

NEW LIFE FOR E.R.A.

On Oct. 6 the U.S. Senate passed the extension resolution giving 39 more months for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. The deadline now has been extended to June 30, 1982.

Earlier that week the Senate voted against two ammendments to the resolution which would have accepted rescissions. These included an amendment allowing future rescissions only and a separate amendment accepting past and future rescissions. Both Texas Senators Tower and Bentsen voted to accept future rescissions. Then, Bentsen voted for the extension itself while Tower was one of only four Senators absent during the vote. (The resolution passed by 60-36.)

Despite pessimism about the Senate vote, N.O.W. and many other groups supportive of women's rights galvanized E.R.A. supporters naionwide in a letter and telegram writing campaign to Congress. There is no doubt that this influenced the final vote. (As part of this grassroots effort, H.A.N.O.W. President Linda Jones coordinated volunteers in generating mail from the Houston area to Senators Tower and Bentsen in September.)

Ratification efforts can now be focused on the 15 unratified states. Electorates this fall will defeat a number of anti-E.R.A. legislators and thus increase the success of ratification in those states. But more pressure will be absolutely necessary, and this can be exerted by people in the ratified states. More organizations and government agencies need to be enlisted in the economic boycott: make a point of getting the organizations to which you belong to cancel conventions and meetings in unratified states and reschedule them in ratified states (like Texas). Encourage your friends to join you in boycotting unratified states for vacations. And donations to help defray the costs of this summer's lobbying in Congress and the expenses ahead in ratifying the E.R.A. in three more states will be needed and welcomed by National N.O.W. at:

N.O.W. National Action Center, 425 13th St. N.W.,
Suite 1048, Washington, D.C. 20004.

national conference report

H.A.N.O.W.'s delegates to the N.O.W. National Conference in Washington, D.C. will report on the issues and plans of action considered at the conference for us at the business meeting this month, Wednesday, Nov. 1.

There will also be elections for officers for the upcoming year beginning in November. The slate of nominees so far are: President, Yvonne Broach; Vice President, Aileen McMurrer; Treasurer, Kathy Fittrakis; and Secretary, Jan Jackson.

This month's business meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. at 1902 Colquitt, No. 16c.

At the Oct. 4 business meeting, H.A.N.O.W. members endorsed the following resolution: "Because we believe in justice for all people, we hereby endorse the Sue Bennet Fund and we encourage all who are able to contribute to this fund so that Sue Bennet may have a good lawyer and free access to a free trial."

This is the last issue of BROADSIDE to be published by the current staff. It's been fun, and your new BROADSIDE editor Linda Jones will undoubtedly find it to be so, too. One word of advice and encouragement, though: You people out there with news and announcements, get on the stick and share that information with Linda at 933-0962!

point of view

This letter is short because my point is simple. There have been so many good letters written to Ms. Magazine in its six years--letters that are heartening to any feminist for the strength and wisdom they express. I would call upon those who write to Ms. to step beyond the boundaries of the receptive audience the magazine provides and to write the same sorts of letters to their local newspapers. We need to speak to those who disagree with us, now, more than ever, if we are to accomplish our goals of equal rights and a greater sense of the worth of all women.

This is particularly true for those of us who live in small towns, where the letters column is read as avidly as the sports page. Feminists, after a decade of gathering strength, should approach not just legislators and persons in positions of power, but the people who are our neighbors and don't understand why issues like the Equal Rights Amendment or federal funding for abortion are important.

The Women's Movement must move to the grass-roots level if it is to succeed. Write to your local newspaper and explain, for those who still refuse to look at Ms., what we "women libbers" are, in fact, all about.

Anne K. Marshall, Helena, Mont.
(from Ms., November 1978)

abortion rights threatened

The long political battle over abortion has evolved into a series of skirmishes over such unlikely vehicles as congressional appropriation bills for the military, foreign aid and lightly-reported action in state legislatures and courts.

In the House of Representatives, anti-abortion riders have been attached to funding bills for the Defense Department, foreign aid programs affecting Peace Corps volunteers, and a bill that would require health insurance coverage for pregnancy.

In what has turned into an annual event on Capitol Hill, the House and Senate clashed once again over the Hyde Amendment to the Health, Education and Welfare appropriations bill which cuts off Medicaid funding for abortion.

But what may be the most significant development in the abortion controversy is the new Right to Life movement push in state legislatures which petitions Congress to call a constitutional convention.

The newly elected president of the National Right to Life Committee--Dr. Carolyn Gerster--is committed to the strategy of a national coordinated drive for the constitutional convention.

The purpose of the constitutional convention would be to add an amendment to the Constitution that would define abortion as murder by stating that human life begins at the moment of conception.

So far, 13 state--10 in the last two years--have petitioned Congress for a convention; 38 are needed before Congress must act.

Despite this growing momentum, the route to the constitutional convention is fraught with legal uncertainties/ It is not clear how delegates would be chosen, whether the convention could be limited to the single issue of abortion, or whether the Right to Life movement might indeed control the convention.

Yet another snag is that not all the state petitions have identical wording. The 13 states that have passed a convention resolution are Missouri, Louisiana, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Indiana, Nebraska, Kentucky and Delaware.

Resolutions were defeated over the past year in Alabama, New York, Florida, New Mexico, Kansas, Maryland, Iowa, Minnesota, Virginia, Vermont, West Virginia and Montana.

One opponent of the anti-abortion movement, executive director Karen Mulhauser of the National Abortion Rights Action League, said that the thinking behind the constitutional convention strategy is that if as many as 20 or 25 states pass petitions, it may force Congress to act on a human life constitutional amendment.

In the meantime, the two sides are clashing in state legislatures and city councils.

An Akron, Ohio, city ordinance that applies to all groups providing abortion services requires that patients be informed in clinical detail of the development of the fetus.

In Louisiana, a similar state law requires a doctor--rather than a nurse or counselor-- to inform any woman seeking an abortion that human life begins at the moment of conception. Doctors in the state are fighting the statute on grounds that it interferes with their right to practice medicine as they see fit.

Following a lead set by Congress, 19 states have restricted Medicaid funding of abortion to cases in which the pregnancy would endanger the life of the mother or resulted from rape or incest; another 12 have passed even more stringent restrictions, limiting abortions to cases in which the life of the woman is endangered.

State restrictions on abortion funding were upheld by the Supreme Court last year, but the decision applied only to elective abortions--that is, abortions that are not deemed medically necessary.

Consequently, the state and federal restrictions on Medicaid funding for abortion have been challenged in court.

In Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and West Virginia, restrictive abortion laws have been temporarily struck down by state or federal courts which ordered that all medically necessary abortions must be paid for. In October, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to reverse a similar court decision about an Illinois law.

These cases are eventually expected to reach the Supreme Court, bringing a ruling that will define what a medically necessary abortion is. The last time the Supreme Court addressed this issue--in its landmark 1973 decision that made abortion legal--the criteria for "medically necessary" included the woman's age, family situation and overall health status.

This definition is considered to include as many as 90 percent of the abortions funded under Medicaid before the current federal restrictions were enacted.

Only six states (including New York and California) and the District of Columbia pay for all abortions under Medicaid. Another eight pay for medically necessary abortions under a variety of definitions.

from the Houston Chronicle,
August 27, 1978

herstory

One of the most prolific of all women inventors was Margaret Knight (1838-1914), who thought up a safety device for shuttles in a cotton mill when she was only 12 years old. Her first patent, for a machine to fold square-bottomed paper bags, was not applied for until 1870, at age 32. This American took out about a dozen patents, mostly connected with industrial machinery, though little money was made from any of them.



this & that



November 10 there will be a benefit film premiere for Breakthrough, Houston's feminist newspaper. Ingmar Bergman's latest film "Summer Paradise" will be shown that evening at the Greenway 3 Theatre. Call the theatre or Breakthrough at 526-6686 for more information.



When the amendment to allow rescissions of the E.R.A. was defeated by 54-44, Senator Garn (of Utah), who sponsored the amendment, complained he was doublecrossed by six Senators. He said these six had suddenly and unexpectedly changed their votes because they had been subjected to "new and unusual" pressure. Their wives and daughters told them they (the women) would not live with the Senators if they voted for the amendment. One wife even threatened to divorce her husband if he didn't vote against the amendment.



How to Avoid or Cope With Rape is a booklet assembled by our women's advocate Mayor Jim McConn. Although not the solution to rape, the pamphlet has some useful information. It is free and copies are available by calling 222-3141 or writing to the Mayor's Office, P.O. Box 1562, Houston, Tx. 77001.



broad'side

- 1: a sheet of paper printed on one or both sides and folded
- 2: any strong or comprehensive attack, as by criticism
- 3: the simultaneous discharge of all the guns on one side of a ship

** as the world turns **

* The Texas Department of Community Affairs recently announced the results of a federal study of government employment policies. Women comprise 76% of the four lowest paid government job categories and less than 3% of the highest paid. The study determined inequities in family Social Security benefits depending on whether a wife works. If a husband earns \$800 a month, the family can retire with Social Security benefits of \$766 a month. But if a husband earns \$600 and the wife earns \$200, their combined Social Security benefits at retirement drop to \$669 a month. Although male-female inequities were found to be pervasive in government policies and practices, the T.D.C.A. study disclosed that more government agencies now seem unwilling to make changes to correct this inherent discrimination.

* In Louisiana (an unratified state), state law designates the husband as the "head and master" of the family. This allows him to control the couple's property as he wants with no consent required by his wife. Selina Martin of New Orleans and N.O.W. had sought to overturn this antiquated law, but the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear their appeal recently. Wives in Louisiana are left powerless until a new community property law goes into effect in 1980.

* A Labor Department study released in September reported that between 50 and 60 per cent of women over 16 have jobs in most parts of the country. Women working full time earned an average of \$5,000 a year less than men in most big cities in 1975. In the region including Texas, the median income for men in that year was \$11,586 and for women \$6,542. Employed women have stayed mostly in clerical and service jobs, which are generally lower paying than jobs held by men. Even in professional-technical positions, women are concentrated as teachers, nurses, and occupations that are poorer paying than traditional male jobs such as lawyers or doctors.

* Anti-abortion groups are pressuring various agencies that might fund abortions, such as the March of Dimes. M.O.D. funds over 80 genetic counselling centers which offer the alternative of abortion to women who are at risk of having children with severe birth defects. Right to Life groups claimed to have forced M.O.D. to close these labs this year, but M.O.D. quickly countered that as false and continue to operate the centers. Four anti-abortion groups have announced a nationwide boycott of United Fund because it funds abortions in some areas (but not in Houston).

* There is an excellent article about terrorism directed against abortion services, reported in the November 1978 issue of Ms. Magazine.

OFFICERS:

President Linda Jones
Vice President Joy Goodman
Secretary Linda Bain
Treasurer Ellen Sitton

BROADSIDE STAFF:

Yvonne Broach, Editor
Linda Jones
Joe E. Fojtasek

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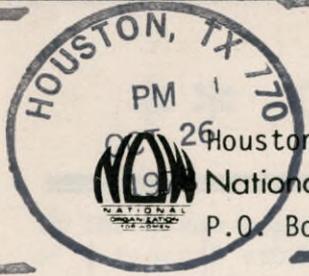
WANTED--STATE TREASURER

The opportunity to serve your Texas State NOW as the State Treasurer awaits a committed activist. It will also give you the opportunity to learn book-keeping so when you make your first million, you will also know when your accountant makes an error. If you are interested in this job, please contact Gail Baier, at 7134 Blanco Rd., #112, San Antonio 78216 or call her at 512-349-9767. You would only have to take this job until March when new state officers will be elected at the convention.

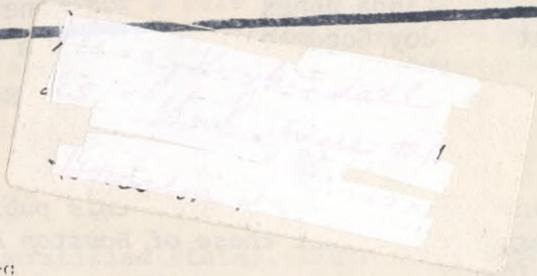
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Address Correction Requested

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