



When the Chicago N. O. W. chapter gathers, members, among them Joyce Lieberman (top) and Agnes Kelley, plan the strategy they'll use to accomplish their major projects: job equality, day care, health facilities.

Tribune Photos by Roy Hall



Our status today

Continued from page 1

mand of N.O.W. From her home base in Atlanta, Ga., she travels throught the country organizing new chapters, talking to women everywhere.

"We've captured the hearts, minds, and participation of women. The resurgence is due to pressing economic issues and commitment to working on them," she says.

MAJOR N. O. W. projects for 1975 reflect women's concerns: employment discrimination, the Equal Rights Amendment, rape, and abortion. Thruout the U. S., Lightfoot says, women are working on problems of day care, health issues, sexist education, school sports, media, and problems of aging.

A significant reflection of where women are today is that homemakers—full-time housewives—constitute 30 per cent of N. O. W.'s membership.

"If organizing and getting together is what women have achieved in the last seven years, then community and political action are where we are going next," Lightfoot says. "We will win because we are right."

Are black women going forward at the same pace as white women? That question

concerns Nancy Randolph, assistant dean of the school of social work at the University of Alabama's Tuscaloosa campus. She is the only black member of a new chapter of N. O. W.

"An alliance of blacks and whites is hard to put together," she says. "Black women have been persecuted by white women as well as by black men. Every time I'm at a N. O. W. meeting, I think of all the blacks who are at home taking care of the members' children. But I think all women have problems to work on together. It's our only hope."

CHICAGO women in N. O. W. are moving faster than the rest of the country. "We live in a city with a highly sophisticated and organized political machine; so we've learned organization, too," says N. O. W. member Mary Jean Collins-Robson. In 1968, Chicago had 30 active members; now there are 500 in the city alone.

At the national convention in Houston last spring, Chicago N. O. W. was dubbed "The Chicago Machine." Some local women didn't like that; some did. "If we're a machine, everyone needs one," says Diann

Smith, director of the Loop Center YWCA.

CHICAGO N. O. W. began the national action against Sears Roebuck and Co., accusing the giant retailer of discrimination against women. In Chicago, sexism also has been attacked in the schools, on the job, in court, and in hospitals. Marriage and divorce clinics have been established. Legal advice, job counseling, rape crisis clinics, and employment groups are active here.

N. O. W. locally and nationally reflects a change in women's attitudes about homosexuality. Betty Friedan was terrified of the "lavender menace," much as civil rights leaders once feared Communists. But N. O. W.'s position has changed, and homosexuals have a say in the movement. They've become more organized and outspoken in this country.

The self-images of many women have improved because of the women's movement. That's the biggest thing that has happened.

Now giant steps are being taken to bring that confidence—and concrete results—into jobs, school, government, the legal system. We've got a long way to go, but we're going.



There's a feeling of camaraderie about the meetings as the members such as Susan Doty (top, left) and Kathy Rand, N. O. W.'s midwest regional director, and Anne Ladky (bottom, left), Chicago N. O. W. president, and Agnes Kelley, air their feelings.



Vets, consumers at Civic Center

2 protests, but one objective: more money

By Eleanor Randolph

TWO LARGE circles of protesters, marching like huge wheels under the Civic Center's Picasso, chanted their separate grievances Saturday afternoon.

One wheel was mad because President Ford doesn't want to give more money to veterans. The other was angry because consumers don't want to give more money to merchants.

Weaving between in busy figure eights around the two circles, came the ones like 71-year-old Joseph Dilys, whose hand-made sandwich board announced that he is a victim of Communism.

DILYS' HANDOUT explained that his handouts routinely cause problems as rallies such as the ones Saturday. "While Mr. Dilys legally passes out his literature, he has been spit on and at, struck, arrested, and beaten," his literature said.

"That may be how he was a victim of Communism," said a young man who identified himself as a Trotskyite.

It was definitely the day to be heard in downtown Chicago—as if in some pre-winter outpouring before it gets too cold for even the best of issues, there were at least four official rallies and several spontaneous ones.

THE CHICAGO Acts Against Inflation, a coalition of about 12 labor and peace groups,

protested higher prices on everything from electricity to the stacks of paper they handed out to a few reporters and about 15 to 20 shivering passers-by who wandered into the plaza.

The Illinois Federation of Veterans in Colleges, about 65 young men in tattered Army greens and one in a regulation Army blanket, chanted, "No tax for disabled vets." Their leader called the White House press office Saturday morning to announce the rally. An operator promised to pass on the word to President Ford.

A group calling itself the Chicago Committee for Victory to the United Mine Workers demanded "Victory for the Miners." One member explained that meant an end to government intervention, union control, and capitalism.

THE NATIONAL Organization of Women started the rallies with an early-morning protest at Sears State Street store because, they said, the manager had refused to talk about women's problem's getting credit.

"They told us managers didn't work on Saturdays," said Agnes Kelley, a NOW spokesman. Only the women clerks work on Saturdays, so if anybody comes out in a suit, we have a right to ask him his name. He can't be a manager, of course, because they don't work on Saturdays."

A few minutes later, as if on cue, a man in a suit with a suspiciously managerial-looking set of keys hanging from his belt emerged from the

store.

A NOW worker asked if he worked at Sears.

THE MAN looked up, saw

an anti-Sears button, and delayed lighting his cigaret.

"I had nothing to do with it," he said. "I'm just a salesman."

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Women's Equality Day

The troops are restless on the feminist front

By Carol Kleiman

TUESDAY, THE day after laundry day, has been set aside as a national day of celebration for women because it's the 55th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution's 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote.

It is the eighth month in a not-too-fruitful International Women's Year—not even a full term pregnancy yet—and on the eve of Women's Equality Day, Chicago feminists are worried about serious job setbacks.

In this anniversary year, there are not women senators, not one female President, not even a female Supreme Court justice. But women have only been at it half a century. And it is nice to have the vote.

FOR THE LAST five years, the National Organization for Women [N.O.W.] has optimistically chosen this day to talk about feminist challenges, achievements, and setbacks.

"Women for jobs and justice" is the theme of the Chicago observance—it couldn't be more timely. If unemployed women alone came out to the lunchtime rally, the Federal Plaza would be filled with avid listeners.

Nothing has changed much for working women; things have gotten worse. Women, last hired, first fired, are getting restless about the recession, unemployment, lack of enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, and the three-year backlog of sex discrimination cases heard by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Another problem is the lack of commitment to affirmative action by President Ford who proclaimed this the year of the woman, International Women's Year. Affirmative action is the name given to the government regulation that requires that businesses which deal with the government—including universities, hospitals, and schools—have a plan for giving women job equality with men. So far, business has done little on affirmative action programs for women. And little has been done by the government to tell the offenders they are offensive.

Figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics tell why unemployment is a major issue for women. In July, the unemployment rate of adult men was 7.0 per cent. For women, it was 7.9 per cent.

Chicago N.O.W.'s celebration of Women's Equality Day is five years old and growing. It all started in a small way in

1970. The theme then was "Don't iron while the strike is hot," an appeal to housewives and other oppressed groups to join the women's movement. The plea worked. One out of three members of N.O.W. is a housewife, or homemaker in the preferred feminist jargon.

Other Aug. 26 issues include the Equal Rights Amendment [E.R.A.—still unpassed]; week-long consciousness-raising sessions, exposure of employment agency practices against women, and the launching of a national protest against sex discrimination at Sears, Roebuck and Co.

Feminism today is not the dirty word it was five years ago before the women's movement gained popularity. Interest in the annual Aug. 26 festivities increased three years ago when the microphones were abruptly shut off during the N.O.W. observance in the Civic Center Plaza. The deed was done allegedly by Mayor Daley's audio technicians during a discussion about abortion.

Interest, in Aug. 26 is at a peak for several reasons. It's the year before Presidential elections and N.O.W. was recently granted permission by the Internal Revenue Service to endorse political candidates without losing its tax-exempt status. That gives N.O.W. certain power, and it's not surprising that some candidates, mostly male, have become ardent feminists almost overnight.

A chief indicator of this increased political importance is Gov. Daniel Walker himself, who has asked to participate in Tuesday's Chicago rally.

"We didn't invite him," says Anne Ladky, Chicago N.O.W. president. "He asked us. We have a lot of questions to ask him and tomorrow's a good time to do that—in public."

Ladky hopes that Walker, in his newly found interest, will announce that Susan B. Anthony's birthday will be declared an official state holiday, an observance local feminist groups have pressed Walker about for months.

NATIONALLY, the theme of Women's Equality Day is to stop violence against women. "That means psychologically, emotionally, and physically," says Agnes Kelley, national coordinator of the Aug. 26 events. "It includes the violence of not being able to get ahead on the job as much as the physical violence of rape."

Kelley says that, if necessary, N.O.W. will march in the streets to protest today's employment picture for women. "We won't stop until real equality is won on the job," she says.

"And then we'll go on from there."

Women's Groups Will Seek Company Pregnancy Benefits

Chicago Sun-Times

CHICAGO — Representatives of women's groups say they will press individual companies to offer pregnancy benefits to employees despite a U.S. Supreme Court ruling denying the necessity of such a benefit.

'It's a drastic blow to the progress women were seeking at this time,' said Addie Wyatt, vice president of the

Amalgamated Meat Cutters and an officer of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. 'I'm terribly disappointed.'

The decision 'is certainly a clear indication that women are not going to get anything unless they demand and push for it,' said Agnes Gioconda, president of the Chicago chapter of the National Organization for Women.

Urge Carter bar plans to change U.S. hiring rules

A coalition of women's and minority rights groups called on President-elect Carter this week to suspend proposed Labor Department regulations they say would weaken affirmative-action plans.

In a press conference at Women Employed headquarters in Chicago, the groups outlined what they said would be damaging changes in the operation of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs.

Jean Hoffenkamp, chairperson of Women Employed, said the proposed regulations would greatly reduce the number of companies with federal contracts that would have to answer to the federal government on their minority and

women's hiring programs.

Under the new regulations, scheduled to go into effect after hearings are held around the country, contractors would no longer have to prove to the government that they have specific plans for hiring and promoting women and minorities, Ms. Hoffenkamp said.

Federal contractors now must "show cause" why their contracts should not be canceled if they have no such plans, she said.

She and Agnes Gioconda, president of the Chicago chapter of the National Organization for Women, said they were not sure how many companies fall under Labor Department regulations.

But "many millions of dollars" are awarded in federal contracts each year in the Chicago area, Ms. Gioconda said. Nationally, as much as one-third of the labor force — about 30 million people — has jobs dependent on federal spending, she said.

One proposed regulatory change would raise the number of employees a company must have before it is covered by the regulations. Another would increase the amount of federal contracts before requirement of a company personnel review by OFCCP officials.

"The proposed revisions will virtually eliminate any possibility of the regulations ever being enforced," Ms. Hoffenkamp said.

She said that Carter commented before the election in a position paper that the proposed regulations would "weaken" the likelihood of progress in eliminating sex and race discrimination.

Ms. Hoffenkamp and Ms. Gioconda said they also were urging Carter to appoint a secretary of labor "who is truly committed to the enforcement of affirmative action for women and minorities."

They said John Dunlop, Harvard University professor who has been mentioned as a strong possibility for the labor post, is not acceptable because of what they said is his poor record on women's and minority rights.

Maternity insurance coverage comes under fire

(Second of two related columns)

The state's proposed rule to end discrimination in insurance would require that complications of pregnancy be treated no differently than any other illness. But normal pregnancy need not be covered.

Kit Duffy of Women Employed, the group that has spearheaded the drive for the rule, attacked the problem of maternity coverage at last week's hearing. She said maternity-related insurance problems constitute "95 per cent of the calls we get from women."

"Under the guise that pregnancy is planned," Ms. Duffy charged, "the insurance industry gets away with charging exorbitant premiums for meager coverage. If men bore children, maternity would be treated like any other illness."

MS. DUFFY cited the following figures: One insurance company charges \$90 a year extra for maternity coverage while offering only \$150 maximum benefit; another charges \$40 a month with a 10-month waiting period

(thus \$400 in premiums) with only \$450 maximum benefit. Blue Shield pays only 30 per cent of the physician's fee for a delivery, but 70 per cent for an appendectomy.

In contrast, Ms. Duffy said, Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company treats normal pregnancy as any other illness, making the coverage available to both married and single women, at a premium rate of \$20.23 for major medical or \$80.41 for family plan.

Several women described personal experiences in trying to make insurance claims for pregnancy. One said she delivered a stillborn baby in the seventh month, but the insurance company did not consider this a complication and allowed less benefit than for a normal delivery.

ANOTHER WOMAN whose doctor has told her she must deliver by Caesarean cannot get coverage because her insurance company says it only will pay for abdominal surgery. The company claims Caesarean is not abdominal surgery, although it is consid-

ered such by physicians.

Another woman bitterly described her insurance company's policy, which "excludes pregnancy along with injuries sustained in war, attempted suicide, or during the commission of a felony." She added the policy covers such optional planned surgery as vasectomy, hysterectomy and correction of varicose veins.

Agnes Kelley of National Organization for Women said insurance companies are continuing to exclude pregnancy from temporary disability coverage despite the fact that such coverage is required by the Equal Employment Opportunity regulations. She said four appeals courts have ruled the exclusion a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.

MS. KELLEY said the insurance industry, anticipating that it will be forced to offer such coverage, is already estimating the cost of maternity premiums at double the rate without maternity.

Pointing out that at least one Mid-

Keeping up

by Monica Wilch Perin

west company already offers full maternity coverage as a disability with no change in premium rates, Ms. Kelley urged that the double rates being projected by the industry be investigated.

Three other states which have already enacted non-discrimination regulations, New York, Pennsylvania and Oregon, told The Herald their rates have not apparently changed because of the equal treatment requirements. They emphasized that any rate differences must be justified by the companies actuarially, and added they

are investigating the rate situation.

SEVERAL PEOPLE testifying urged that the rule be expanded to cover casualty insurance (auto, homeowners, tenant, etc.) as well as life and health. Ralla Klepak, an attorney representing the Institute of Women Today, cited a case in which a woman was granted auto insurance at the standard rate based on her perfect driving record.

The insurance was later cancelled because her husband was arrested for driving another vehicle while intoxicated. She was forced to pay a premium three times the original rate, and was refused a rider giving her coverage under the condition her husband would not drive her auto.

When Oregon adopted its insurance regulation against discrimination, it included casualty insurance. Some results: tenant homeowners policies became available to both females and males on the same basis and rates, and auto insurance became available to divorced females on the same basis

as other drivers.

ALTHOUGH THE Illinois rule would require that life and health insurance not be withheld from a female because she lives with someone not related to her, several lesbian and gay liberation groups asked that specific wording be included to prohibit discrimination against homosexuals or alleged homosexuals.

An attorney of the Midwest Women's Legal Group detailed a case in which her client was arbitrarily denied insurance because of alleged "female trouble."

A 'cool line'
for nursing
home gripes

See Page 6.

Thompson's men-only club angers feminist movement



GOV. JAMES R. THOMPSON

CHICAGO (AP) — Gov. James R. Thompson's membership in a men-only club is "a disgrace," a leading feminist says.

"It's things like this that are making the women of Illinois angry," Agnes Gioconda, president of the National Organization for Women, said in an interview Monday. "It's a disgrace that the governor of our state would continue to hold a membership in such an organization that excludes or bars women."

Thompson said Monday morning that he would resign from the men-only Butler National Golf Club, site of the Western Open, in Oak Brook but retain his membership in the Union League Club, which allows women to join but excludes them from some of its facilities.

Thompson said last week at the National Governors Conference in Detroit that he thinks private clubs have the right to exclude various groups, indicating that he included among those groups women, blacks and Jews. But he said he did "not approve of organizations which bar people on the irrational ground of religion or color of skin." He said he

does not belong to clubs that bar blacks and Jews.

The governor said, "I don't exclude anyone because of his religion or the color of his skin and I won't associate with those who do."

He said, however, that "every American citizen has an inalienable right to associate with whom he pleases, and I don't think there's a person in the country who would quarrel with that."

Ms. Gioconda said Thompson's refusal to resign from the Union League Club, a fashionable habitat of leaders of Chicago's business, banking and legal communities, "puts the icing on the cake."

When questioned on Saturday about his membership at Butler, Thompson said: "I can't square belonging to a club which excludes women with my feeling about clubs which bar people on racial or religious grounds. I suppose it's a generational gap."

Later, though, in announcing that he would quit Butler, he said, "I've tried to avoid honorary memberships in clubs that excluded women or others on the basis of race or religion, but I just plain forgot about it with this one. It was foolish."