

'Marriage Is Form of Slavery'

By ELEANOR SAPKO

Courant Women's Reporter

Marriage is a form of slavery, invented by men for their own benefit, in which woman is the slave and man the master.

This statement was made by a 25-year-old graduate of Berlin High School, active in the women's movement for "almost four years," on a return visit to her home town of Berlin, where she spoke at a meeting of the Berlin Junior Woman's Club.

"Freedom for women can't be achieved without the abolition of marriage," she said. "It's the very basis of our oppression."

Miss Crothers had appeared on a much-talked about Dick Cavett Show on which she and two other feminists argued with Hugh Hefner about his "Playboy philosophy." She is on the staff of a feminist publication, "Women's Rights Law Reporter," that reports legal news of the women's movement. She is also a student at Rutgers University School of Law, has written an article on rape for a national magazine to be published early next year. Love means different things to men and



DIANE CROTHERS

women, she said. "The idea that marriage benefits women is very much a part of male culture," which she also said claims to "protect women. It protects women like slavery protected slaves," she said.

In our culture, she said, women are brought up to "think they're giving their services to their husbands out of love, whereas the courts say that she's legally bound" to provide these services, including housework, child care and sex, Miss Crothers said.

"Being a wife," she said, "is a full-time job to which one is not entitled to pay."

Marriage, along with motherhood, is one of the cultural institutions that have "kept women in line," she said. These institutions are, in our culture, among the few "functions" of woman — part of her "biological destiny," Miss Crothers said.

The marriage contract "to love, honor and obey," is not a contract at all, she said, because it doesn't stand up legally in court. "A husband can legally force his wife to have sexual intercourse," she said, "something that if he did with a woman other than his wife would constitute the crime of rape." The marriage contract operates "to the advantage of the male," she said.

"Of course, a wife can also legally force her husband to have sexual intercourse, but this is not likely to happen."

According to law also, she said, "if a married woman refuses to move when her husband moves, she can be charged with desertion

"If persons are forced into line long enough," (as she said women have been) "they begin to believe in their own inferiority."

But because of the "way society is set up and because of employment discrimination, woman has little choice but marriage."

After Miss Crothers' talk, a woman in the audience asked, "How would you advise me to liberate myself, an ordinary housewife with three children?"

Miss Crothers said that she could only answer by telling her what she herself had done. "I started to meet with other women to discuss our personal problems." In this way, she said, "she got the support of other women."

"But the greatest percentage of women are like myself," the questioner went on. "Nobody's going to be there with my children tomorrow morning at 6:30 but me."

Miss Crothers said she thought her husband should assume an equal share of responsibility for the children, but she

admitted that this was sometimes impossible. "Maybe in your case," she continued, "you could start to work toward limited goals, like starting a child care center."

Another woman in the audience expressed concern about children: "Will they suffer by being put in these centers?"

"Children are better off with people their own age," said Miss Crothers. "All kinds of things can be done in group settings that would exhaust an individual mother."

Another woman asked what women could do to help their husbands "understand their responsibilities. Should husbands and wives go to marriage counselors?"

Miss Crothers suggested getting together with other couples in groups to discuss problems and responsibilities. She also suggested that "men's liberation" discussion groups might be helpful to men.

When asked whether she thought marriage would be abolished, Diane said "I hope it will be. It would free the kinds of relationships men and women could have together, without being locked together for the rest of their lives."

One woman was concerned about the child of such a non-marriage union. "If I had a child," Miss Crothers answered, "I would rather have it happy with me or with him. I don't think it's so much whether the father (or mother) is there, but that someone really cares for the child."

"How does your father (Dr. Charles Crothers of Kensington) feel about what you're doing?" one woman wondered.

"Ask my mother," Diane replied, pointing to her mother, Maynette Crothers, who was sitting in the back of the room.

"He as proud as he can be," said Mrs. Crothers. "I've always felt that my husband felt he was gypped by not being with the children more. The mother always gets the full benefit of the children." The Crothers have two other children, a daughter, 22, and a son, 18.

One woman caused quite a stir in the audience when she asked Miss Crothers what she should do as a "happy" housewife. "The tasks we do may seem very menial," she said "but we're still happy."

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Named to Head Paltz Program

NEW PALTZ—Diane Crothers, the former director of affirmative action at Staten Island Community College, has been named coordinator of the new cooperative education program at the State University College at New Paltz.

Ms. Crothers, an attorney, teacher, editor and writer, will administer a \$24,000 grant from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to establish a program in which New Paltz students, especially minorities, women and veterans will be able to alternate periods of work with their campus studies and receive academic credit for it.

Ms. Crothers will report to Pamela Tate, SUNY's director of innovative studies, who, with Associate Dean Jon Fackler, developed the original proposal. During the planning for the program, Ms. Tate said, 60 per cent of 1,100 incoming students indicated a strong interest in participating in the co-op program.

Ms. Crothers says her objective as coordinator of the program will be to help students learn about the world of work and aid them with career planning and interview techniques. This, she hopes, will avoid the kinds of mistakes in this area which can be very costly after graduation. She cited concern among the parents who finance their children's education about the inability of graduates to find a job.

While the program was designed to aid disadvantaged students, women and veterans, Ms. Crothers stressed the fact that there will be no quotas in determining the placements. She said simply that a special effort will be made to reach out to these groups. One of the groups she hopes to involve in the program are women who are returning to the job market after raising a family. She pointed out that the seminars that will accompany the work experience will be more educational for all concerned if there is an age disparity among the participants.

Ms. Crothers said the program will benefit the employers as well as the students by enabling them to recruit interns, train them and see how they work out. She pointed out that employers could hire students during times of maximum activity. She said the optimal time period for the employment of students was not yet determined, but that it would probably be about four months.

Ms. Crothers brings to her new job a great deal of experience in the areas of hiring practices and job satisfaction. As director of affirmative action at Staten Island, she was responsible for the collection, maintenance and analysis of computerized employment data on recruitment, hiring, promotion, salary and retention patterns for 1,500 staff members at the college and she adds "I learned a lot looking for work myself."

She plans to ready the students for their jobs with a pre-placement, team-taught seminar which will involve role playing in an interview situation and help with career planning.

Ms. Crothers is a graduate of the University of North Carolina and Rutgers Law School. She was involved in voter registration drives in Alabama in 1965. She has lectured at NYU Law School and Queens and Brooklyn Colleges and produced her own show about women's legal rights on WBAI-FM in New York. She also helped found the Women's Rights Law Reporter which

has since attained a national reputation.

She resides in Saugerties with her husband, Benjamin Patterson, and a 14-year-old stepson.

Reconciling Women's Roles

BY GERRY RAKER
Journal Staff Writer

Today almost 48 per cent of all the women in this country work yet relatively few females plan their lives along the lines of their employment.

Few facing the job market in their late teens or early twenties think about what their lives will be like when they reach 35 because most women still believe someone else will be making all the important decisions for them.

Yet what of the man who wants his wife home with the children until the divorce and then, when he marries a second time, wants to

know why the woman he's paying alimony to doesn't go out and get a good-paying job?

While more fields are open to women than ever before, most still shrink from taking non-traditional jobs either because they do not see the future in terms of a career or because their expectations remain low.

These and other questions and assessments tumbled out in a free-wheeling talk which recently took place with three area women whose own careers in some way concern the world of work.

When Diane Crothers, a lawyer and coordinator of the cooperative

education program at the State University College at New Paltz; Liz Bunch, senior employment counselor at the Poughkeepsie Office of the New York State Employment Service; and Linda Gordon, assistant professor of sociology at Vassar College, were first brought together it was for a discussion of women and work today, more than a decade after the onset of the women's liberation movement. Their views were solicited for their experience in the related fields.

As it turned out, the three, unknown to each other or their interviewer until that afternoon, had as much to contribute from their own life experience as they did from work and observation.

All three were married in the Sixties, later divorced and married again in the Seventies. Two have stepchildren. All noted that the "Seventies husband" is far more helpful at home and supportive than was the "Sixties husband" which was especially interesting when it emerged that one of the "Seventies husbands" is in his late twenties and the other two are in their forties. In this they are not typical of husbands of most working women.

As increasing numbers of married women enter the job market two separate studies made at Queens College in 1973 and Northwestern University in 1975 indicate there is no difference in the time spent doing housework by the husbands of employed women and the husbands of non-employed women. More than half the women who work are married.

Dr. Gordon: "It should not be necessary for women to have such hard questions as 'Can I have a family if I have a career?' Men can and should learn to enjoy the same things that are glorified in women's magazines...the joy of seeing a child tie its shoe for the first time."

Ms. Crothers: "There is a lot of satisfaction in nurturing. Asking not only 'How do you feel?' but also 'Can I get you something?' or 'Why don't you lie down?'...the traditional female questions. There's a lot of satisfaction in offering those services and young boys can be taught to offer that gift, for it is a gift."

Tears came to her eyes as she cited the results of a recent study of men who had been unemployed for a period of nine months.

"Not only did they feel replaceable at their places of employment, they came to believe

that if someone walked into their homes with a paycheck, they could be replaced there too.

"What a terrible way to feel! Men have been equally conditioned to shortchanging themselves as valuable members of the family and the home."

If men have been shortchanging themselves at home, women may well have been shortchanging themselves in the job market, according to the experience of all three of these speakers.

Ms. Crothers, who develops and coordinates off-campus academic work and work experience for students to expedite their transition from college to the world of work, said she is trying to get across to her students "You should be aware that if you choose female-dominated occupations (secretary, hairdresser) you are choosing to be relatively poor over a lifetime or dependent on somebody else. Two thirds of women workers are still earning \$7,000 a year or less."

She said when the average 20-year-old is confronted with this "she is startled to have to think of herself at age 35; to think about how much she will have at her disposal to spend; whom she will have to ask for that money; and what it will mean to have to ask for it."

She herself believes it's a good thing for young women to grow up thinking about things like utility bills "otherwise you're a perennial pet. Women have as much energy as men and where is that energy to go?"

Mrs. Bunch, who has been doing employment placement and counseling for 15 years, said she was heartened to have one girl recently who showed an interest in the construction trade apprenticeship programs.

"It compensates for the great number of girls who turn away from high potential jobs often because their expectations haven't been raised higher or because they've had minimal exposure to other kinds of work.

"I see more types of occupations open to women since I began but either they're not interested or they're not prepared educationally to handle them. Mostly this applies to traditionally male-oriented jobs."

Dr. Gordon believes that patterns may have moderated somewhat yet women still seem to choose jobs because the office is pretty or they'll have the chance to

(Continued on page 4A.)



Liz Bunch agreed with the others that entertaining and the self get the shortest shrift from the working housewife. "It has a lot to do with compromises. Can you compromise on the entertaining? The kitchen floor shine?" Although often exhausted herself after the working woman's usual Saturday housecleaning she said "In our house I think my husband is a closet libber and I'm a closet sexist, so it works out fine."

Poughkeepsie Journal Photo by Robert V. Niles



Diane Crothers asks "Is the working woman destined to be the most tired person on the face of the earth?" and answers herself "Not necessarily but we have a long way to go." She said that at 30 and having been in the vanguard of the women's movement she ought to know better, but acknowledges her own equal compulsion about home and career. "Most working women not only think they can do it all but that they MUST do it all and do it very well."



"Women, the successful ones, have this perfectionist streak," said Dr. Linda Gordon, "which is one of the reasons they get to be a success. It carries over into the home, but what of the ideal that home-oriented chores and responsibilities should be the equal concern of both partners? There is a need for men's roles to change. Maybe it will come from the sons of working mothers."

Women look toward Second Chance

BY GERRY RAKER
Journal Staff Writer

Do you feel that right now your family responsibilities, lack of education or proven employment record limit your chances for a job with real opportunities for advancement?

If you do, you are not alone. According to a recent local survey, many women who interrupted their education or careers to care for their families feel this way. Twelve hundred area women answered these and other questions when they returned a recently distributed questionnaire.

Many indicated that if they did hold jobs, they were low-paying, lacked opportunities and would not suffice for the anticipated financial needs of their families or themselves.

Some doubted they would find educational opportunities nearby which would make it possible for them to change the pattern of their lives or that they would be able to handle the role changes within their families.

Some touched on the problems of being recently divorced or widowed or with several children who would need to be put through

college. These were their responses to the title of the questionnaire: "What's A Woman To Do?"

But 1,150 of the 1,200 respondents asked for a second chance. And that is largely how Project Second Chance came into being. It is new. It is starting next month. And it is designed for you if you are female, reside in Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan or Ulster counties, have interrupted your college or secondary education for at least two years and if you think you may be at all interested in any of the 10 following fields: accounting, banking, engineering, finance, government and politics, industrial management, insurance, restaurant management, retail management or sales.

These are the careers expected to expand for women in the 1980's and offer them occupational mobility.

Starting next month, thanks to a proposal written by Diane Crothers and Lorraine Kneeland, a proposal which has brought two years worth of funding here, 3,000 women of any age who meet the above minimal criteria can explore the possibility of further education and employment.

Ms. Crothers is the program director of Project Second Chance and Ms. Kneeland is its community director. Both hold administrative positions at SUNY New Paltz where they developed the concept.

In this effort they will have the cooperation of six area colleges, but the money will not be used for tuition if and when the women decide to enroll in regular college courses toward their goal.

It will be used primarily for encouragement and to enable women who previously lacked knowledge of what was open to them to make the proper and sensible choices.

Lorraine Vail Kneeland, community coordinator, is understandably enthusiastic about the grant both from a professional and personal point of view.

She grew up on a dairy farm in LaGrangeville and although her real love was dairy cattle "it was not the kind of work a woman did on her own. To maintain that kind of involvement meant marrying a dairy farmer."

So she went to a junior college and studied merchandising which was in some ways related to the 4H work she had done as a child, and

later worked in the garment industry in New York. Then she married and moved to Oregon where her husband completed his graduate work and she took a job with the college administration.

She found she liked the work, so when her husband came East to become dean of Harriman College, she completed a degree in sociology at New Paltz and then went to work there as coordinator of women's programs.

The proposal she and Ms. Crothers devised grew out of statistics indicating that women work for the same reasons men do, to support their families. And although last year alone more than a million American women entered the paid labor force, nearly 70 per cent of them were employed in service or clerical jobs where financial rewards and occupational mobility are and will remain quite limited.

The proposal also takes into account the fact that women in rural areas are reluctant to travel far from home, so counselors will move out of agencies to bring help and advice to those women not now near educational centers.

Through workshops in 14 dif-

ferent areas of the Mid-Hudson Valley, women will learn how to make informed choices about a job or even how to continue in their present roles with a greater feeling of self esteem.

They will learn how to anticipate and cope with what may be initial anxieties of husband and children in a two-paycheck family; and they will, through the friendship of others in similar situations and those already in related careers, learn how to develop resources within themselves and their families.

Each of the cooperating colleges, Marist, Vassar, New Paltz and Ulster, Sullivan and Orange Community will have a coordinator to develop training programs. But first, 3,000 women will have the chance to explore their goals, strengths, fears and even to overcome weaknesses such as anxiety over mathematics which is involved with several of the growth fields mentioned earlier.

Those interested may contact Project Second Chance at SUNY New Paltz. They will find a friend, many friends, to help them find the answer to "What's A Woman To Do?"

www.newsday.com/tech/techmain.htm

Q Business

QUEENS INC.

Affirmative Action Office Deputy Named

The U.S. Department of Labor's New York bureau has a new deputy director for the office that enforces affirmative action among federal contractors.

Diane Crothers, who is leaving the national office of the Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs in Washington, D.C., becomes the office's second in command in New York.

The regional OFCCP office ensures that federal contractors and subcontractors in New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and six states in New England comply with federal affirmative action regulations requiring equal employment opportunity.

Crothers, who served as director of affirmative action for the City University of New York from 1974 to 1976, more recently worked at the Department of Labor's Women's bureau. She received the Secretary of Labor's Exceptional Achievement Award in 1997 for developing and implementing the Fair Pay Clearinghouse at the Women's Bureau.

— Katia Hetter