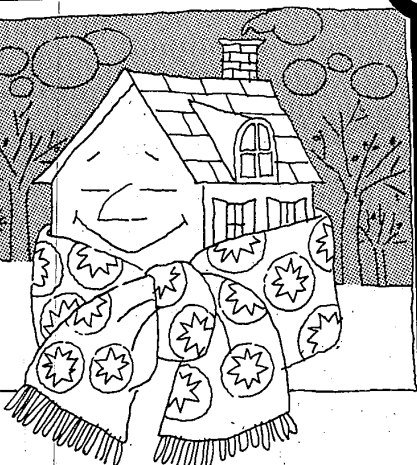
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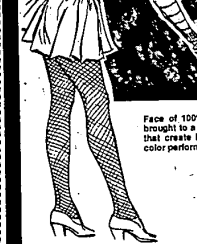


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