

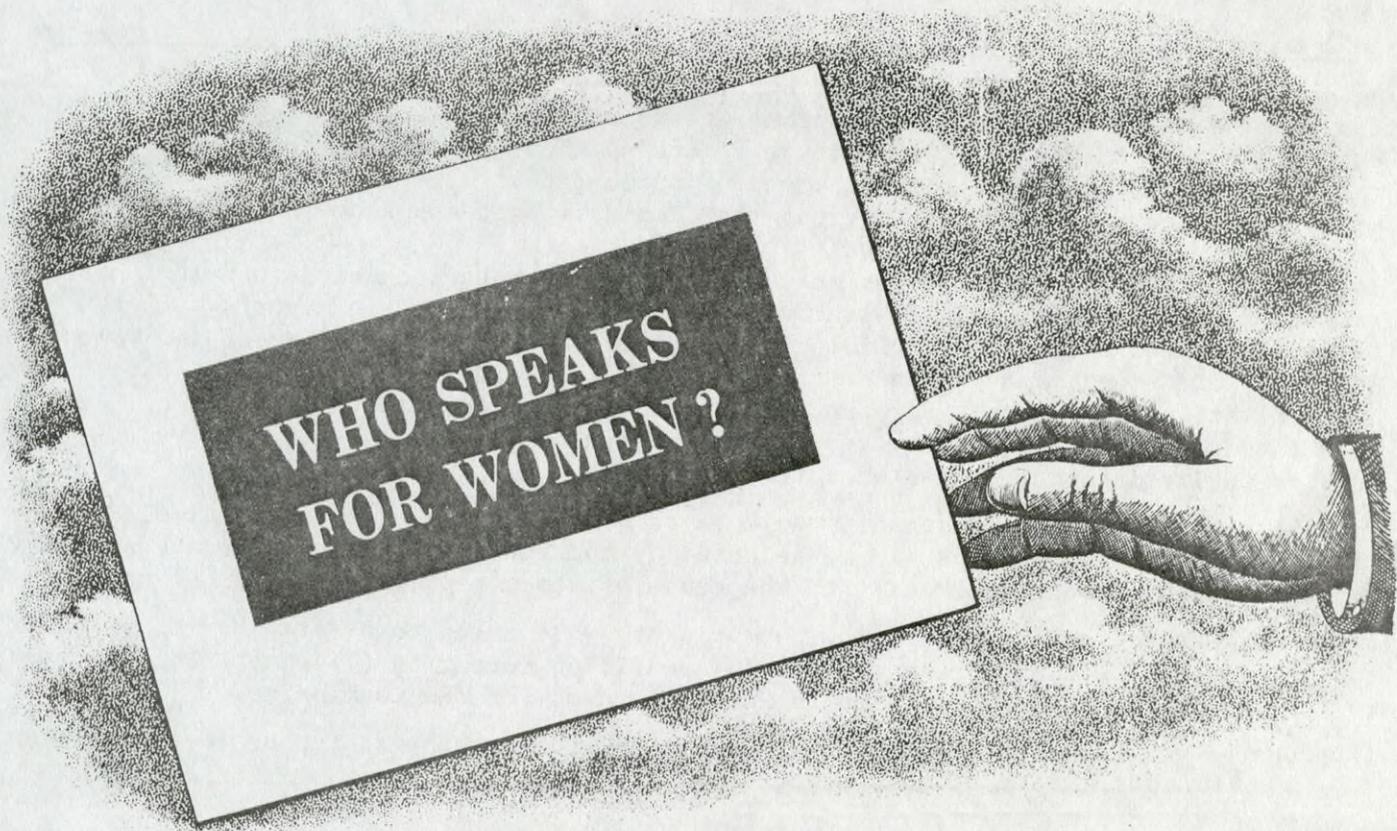
N.O.W. Bay Area Chapter

NEWS

National Organization for Women



Volume IV, Number 12
December 1976



Program/Action Meeting - 8 p.m. December 2 - Uniting Church, El Camino Real
and Reseda, Clear Lake City

Speaker: DR. NIKKI VAN HIGHTOWER, WOMEN'S ADVOCATE FOR THE CITY OF HOUSTON

As Women's Advocate, Dr. Van Hightower is concerned with equal employment opportunity for women in the Houston city government, child care for city employees, and equalization of benefits for women. She is also working toward a crisis housing program for battered women in Houston.

Dr. Van Hightower will discuss her work as Women's Advocate and the formation of a Women's Commission to be composed of an appointed representative from each of the major women's rights organizations in the Houston area.

Meeting coordinator: Ruth Fruland, 488-8027.

Agenda - Thursday, December 2, 1976

(Coffee and conversation before the meeting)

- 8:00 - Business meeting
 1) Women's Commission, City of Houston
 2) Title IX: local coalition for checking compliance
 3) Task Force reports
- 8:30 - Program
- 9:30 - Informal discussion with speaker
 Committee conferences
- 10:00 - Adjournment

Women's Commission: background information for discussion of agenda item at Dec. meeting

A meeting was held on 10/21/76, chaired by Dr. Janet Schreiber, at which it was agreed that a commission should be formed and that it should pursue the following goals:

- 1) Facilitate communication between groups regarding their priorities, projects, needs, and programs in which others might want to participate.
- 2) Establish information about each group that could be used for a new information and referral center, to be established/
- 3) Encourage formation of coalitions to work together on mutual concerns and lend whatever resources might be available to deal with those concerns from the Mayor's office.
- 4) Establish firmer and more extensive grassroots ties between the Office of the Women's Advocate and member organizations which would in turn add legitimacy to the Office and a clear base of support for programs of the Women's Advocate.
- 5) Pursue certain objectives that the Commission deems important.
- 6) Provide public information and education.

It was further agreed that membership would be composed of single representatives from all major women's rights groups, to be selected by each group, with an alternate also to be selected. No group concerned with the cause of women's equality would be excluded.

At a second meeting, held November 16, participants were asked to be prepared to discuss: (a) priorities of their own organizations (b) coalition formation (c) unmet needs of women (d) structure of the Commission (e) official name for the Commission.

It is expected that Dr. Van Hightower will report on the present status of the Commission.

Who is Nikki Van Hightower?

She received her B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Houston and her PhD. from New York University (1974). Her dissertation, on the subject of women in politics, is entitled "The Politics of Female Socialization." While in the New York area, she organized a chapter of N.O.W. in Huntington, Long Island, and served as its first president. Dr. Van Hightower has been active in the Houston Area N.O.W. and helped organize an employment compliance task force, to counsel women on sex discrimination in employment. Before being appointed Women's Advocate by Mayor Hofheinz, Dr. Van Hightower was assistant professor of political science at the University of Houston.

Meeting coordinator, January, 1977

Jeanne Saletan is coordinator for the January, 1977 meeting. Please call her at 471-2862 if you have questions, agenda items, etc.

Getting Involved: National Conference on Career Education

Rosemary Mylecraine, deputy director of the Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs (established by the Women's Educational Equity Act) called from Wash. DC in October to issue a sort of MAYDAY alert about the Career Education Conference slated for Nov. 7-10 in Houston.

Noting that content on women's issues in career education (CE, for short) - employment discrimination, job stereotyping, etc. - occupied about .07% of a program of 800 topic sessions, she hoped that Houston feminists could rally 'round to attend sessions to voice, whenever possible, these forgotten concerns. A public hearing on the CE legislation, held during the Conference, offered a good opportunity to put our concerns on record for those who would eventually develop regulations to implement the legislation.

By writing to the Office of CE, U. S. Office of Education, I put myself on the hearing agenda for the Continuing Task Force on Education For Women of Texas NOW. Dr. Nikki van Hightower, Women's Advocate for the City of Houston, and Fredell Bergstrom of Project Eve also reserved time to speak.

The hearing was conducted in a cavernous room at the Astrohall, with members of the National Advisory Council on CE, as well as Dr. Kenneth Hoyt, director of the Office of CE, seated at long tables on either side of the podium. The self-congratulatory tone of the proceedings was reminiscent of a local school board meeting, with most of the speakers offering testimonials to the rewards of carrying out CE projects on grants from the Office of CE.

Asserting that "daily I am confronted with the failure of such (career) education and the damaging effects it has on the lives of women," Nikki proceeded to show how education which ignores the fact that most women will eventually work for pay and which systematically misfits women for upwardly mobile jobs is reflected in City Government employment. Two-thirds of women employees of the City of Houston, she said, are in low-paying, dead-ended service/maintenance or clerical positions. The salaries of male employees average 30% higher than females' salaries. The motivational side of women's labor force participation has been neglected by the educational system which "has done little to dispell such myths as: (1) working is a masculine activity (2) every woman will marry and stay married and her husband's income will be sufficient to support the family (3) any paid employment is secondary and should be accommodated to or sacrificed for her true vocation - that of homemaking (4) role conflict is inevitable for the woman who departs from her true vocation by seeking employment (5) men will and should give primacy to only one role obligation - employment."

My statement backgrounded very briefly the bleak economic situation of women, including displaced homemakers and the elderly, in today's "world of work" (a favorite CE cliché). It next examined attitudes toward sex discrimination implied in the language of the CE Act of 1974 and in published statements of Kenneth Hoyt, noting the use of "generic" he except to distinguish between his or her ability and a tendency toward patronizing statements about "appreciating" the value of unpaid work. It also tested effectiveness of the CE Act as a stimulus to research on elimination of sex stereotyping by checking citations on that subject under the CE heading in major education indexes (one had 6 of 644 on the subject) and documented latent sexism in new "non-sexist" CE curriculum materials. The statement offered a sample list of questions about CE as it relates to women which could have been considered at the Conference, but were not, and it concluded by criticizing the failure of the Conference to address more aggressively the issue of institutionalized discrimination against women in American society and the obligation of career educators to provide successful strategies to combat it.

Audience reaction to the presentations summarized above made it clear that women familiar with both the CE field and the Conference program agreed with our criticism. As I finished speaking, Thelma Daley, a member of the Advisory Council took the floor to add to the record that the 16-member Steering Committee for the Conference included no women. How other council members reacted to our comments was hard to tell, but there

was one amusing indication - they were effusive_{ly} enthusiastic in their response to Fredell's presentation on Project Eve, as if rushing to demonstrate that they did too encourage non-sexist programs. Dr. Hoyt requested a copy of her report which she promised to supply, while refraining from pointing out to him that she had not been informed of the Conference, much less invited to participate in it. Such an invitation would have come from no farther than the TEA Region IV Center in NW Houston. Dr. T. S. Hancock, director of Region IV, is also an officer in something called The Greater Houston Area Educational Foundation, which has offices adjoining the Region IV Center and which was awarded a \$200,000 contract from the Office of CE to stage the Conference.

This lengthy account is offered as a sort of demonstration of the kind of cooperative network that seems to be coming into being among feminists. Alerted by skilled and knowledgeable women at the legislative center, we can provide the kind of grass roots support that prevents good laws from being weakened by weak regulations for their implementation. It is well worth our while to try to assist when asked, and on behalf of state as well as federal legislation. A similar effort to produce witnesses, for example, was being made all around Texas for a hearing on the Vocational Education Act of 1976 in Austin on November 29. Thanks to feminist legislative assistants in the offices of many Congress members, this Act is strongly worded throughout to enforce fairness to women in any program - state or federal - that it finances. Only massive support for these provisions, as demonstrated in state hearings across the country and written comments made directly to the Office of Occupational and Adult Education, Office of Education/ HEW (now and when the proposed regulations are published) can assure effective implementation of the anti-sex-bias aspects of the law. You're a bit late for the Austin hearing right now, but please get out your typewriter or stubby pencil and let someone know you are willing to help.

-- Twiss Butler

To Daddy-Long-Legs from Judy Abbott, Vassar College, ca. 1910

"Just back from church - preacher from Georgia. We must take care, he says, not to develop our intellects at the expense of our emotional natures...It doesn't matter what part of the United States or Canada they come from, or what denomination they are, we always get the same sermon. Why on earth don't they go to men's colleges and urge the students not to allow their manly natures to be crushed out by too much mental application?"

(Writer Jean Webster b. 1876, Vassar 1901, active in orphanage reform, died in child-birth 1916.)

Woman's Place Is In The House, All Right - But It Sure Ain't In The Senate!

RICK O'SHAY

Houston Post Monday Oct. 25, 1976 11D

—By STAN LYNDE



Poor baby Rick, no hands but hers can get his shirts whiter-than-white, "his" floors gleaming like glass...I bet the hired help doesn't even use the kind of margarine that makes him feel like a King!

--Nora Mertz

Recipe For Obtaining Credit in Your Own Name

If you are a middle-class married woman, you may not think you need or want to establish credit in your own name. But consider what might happen if the marriage were dissolved in one way or another. Consider that you live in a community property state. Both you and your spouse are legally responsible for all consumer debts the other incurs. Shouldn't both spouses of a marriage enjoy equal credit.

In order to establish credit:

1. List all the consumer and bank accounts you have, or you and your husband have, or that you use even though they are in his name. (It is worth noting that those women who are gainfully employed outside the home will find obtaining credit easier than will those who work at home.)
2. Go to the Credit Bureau, actually titled Associated Credit Services, at 205 Fannin between the hours of 8 am and 5 pm, Monday through Friday. Don't try to get in after 4:30.
3. Speak with someone in consumer sales and state, "I want a file in my OWN name." Be insistent, if necessary.
4. You will be asked to provide your name, birthdate, social security number, residence, spouse's name and last place of employment. (Q. Yours or his? Ed.)

If a divorce should ever ensue, it is necessary to establish this separation with the Credit Bureau by taking a divorce decree to it. If you are already divorced, you will need your former husband's signature as a part of establishing your own credit file. (Q. Would he need your signature for the same purpose? Ed.)

After Nov. 30th and before Feb. 29th, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act requires that anyone having a credit account, be it in the name of Mr., Mrs., or Mr. & Mrs., must be sent a letter asking whether the holder of the account wishes credit to be reported in both names. (Remember, a wife may be using many accounts which are actually in the husband's name.) Be sure to respond in writing, stating that you do want credit reported in both names. If you don't hear from all your creditors by Jan. 1977, let them hear from you!

These regulations are subject to reinterpretation (ahem). Already there has been some resistance by credit bureaus, banks, and department stores pleading cost or complexity. Thus, anyone experiencing any form of discrimination should register complaints through the appropriate agencies. (Call the Houston Area Feminist Federal Credit Union (HAFFCU) and talk with Rema Lou Brown. Phone #527-9108.) Lack of complaints has permitted Federal agencies to claim that there is no discrimination. It is up to us to prove it!

If a woman has always applied for credit in her husband's name, she must establish credit in her own name by demonstrating a history of responsibility. To do this, take out a small loan and repay it according to contract terms.

For example, borrow \$300 from HAFFCU. Place the borrowed money in a savings account at the credit union and pay it off.

And go to a department store where you have a charge account and request one in your name. Buy something and pay for it according to the terms specified. These two actions together will demonstrate your ability to meet payments, etc.

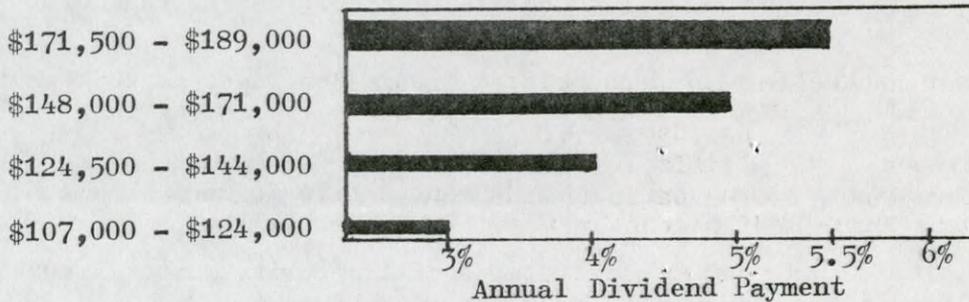
The above applies to personal loans. If you want a commercial loan for setting up a business, start early to shop for commercial lenders. Know that the Equal Credit Opp. Act does not cover commercial loans. Also that HAFFCU does not handle commercial loans.

In connection with all this discussion about establishing your own credit, ask some questions about insurance, pensions, and social security. How does your husband's coverage relate to you? Are you covered at all?

Next month, we'll talk about responsibilities of having credit. ---Becky Christman

HAFFCU Declares Dividend

Houston Area Feminist Federal Credit Union has declared a dividend of $\frac{1}{2}\%$ (2% annual rate) on shares on deposit in its fourth quarter (July 1-September 30). It is unusual for a credit union to declare any dividend after less than a year's operation. With continued luck and good management, HAFFCU projects the following dividend payments with continuing growth:

Total of Share Deposits

The Credit Union needs regular share deposits from its members for healthy growth toward our goal - to be the chief financial resource for Houston area feminists.

Sarah Weddington on Behalf of Citizens For Parenthood By Choice

"Since the Supreme Court's decision on abortion, never has there been a more vigorous attack on that decision than that we've witnessed the last few months...The Texas legislature convenes January 11, to be in session through June 1, 1977. Based on past experience in 1973 and 1975 when twelve anti-choice bills were introduced, I am sure that anti-choice legislation will be introduced and that pro-family planning funds and legislation need to be secured. To accomplish our mutual goals, we must support Citizens For Parenthood by Choice.

The purpose of Citizens For Parenthood by Choice is to preserve the integrity of the 1973 Supreme Court decision on abortion. Attacks on the decision are coming with increasing frequency, not only in State Legislatures, but also in Congress, and even through abuse of the Presidential Primary system. There are many organizations which have protection of choice of abortion as one of their concerns and there are many individuals who similarly see this matter as an essential one. There is a need now, however, for a concentration of energy and finances, specifically directed to preserving this constitutional right.

Citizens For Parenthood By Choice has opened an office in Austin to help concerned citizens and organizations throughout Texas to contact members of Congress, in order that the Texas Congressional delegation may be united in opposition to a constitutional amendment forbidding abortion; and contacting members of the state legislature as to their position on this issue so that they will be committed to opposing any new laws limiting the current availability of abortion in the state."

To request more information or send contributions, write: Peggy Romberg, Exec. Director, Citizens For Parenthood By Choice, 711 San Antonio, Austin, Tx. 78701 (512/478-0094).

Films By Women To Be Shown

WOMAN TO WOMAN by Donna Deitch and MOSORI MONICA by Chick Strand will be shown on Friday, December 3 at 7:30 pm at the First Unitarian Church, 5210 Fannin. (\$2.50 donation).

Some Observations on Medical Sexism

Participants in the "Women in the Media" workshop sponsored last spring by the Rice Media Center and BREAKTHROUGH were privileged to see an impressive slide show on the image of women conveyed by advertising in psychiatric journals - notions of what women are like and what they "need" which support and reinforce stereotyped ideas presumably cherished by psychiatrists to whom the ads are directed. Creator and narrator of the show was Dr. Virginia Davidson, a psychiatrist at Baylor College of Medicine. As a member of the Committee on Women of the American Psychiatric Association, Dr. Davidson recently presented a position paper on "Sex Bias in Medical Advertising." The paper reviews briefly the stereotyping that exists, comments on its probable harmful effects on patients, and requests that the American Psychiatric Association review its policies regarding standards for advertising in its own publications, and develop guidelines which will eliminate stereotyping and sex bias.

"Sex and character stereotyping," Dr. Davidson notes, "increases the likelihood of unwarranted drug prescribing and may minimize the need for complete medical diagnosis, in addition to reducing the status of the patient involved...women patients may increasingly be given psychotropic medications by their general physicians when there is no psychiatric indication."

The situation Dr. Davidson describes is the end product of an educational process which begins when the future physician is an infant, but is materially assisted by sex-biased textbooks all the way from kindergarten to licensing. Ludicrous misinformation about female sexual response found in "Health" texts in the Clear Creek High School Library was discussed in NOW NEWS (6/76). Textbook Task Force members ^{saw} stereotypical distortion and imbalance in presentation of male and female reproductive functions in new biology texts selected for Texas public schools in 1976. An outstanding article by Marilyn Ivory in the November, 1976 issue of BREAKTHROUGH documents with quotations from textbooks on gynecology her assertion that: "The male-dominated medical profession accepts a carefully constructed body of myths as gynecological science and sanctions selective mistreatment where women and so-called women's diseases are concerned." The elaboration of these myths - some of them suggested by section headings from the article reproduced below - into rationales for "treating" childbirth, menopause, etc. makes for some grim results, with which, however, every woman is to some extent grimly familiar.

Finding Dr. Evelyn Gendel's indictment of sexist medical textbooks and practices in the Houston Post (though only too likely in TODAY, the thinly-disguised "women's page") offers some hope that this issue is emerging into the light of public awareness. A woman alerted to sexist medical myths is a woman less likely to be victimized by a male-dominated "humane" profession.

Doctors called medical sexists

By CAROLYN KORTGE
Knight News Wire

Houston Post
10/28/76

WICHITA, Kan. — His headache and her headache may feel the same to him and to her, but chances are good a doctor won't think they're equal.

In the eyes of medical science, his is a medical problem. Hers is a female complaint, according to a physician who calls the difference medical sexism.

"Medical textbooks published as recently as 1972 have said that most medical complaints of women are imagined," said Dr. Evelyn Gendel. "They still say that women have poor protoplasm, which makes us more physically susceptible than men."

The men who have dominated medicine since its inception have convinced themselves and their patients that the problems of woman are insignificant, Gendel said in an interview.

NOW IT'S UP TO WOMEN to set those men right, she asserted. Gendel is associate director of the maternal and child health bureau of the Kansas Department

of Health and Environment and a former family practice physician.

"There's a lot women can do to change the paternalistic attitude most doctors have toward women and children," she said.

Gendel backed the admission of women to West Point with medical evidence of female equality.

"I hear doctors all the time saying 'Susie doesn't really want to know that. It would be bad for her. I'm doing her a favor by not telling her everything,'" Gendel said.

THAT TRADITIONAL male protectiveness, she said, becomes a tool with which physicians maintain control of women's bodies and a barrier which prevents women from accepting a responsible role in their health and well-being.

"If men had babies," she said, "we wouldn't have laws controlling abortion. Any laws restricting medical practice in any way have always restricted something women needed. They have controlled contraception, sterilization and abortion."

myths in med school texts

SHE'S A CHILD

SHE NEEDS PAIN

SHE LOVES RAPE

SHE NEEDS A PSYCHIATRIST

SHE DOESN'T NEED
A CLITORIS

Houston Breakthrough

November 1976

REQUIRED



GENERAL MILLS IS AT IT AGAIN DO IT NOW 4/76

Kenner Toys of Cincinnati, a division of General Mills, has been attacked by Cincinnati NOW for vicious discrimination against women and in particular, Marilyn Hyland, who has been fired twice in her struggle for equality for women employees. It seems that this corporation has a lot to learn and who can teach them better than we can? Perhaps a boycott of General Mills products?

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A rocket and repair station. Figure not included. 75¢ REFUND

Jaime Sommers THE BIONIC WOMAN™*

Beautiful 12¼" Action Figure with Bionic™* ear, arm, and legs. 50¢ REFUND

Colonel Steve Austin THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN™*

13" Action Figure with Bionic™* eye, power arm, and removable Bionic™* arm modules. 50¢ REFUND



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Houston Post-Comics section 11/21/76

This is NOT a Christmas present. ↑

This IS a Christmas present. →

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(and if you want to give a piece of your mind to the General Mills Fun Group, address is General Offices, Minneapolis, Minn. 55440.)

HOLIDAY SUBSCRIPTIONS TO HOUSTON BREAKTHROUGH

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P.O. Box 88072, Houston 77004

WOMAN BETS ON JERK--AND WINS!!!

★ The Houston Post SAT., OCT. 30, 1976 TB

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP) — The assignment seemed like child's play: Create the perfect tug-of-war machine with only a handful of rubber bands, a few strips of wood and some pieces of plastic.

So 134 students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology took to a tabletop sandlot and came up with bizarre contraptions worthy of inventor Rube Goldberg.

Some machines flapped, others jerked and a few fell apart as the products of Class 2.70, Introduction to Design, were pitted against one another in the 8th Annual Great Sandbox Derby.

First prize went to Sue Kayton, 19, of Santa Monica, Calif., whose mighty little puller, "Tugger Mugger," easily vanquished the other contestants.

"I wanted to build the simplest and strongest machine I could think of, nothing too elaborate that could break or conk out," she said.

Contestants set up their contraptions two at a time at either end of a long table covered with official MIT ashtray sand.

Opposing machines were connected to a tug-of-war string, which carried a red and black marker in the middle.

The contestants turned on their machines — powered only by wound-up rubberbands — and whichever one pulled the marker onto its side of the table was declared winner of that round.

A kit with all materials was supplied to each student. Machines had to weigh less than one kilogram (2.2 pounds), survive the rigors of competition and start and stop easily.

Some creations looked like Mississippi paddle-wheel boats, while others were variations on a simple slingshot theme. One artistic designer painted bright green dragons on the sides of his machine.

"I settled on an anchor system that kind of jerks my opponent in," said Kayton as she pointed to a round bobbin at one end of her machine. "Once my rubber bands go off, I can't budge."

First prize was a sandpail and shovel and the promise of having the winning design displayed prominently on campus.

WOMAN IN TV WONDERLAND, or "Let's watch Rockford Files, huh?"

Mariel Hemingway stars in

'I Want to Keep My Baby' Houston Post 11/19/76

7:30 p.m., Channel 2, Chico & the Man:

Ed's over his operation but decides to hire a nurse to keep him on an even keel. Trouble is she's the kind who's both husband-hunting (had four of 'em) and overly conscientious about her chores. Shirley Mitchell guests in the role.

8 p.m., Channel 2, Rockford Files:

Jim Rockford becomes involved in a court battle when he's summoned to testify about an alleged kidnaping of a union official. And Jim doesn't like what's going on; neither does the judge who cites him for contempt of court.

8 p.m., Channel 11, CBS Friday Movie:

"I Want to Keep My Baby," a TV movie starring Mariel Hemingway, granddaughter of the noted writer Ernest Hemingway, debuts. She plays a teen-ager who gets in a "family way," is abandoned by her boyfriend and faces all the problems that lie ahead. Susan Anspach, Jack Rader, Vince Bagatta and Rhea Pearlman costar. Joanna Lee, who penned "Babe," wrote and produced it.

8 p.m., Channel 13, ABC Friday Movie:

Mike Connors turns hunter in "Revenge for Rape," a TV movie debuting. But unlike his old Mannix role, Connors is a married man seeking vengeance. His young wife (Tracy Brooks Swope) was raped by a trio of men while they were on a camping trip in the Canadian wilds. Albert S. Ruddy's story has a twist ending right out of an old Alfred Hitchcock show.

9 p.m., Channel 2, Serpico:

Frank (David Birney) is teamed with a woman cop (Jesse Welles) who heads for trouble when she tries to outdo her partner. Not only is she gunned down but is raped by a drunken gang.

and also given 10 demerits for being out of uniform while on duty.

"DEVELOPING MANAGERIAL SKILLS: FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION" Workshop

Saturday, December 11th

COLLEGE OF THE MAINLAND

Room 126 * Administration Bldg.

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

To be conducted by Dr. Barbara Washburn

Tuition: \$15.00, including lunch and child care

JOIN N.O.W.: Clip and mail with your check to : Marjorie Randal, 1922 Redway, Houston 77062.

_____ I would like to become a member of Bay Area N.O.W. and National N.O.W. (\$15)

_____ I want to join, but can only afford \$ _____.

_____ I am not a member, but would like to receive the NEWSLETTER for a year. (\$4)

_____ I would like to make a contribution of \$ _____ to N.O.W.

_____ As a N.O.W. member, I authorize my name and address to be published on chapter roster.

NAME _____ Home Phone _____ Other Phone _____

ADDRESS _____ City and Zip _____

Occupation and Employer _____

Interests and/or skills which I can contribute to Bay Area N.O.W. projects:

Criticism of Bay Area N.O.W.'s program, organization, goals:

