

6A Chicago Tribune, Thursday, October 24, 1974

Black feminists slate 1st forum

THE CHICAGO chapter of the National Black Feminist Organization will hold its first political forum for state, county, and city candidates at 1:30 p. m., Sunday in the Parkway Community House, 500 E. 67th St.

Candidates will speak on issues concerning the plight of the poor, the economic state of the worker, oppression of ethnic minorities, and exploitation of women, chairperson Brenda Eichelberger said.

Formed in May, 1973, the national group has chapters in 10 cities and a local membership of about 80 black women, she said.

DESCRIBING the organization's goals, Eichelberger said. "We are working on changing the media and self-image of the black woman, seeking employment for black women commensurate with their abilities, which includes job training and retraining.

Other interests include backing antidiscrimination legislation, such as the Equal Rights Amendment, establishing day care centers, and upgrading existing facilities.

Eichelberger added that the group also fights for rights for the black, female homosexual.

"The existing system mili-

tates against lesbians in the areas of child adoption and employment, which heretofore have been ignored."



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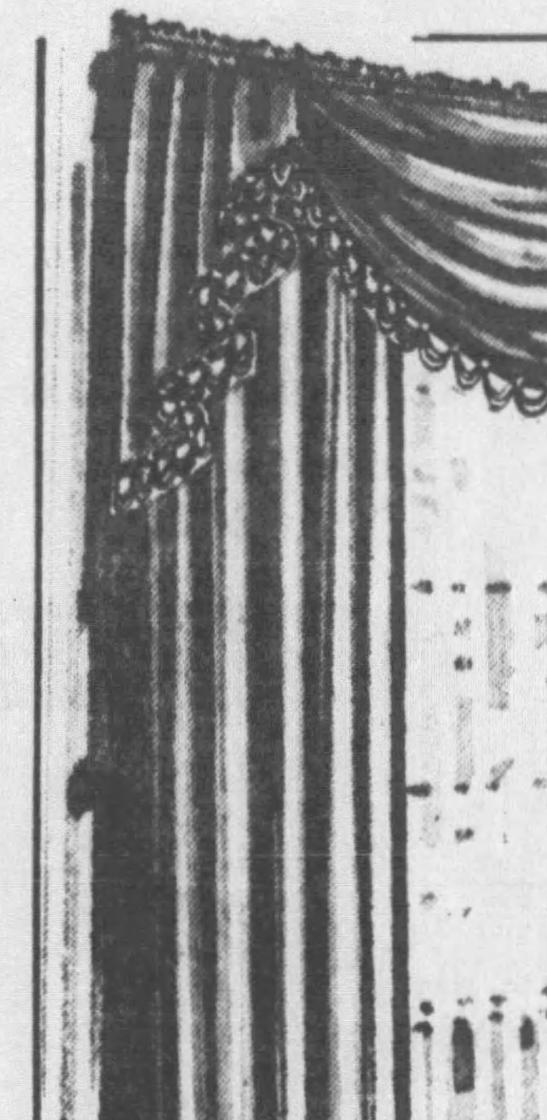
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Struggle of Black Feminists

BY ELLIS COSE
The Chicago Sun-Times

CHICAGO—Few persons are viewed with as much curiosity, suspicion or hostility as black feminists. They are being tricked into a white women's struggle, it is argued. They should be fighting for the black man's freedom, it is said, and the black woman has always been liberated.

The point is pounded home time and again that there is room only for one struggle in the black community, that these bored, white, middle-class, bra-burning housewives are just as much a part of the problem as the white male, that black feminists are traitors to their own community.

Brenda Eichelberger, chairperson of the Chicago chapter of the National Black Feminist Organization, believes the criticism is out of line. The black woman, she maintains, is on the bottom of the social-economic ladder, behind white women, behind black men, behind white men. And she believes it's about time for that to change.

'Half a Race'

"We do not believe in liberation for half a race," be that half male or female, she said.

Since organizing in June, the group has held a sparsely attended political forum and started a "consciousness-raising" group.

It has also protested the ouster of Barbara Watson, a Democrat, from the highest post held by a black woman in the Ford Administration. Miss Watson, whose dismissal is effective Dec. 31, heads the State Department's Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs. Ms. Eichelberger's organization is looking for black women to suggest as alternatives.

Why is a black feminist organization necessary, in light of existing white-dominated feminist organizations? Ms. Eichelberger believes the concerns are different.

Black women, she claims, are concerned about such things as "the disproportionate number of black men who exclusively date and marry white women." They are concerned, she said, about the "myth" that a large number of black women are being hired as so-called double minorities by employers eager to satisfy fair employment hiring standards.

The projection of the image of a more assertive black woman is needed, she said, because black women are much more assertive than they are given credit for, though still less assertive than they should be.

The organization does not have a permanent address (though it has a Chicago P.O. box number: A3489, 60664). However, Ms. Eichelberger believes support is growing.

Stripped of all its emotional confusion, the basic premise that black women are just as good as anyone else makes sense. But few things are so simple in life.

And Ms. Eichelberger will no doubt continue to take heat for pushing what is far from a popular idea.

WOMEN in the NEWS

NAMW salutes media women



Exactly thirty-four Black women in the electronic media were honored Sunday by the Chicago Chapter of the National Association of Media Women

The organization also conferred a special Chicago Chapter "Woman of the Year" award upon one of its own members, Juanita Passmore, a public relations specialist for the Johnson Products Company

The ceremonies were held in the Harriet Harris YWCA, 6200 S Drexel Avenue, and were a part of the Chicago Chapter's annual Founder's Day observance

The women were honored for their contributions to the advancement of Black Women in the news media, and for their journalistic excellence. Among the Honorees were Rosemarie Guley, News Reporter, WLS-TV, Ouida Lindsey, Hostperson for "Soul-Searching, WCIU-TV, Edwina Moore, News Reporter, WBBM-TV, Remee

Poussaint, News Reporter, WBBM-TV, and Bernadine Washington, Vice-President, WVON Radio

Other award recipients included Ann Browder, Communications Manager, TV News, Inc., Elaine Chiles, Announcer, WBEE Radio, Muriel Clair, Reporter, WMAQ-TV, Yvonne Daniels, Announcer, WLS Radio, Barbara J. Faust, Asst. Operations Manager, WBEERadio, Dee Handley, Community Relations Director, WJPC Radio, JoAnn Harris, Community Relations Director, WBBM/CBS Radio, Hermene D. Hartman, Producer, WBBM-TV, Joanna M. Jamison, Public Affairs Director, WLS Radio, Excell Jones, Public Service Director, WFYR FM Radio; Steen King, Reporter, WMAQ Radio, and Betty Lewis, Community Relations Manager, WMAQ-TV.

Also Thelma Lyda, WLS-TV, Sandra Middleton WTTW-TV, Wilhelmina Moore, WBMX-FM, Frieda W. Morris, NBC News,

Karen Nance, CBS Chicago, Angela Parker, WMAQ-TV; Dianne Preacely, WLS-TV, Detra Smith, WSNS-TV, Priscilla St. Jon, WCIU-TV, Sharon Stevens, WBBM Radio, Donna B. Taylor, WTTW-TV, LaDonna Tittle, WBMX-FM, Geri Weathers, WMAQ-TV; Wanda E. Wells, WCFL Radio; Andrea Wiley, WBBM Radio, and Dori Wilson, WMAQ-TV

Mistress of ceremonies for the occasion was Esterfina Jones who introduced the program and the Founding President, Theresa Fambro Hooks, Chicago Defender columnist and public relations specialist for the Parker House Corporation. Ms. Hooks delivered the Founder's Day message and then began the ceremonies in recognition of women in the electronic media.

The current President of the Chicago Chapter National Association of Media Woman addressed the group and presented the chapter's "Woman of the

Year" Award to Ms. Passmore.

An overflow crowd of well-wishers filled the ceremonial hall. Guests refreshed themselves with hors-d'oeuvres and champagne while mingling with the greeting honorees.

Among those greeting the award recipients were State Sen. Richard Newhouse, State Rep. Louis Caldwell, Atty. E. Duke McNeil, Asst. Deputy Police Supt. Edward Buckney, Doris Saunders (Johnson Publications), Timuel Black, Emmett C. Burke, William Tibbs, Cora Mayo, Mr. & Mrs. Matthew Bonds, Mary Grady, Hildreth Honore, and Elton Williams.

Also Clara Spaulding, Brenda Eichelberger and a host of others.

The successful affair served to highlight the numerous contributions of the scores of Black women in the communications media, and to encourage others to enter these lucrative and influential professions.



Patricia Yates: "There's really no publication that appeals to the black feminist . . . I can count the times fashion models in Ebony have had Afros."



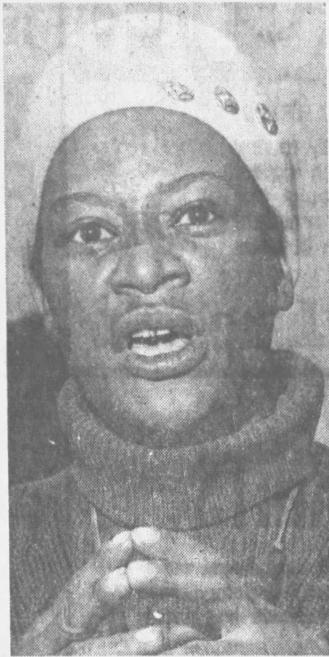
LaVerne Bennett: "We as black women grew up feeling we weren't quite pretty. It's nothing explicitly stated, but something you feel."



Lillian Jefferson: "I'm just learning what feminism is all about. There's a feeling of sisterhood as opposed to feeling competitive."



Tribune Photos by Gerald West



When black women rap, the talk sure is different

By Carol Kleiman

BLACK WOMEN follow the same guidelines as white women in consciousness-raising sessions—but a lot of the subject matter and concerns are different.

The subjects sound the same—relations with men, rape, jobs, self-image, confidence, motherhood. But when you get down to the nitty-gritty of life, black women have all the same problems white women do, with very special, painful ones of their own.

"Unlike white women, we suffer from both sexism and racism," says Brenda D. Eichelberger, chairperson of the Chicago Chapter of the National Black Feminist Organization.

EICHELBERGER, an elementary school counselor, formed the black feminist group several months ago, and consciousness-raising sessions—for black women only—were begun quickly on a weekly basis in individual homes. Typical comments which emerge at the sessions are those at left.

"I didn't know the term, but I think I have been a feminist since I was born," says Eichelberger. "It wasn't until I got into consciousness raising that my sensitivity to being a woman and being black really came out and I could deal with it."

What do black women discuss that's different from what white women discuss in their organized rap sessions?

According to Eichelberger:

- Black men and white women: This problem is a thorn in the side of black women, the fact that some black men date and marry

white women, especially when there are so many fewer black men than black women to begin with. We talk about this a lot.

- Employment: More black women have to work than white women, and we have the worst jobs, mostly in service industries; many are domestics.

- Health care: Many black women have wanted to get abortions but often couldn't afford one or could only afford a butcher.

- Morality: Many persons think black women are more promiscuous than white. This misconception upsets many of us. The black teenage girl has her baby in the neighborhood. The white teen-ager goes to live in another state.

- Housing: Where to live is a problem. We don't have so much mobility as white women or that many neighborhoods to live in.

- Credit: We talk about the fact that some stores use a different coding policy for white women and black women, and that the credit ceiling is lower for black women.

- Rape: This crime is a prime concern of black women. We talk about our indignation and about how to protect ourselves.

- Crime: We fear we are more likely to have our purses snatched or to be killed.

- Day care: The black woman has a great problem in finding nearby day care facilities she can afford.

- Self-image: There's an in-group racism, where light complexions, keen features, straight hair seem to be more desirable. Very dark women speak about being



Chairperson Brenda Eichelberger: A born feminist.

discriminated against by other black women.

- Matriarchy: The 1970 United States Census shows most black families are headed by black men. The term "matriarchy" connotes power. What power do black women have except to scrub Miss Ann's floors?

- Soul food: Even this topic comes up. Some are proud of it; some ashamed. We talk about the unhealthiness of eating pork to ex-

cess. On the other hand, soul food is cheap and has an identity of its own for black people.

Consciousness-raising groups are as vital for black women as for white, Eichelberger stresses. National Black Feminists meet at 7:30 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the Blue Gargoyle, 5655 S. University Av.

The office phone number is IN 3-3646.

Black feminist fights 'Beulah' images

By Belva Datcher
Journal Herald Staff Writer

Brenda Eichelberger is a 35-year-old black feminist who is angry.

The male-dominated media has characterized the women's movement as "white middle-class," and "... any black woman who involves herself in it has been accused of selling out, dividing the race, and an assortment of other nonsensical epithets," she says.

Ms. Eichelberger, president of the Chicago chapter of the National Black Feminist Organization, spoke at Wilmington College recently about "Why Black Women Need the Feminist Movement."

She says black women have suffered doubly in a society that is both racist and sexist. "A premium has been paid to the suffering of black men. I am not trying to minimize that suffering, rather I want to examine what this same oppression has done to the lives and minds of black women."

Ms. Eichelberger says black women have virtually no positive self-image to validate their existence, and she considers the media one of the greatest offenders. In the past, "We have been portrayed as Beulahs, Aunt Jemimas, or castrating Sapphires. These were not positive, assertive roles."

"The same holds true for today. Now we are cast as super sex-symbols, who can do all kinds of weird things in a bathtub, or super karate-kicking women that few of us actually identify with.

"There are specific areas



Brenda Eichelberger

all these other movements, be it the woman's movement, the chicano movement, or the gay liberationist movement.

"But most of the gains, if you can call them that, that we received as a result of the 60's have gone to men. According to the U.S. Dept. of Census black women earn less annually than white men, black men and white women."

She said many other black women agree that there may be a need for a black feminist organization but have trouble with the word, "feminist," characterizing it as a "white word."

"My own personal definition of a feminist is a woman who is autonomous, free-thinking, self-initiating and assertive, but most of all she is a humanist. Therefore she cannot be anti-male, because that would be 'anti' a member of the human species."

"A feminist, however, is pro-female, she seeks to define herself through no man, but recognizes that she is an individual in her own right."

Ms. Eichelberger said the movement has been criticized as being divisive. She said she has been told that black women should get behind black men and give them support.

But Ms. Eichelberger disagrees. "You cannot liberate only half a race. Instead of standing behind we should stand side-by-side supportive of one another."

"We see our actions as strengthening, utilizing all the talents, male and female, of a people in order to combat racism..."

She said in many cases black men want to place black women on pedestals, "a pedes-

tal that is even being rejected by white women." She said it is for this reason that black women cannot rely solely on black organizations for their liberation.

"We not only have to fight

large, we have to fight the racism of the society at sexism in the black community.

"It is unfortunate that many black men view black women babies."

simply as incubators of black blame. We know that society is wrong, and we have to come to the point where we can say,

Ms. Eichelberger concluded that there comes a time when one must take responsibility for oneself.

"It is easy to point the finger and say they are to

"Recognizing that you know there are no pat answers, but you do have options. They should be based on what you want to do, not what society dictates you to do," she said.

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Black women's problems cited

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"I didn't know the term, but I think I have been a feminist since I was born," Miss Eichelberger says. "It wasn't until I got into consciousness-raising that my sensitivity to being a woman and being black really came out and I could deal with it."

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Tribune Photo by Hardy Wieling

Black feminist Brenda Eichelberger: "We are humanists, and especially pro-female."

Black women form rights group

By Sharon Keller

A NEW NATIONAL organization of black women has been formed to fight the "double jeopardy" of racism and sexism, leaders of the group announced here Monday.

Brenda D. Eichelberger, executive director of the new National Alliance of Black Feminists [NABF], said the group "represents a broad cross-section of black women" whose immediate goals include accurate media portrayal, quality education, and economic development for black women.

The alliance will provide and coordinate a black women's center, a speakers bureau, task forces, and consciousness-raising groups, she said.

THE GROUP WAS formed with the intention of "not separating, but reinforcing the black movement, the women's movement, and other humanist movements," she said.

"We are neither bra-burners, man-haters, nor any of the other negative denotations and connotations placed on feminists by the mass media" she said.

"Neither are we white-feminist mim-

ickers, black-race separatists, nor an assortment of preconceived notions of others' interpretations of black feminists.

"We are autonomous, assertive, self-initiating, and free-thinking. Most of all, we are humanists and especially pro-female."

The NABF Chicago chapter is the national headquarters, with 40 local members and a mailing list of more than 1,000, she said. Other chapters are forming in Colorado, Richmond, Va., Washington, D.C.; and Atlanta.



Wisconsin State Journal

Friday

February 4, 1977
Madison, Wisconsin
52 pages ★★★ 20 cents

Betty Friedan spoke out, but 'the Pope didn't listen'

Continued from Page 1

man. I don't have to have big muscles when there are no bears to kill. I don't have to kill in Vietnam to prove I'm a man or be dominant and repressive. Yes, I can even cry.'"

The crowd responded with a swell of applause.

The next step must include solving problems for men and women both, she said.

"How can the economy handle all the women coming into the workforce now?" she asked. "The answer is to solve unemployment for men and women both by having a four-day work week (to spread the work around)."

Men and women are sharing household chores and child rearing re-

sponsibilities more now than ever before, Ms. Friedan said.

"Without these changes in the home, we will have a lot of tired women trying to be superwomen in the office and superwomen at home," she said. "It takes more than legal changes."

During her speech and at the press conference she knocked the Pope ("He says women can't aspire to the priesthood because they won't take on the physical form of men."), the Supreme Court ("They'll allow disability coverage for an uncreative operation on prostate glands, but not for a creative operation like giving birth.") and Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) foe Phyllis Schlafly ("She's a mother of five and she's going to law school. She never could have done that without the

women's movement.").

She had a special dig for Marabel Morgan, author of "The Total Woman," who advocates a sexy, submissive role for women.

"They say you should drape your nude body in Saran Wrap and ostrich feathers and tell your husband he's a great big beautiful man — even though you think he's really a shmuck," Ms. Friedan quipped.

The free lecture series will continue in the Memorial Union with Brenda Eichelberger, executive director of the National Alliance of Black Feminists, Feb. 10; Florynce Kennedy, founder of the Feminist Party, Mar. 17; and Warren Farrell, author of "The Liberated Man," May 5. Next week's lecture begins at 7:30 p.m., the others at 8 p.m.

'Black women have had to be strong'

By ROSEMARY KENDRICK
Of The Capital Times Staff

"Black women have had to be strong to survive," noted Brenda Daniels-Eichelberger, often called the "mother of the black feminist movement," at a press conference here today.

The founder and executive director of the National Alliance of Black Feminists said she enjoyed the television adaptation of "Roots" and was "basically satisfied with the image of black women it presented — it showed the internal strengths that they had."

Daniels-Eichelberger, who will speak tonight at 7:30 in Great Hall of the Memorial Union, commented of "Roots":

"There are many people, white and black, who did not know that blacks were ever treated like that. They had no comprehension of it. And yet, I can't fathom how they could think it was not that way. Slavery was a very oppressive system; the book and the TV program merely chronicled what happened."

She said the black feminist movement involves women from all economic groups, all educational levels, and all ages.

While employment discrimination is a prime concern, she said black women are also focusing on male-female relationships.

Based on her experience and perceptions, Daniels-Eichelberger said she believes "the white man is more chauvinistic in an overall sense, because it's the white man who has the power. But in one-on-one relationships, the black man is more chauvinistic."

Explaining further, she said, "The black man has been oppressed — his model has been the white male and he has learned that you take advantage of someone weaker than you. The black woman is weaker than the black man."

Wife beating and verbal abuse are proportionately more common in the black community than among white couples, she said, adding that black men often are resentful if their wives have jobs when they do not.

But she emphasized, "I'm speaking in generalities — this certainly does not apply to all black men."

Despite the fact that black women have to cope with the double problems of being female and being black, they have been slow to join the women's movement until recently, according to Daniels-Eichelberger, for the following reasons:

- Proportionately more black women are poor, and have less leisure time to attend meetings and participate in feminist activities.

- They perceived racism among white feminists.
- They often were naive about feminism, not realizing that many matters of concern to them were feminist issues.

- They were afraid of dividing the black struggle.

The latter is one of the myths about black feminism that Daniels-Eichelberger refutes. She contends that as black women move up in the world, the black civil rights movement will only be strengthened.

"Some black women feel race discrimination should be their first priority," she said. "Others feel sex discrimination should be. Then there are those who feel both should have equal priority." The National Alliance of Black Feminists works in both areas, she said.

Commenting on the long-range outlook, she said, "I don't see racism or sexism going away in this generation, or the next generation, or the third generation. Oppression is going to be around in one form or another forever."

Both forms of discrimination are "pervasive," she noted, with racism being "more blatant" and thus easier to attack.

"In subtle forms, sex discrimination will be around for a long, long time."

Her speech tonight is part of the Feminist Lecture Series at the University.

Black woman perceives equality in double image

By KATHY GREATHOUSE

Women's Staff Writer

MADISON — Do you consider yourself an aware, unbiased, liberal-minded feminist?

Then you probably know the answers to these questions:

— Who are Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Rosa Parks and Eileen Hernandez? Why should you know who they are?

Historically, all four women, black Americans, have, in their own way, played an important part in the ongoing fight for women's rights.

— How did the Suffragist Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement REALLY get started?

The Suffragist Movement grew out of the Abolitionist Movement to free the slaves.

The Civil Rights Movement re-activated the dormant suffragist movement, i.e. the Women's Liberation Movement.

According to Brenda Eichelberger, founder and executive director of the National Alliance of Black Feminists, black women in America have been working for the rights of black people and women since the mid-1800s.

While American history in general has ignored the contributions of the blacks and of women, it has particularly ignored the contributions of black women, said Ms. Eichelberger, who spoke last week on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus.

Her talk, "Black Feminists Fighting the Double Jeopardy of Racism and Sexism," was sponsored by the Wisconsin Student Association, as part of its feminist speakers series.

The Suffragist Movement, the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Liberation Movement were all outgrowths of the Abolitionist Movement, in which white men, white women, black men, black women, all played a part.

"White women abolitionists working to free slaves found that their gender prohibited them from making speeches, and the white male abolitionists kept them from exercising any political pow-

er.

"Women began to realize that they were just as oppressed as the slaves."

Both Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, who risked their lives to bring slaves north via the "underground railroad," were equally active in the suffragist movement.

But the annals of history don't record the black woman's involvement in either movement. "We only hear about Frederick Jackson Turner, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton."

The Abolitionist Movement reached its peak with the Emancipation Proclamation; the Suffragist Movement reached its peak when women won the right to vote.

(Unfortunately, this victory was partially won on the basis that giving women the right to vote meant more "white" votes.)

The "second wave" of both movements came in the late 1950s and 1960s.

"After the Civil War, during the Reconstruction Period in the South, the freed slaves, as 'first class citizens,' were supposed to get '40 acres and a mule.'

"They never got either, and the terms of those black men in the legislature or in other positions of power were short-lived."

The Ku Klux Klan and a system of "Jim Crow Laws," based on segregation, prevented black people from becoming fully mainstreamed into the southern economy as first class citizens.

Segregation occurred in housing, education, movie theaters, restaurants, public accommodations, etc. (Labels like "White Ladies" and "Colored Women" were used to distinguish restrooms.)

"If you were traveling in the South by car or bus and stopped at a service station, there was no rest room for you. Blacks had to use the fields."

South of the Mason-Dixie Line (Washington, D.C.), there was a written law that blacks had to sit at the back of the bus or train; but there was also an "unwritten law" that blacks could sit in the front, if there was a place available.

Many people do not know

that the sit-ins and boycotts of the Civil Rights Movement were touched off by a black domestic Rosa Parks, of Montgomery, Ala.

Mrs. Parks, tired after a day of work, exercised the unwritten right to sit in the front of the uncrowded bus.

When the bus became crowded, the white bus driver ordered her to give up her seat for a white gentleman.

Rights Movement, but they never attained any leadership power."

These boycotts and sit-ins were successful because they were funded through church dinners — chicken and fish dinners cooked by black women.

Black women have always been over-represented in the congregation, but not in the pulpit. "Take the black wom-



Eichelberger

When Mrs. Parks refused, the driver had her arrested by the police. She was bailed out by the NAACP, through the efforts of a young divinity student named Martin Luther King Jr.

This incident "touched off a 13 month bus boycott which broke the racist back of the bus company." ("Forget the Jim Crow Laws, we have to make money.")

Black women were also active in the teach-ins and lunch counter sit-ins that resulted from the bus boycott.

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about the term "Black Power."

"Black Power" did not mean physical threat; it meant pride in blackness, black is beautiful, keep black money in the black communities by supporting black businesses.

"A 'feminist' is not a man-hater; a 'feminist' is a humanist, so he/she can't be anti-male."

But a feminist is not a woman that seeks her definition through a man. She views this image of a woman as a "role" in a theatrical production. "You can get rid of the role by exiting the stage."

She dislikes the slang accusation that a feminist is a "bra-burner" and usually reports:

"Are you kidding? With these measurements, I need all the support I can get" or "I don't know any woman, white or black, who can afford to burn her clothes."

Ms. Eichelberger feels it is unfortunate that sensational gimmicks have to be used to get the attention of the media.

She commented that one only hears about NOW activists like Gloria Steinem and Ti-Grace Atkinson. Few people know that Eileen Hernandez, a black woman, became the second president of NOW, after its first president and founder, Betty Freidan.

Although Ms. Eichelberger started the National Alliance of Black Feminists only last May, she is already being called the "Mother of the Black Feminist Movement."

She feels many people are fearful about the term "feminist" — which has taken on a negative, threatening connotation — in the same way that they were fearful of

about the term "Black Power."

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"Are you kidding? With these measurements, I need all the support I can get" or "I don't know any woman, white or black, who can afford to burn her clothes."

Ms. Eichelberger feels it is unfortunate that sensational gimmicks have to be used to get the attention of the media.

Ms. Eichelberger also holds an MA in Counseling and Psychology, a MA in School Supervision and Administration, and is doing graduate work in Women's Studies.

She is the recipient of the Young Women of America Award for 1975-76 and the 1978 Bicentennial Excellence Award for Young Black Women.

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Legislator says commission's work done

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Sen. Gerald Kleczka, D-Milwaukee, told members of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women Tuesday during budget hearings that "your job is done."

"I think this is the biggest waste of \$150,000 that we as legislators could perpetrate on the public," Kleczka, a member of the Joint Finance Committee, said of the com-

mission's 1977-79 budget request.

He said that since a bill removing references to sex in the statutes and broadening women's rights is now law, the commission should disband.

Gene Boyer, finance coordinator for the commission, said the state still needs an enforcement agency to make

the laws a reality.

"I can't agree with you that the job is done," she said, but Kleczka argued that most state agencies already have affirmative action officials to perform the commission's task.

But Rep. Esther Luckhardt, R-Horicon, said the commission discriminates against men and blacks.

She said she is "ashamed

to think that you people even think (women) need a special commission."

Gov. Patrick J. Lucey's proposed budget includes \$144,000 for the commission, a 51 per cent increase over current spending. About half the increase would be used to hire a part-time professional for the commission's two-person staff and to hire limited term employees.

Black feminism

Panel identifies double problem

By KATHY GREATHOUSE
Women's Staff Writer

"I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns... I have born'd five children and seem 'em mos' sold off into slavery . . .

"Dat man ober dar say dat women needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted ober ditches, and to have de best place everywhere . . . Nobody eber helped me into carriages, or ober mud puddles, or give me any best place!"

"And aren't I a woman?"
... Sojourner Truth

The black woman is on the bottom of the economic ladder in America today, according to Brenda Eichelberger, founder and executive director of the National Alliance of Black Feminists.

Ms. Eichelberger and several women from the University of Wisconsin-Madison met recently to hold a panel discussion entitled "Black Feminists and White Feminists — Forming a Coalition for Effective Action."

Ms. Eichelberger commented that many black women, for various reasons, feel the feminist movement and feminist organizations, like the National Organization for Women are for the white women.

— There is the feeling of "stand-offishness" that occurs between people whenever they are strangers.

The black woman interprets the white woman's "stand-offishness" as racism, said Ms. Eichelberger. Black and white women need to know each other on a more personal level.

At the same time, "you will find white racists at a feminist meeting."

"As one black woman put it," she continued, "they don't invite me to their home, or include me in social activities — just invite me to meetings when they need money."

— Black women feel that NOW will only get jobs for white women. Although some black women do belong to NOW, there is the feeling the organization "caters to their own kind" and it will only reap benefits and jobs for white women.

This is only logical, because most of the women in NOW are white, even in Chicago, where more than 40 per cent of the population is black.

A young black woman in the audience added that because a white woman is now considered a minority, an employer will choose her to fill a minority quota, rather

than a black man or woman. "What minority group do I fall into — the one based on my sex or my color?"

White males rank first on the economic ladder; then come black males, white females, and last, black females.

(This may explain why many of the women on welfare, as the single head of the household, are black.)

Gretchen Dziadosz, a doctoral candidate and head of the Feminist Caucus of the Teachers Assistant Association, spoke on the common experiences of those oppressed.

"Women compose one half of the labor force. But two-thirds of those women work out of economic necessity.

"That is they are either separated, divorced, widowed, or their husbands make less than \$7,000 a year.

"The myth about the white middle-class woman working to fulfill herself is just that — a myth."

A 1969 survey showed that:

— 35 percent of all women workers hold clerical jobs.

— 46 percent of all black working women are employed in the area of private domestic service.

"It distresses me that neither I nor my children, nor my grandchildren, will see the end of sexism or racism.

"But I can work on the most crucial aspects of it now, in terms of the market place. Women holding clerical, domestic, and textile factory jobs need to be unionized.

"How can you find the time to go to a consciousness raising session, when you are working 8-19 hours a day to put bread on the table?"

Susan Friedman, a women's studies professor feels it is necessary for white women and black women to build separate feminist organizations, before they can come together on important issues.

"But first I need to know in what ways I am different from men, before exploring in what ways I am different from black women.

Black women might not find the support they need in a white consciousness-raising group."

But as an educator, "it is my responsibility to find out

as much as I can about black women's experiences and talk about it."

— She noted the dual oppression of racism and sexism in her women's studies classes. "White women would say to the black women, 'Are you a woman or are you black — choose.'

"Do you identify with me or the black man?" Those who identified with the black man were accused of coping out on feminism.

"This created a serious problem and shows the inability of the white woman to understand that the black

be a coalition."

The last panelist to speak was Jean Collins, minority program advisor and Extension arts specialist.

Ms. Collins, who feels the development of separate cultural identities is important, noted the impact of the television dramatization of the novel, *Roots*.

"Consciousness-raising about blacks started a long time ago, but we missed some people. Most people assume we came from Mississippi, not Africa.

"Today people understand racism better than they do

Unlike many other people, she doesn't feel the Feminist Movement is dead. "We've come through a period of tearing down, of being burnt out; so we are resting and rebuilding.

"So many people are against feminism, we have to know why we are for it and be able to explain ourselves.

"If we had held this panel discussion one year ago, there would have only been about six people in this room," she said to the 30 present — males, females, blacks and whites.

At the end of the discussion, women asked Ms. Eichelberger about the National Alliance for Black Feminists, headquartered in Chicago, Ill.

It has a 10 part Black Woman's Bill of Rights, which focuses on the right to quality education, health care, and child care; consumer service; a stable home life; political advancement; cultural recognition; individual freedom; and an accurate media portrayal.

The organization also holds sessions in assertiveness training, drug awareness, and consciousness-raising.

The last item, which she feels is of central importance, is especially needed among black males, whose egos are more fragile than the white males, according to Ms. Eichelberger.

Like most men, black men have a "fear of being left out and not wanted. I don't believe they feel it's a threat to their masculinity; but they don't want to accept that they can no longer keep a woman in her place."

Sensitivity sessions between black men and women will be just as necessary as sessions between blacks and whites.

The organization also has established a writer's workshop, a Women's Center, a referral service, and the first Women's Credit Union in Illinois.

There are now 200 members in the National Alliance of Black Feminists. "We need to form our own movement because it will strengthen both the Black Movement and the Feminist Movement."

"The black woman has always been liberated, both during and after slavery to . . .

— do back-breaking work;

— be sexually abused;

— wet-nurse the babies of her white-pedestal counter-part, while her own motherhood was being violated at the auction-block;

— be the single-head of the household and viewed as a matriarch by white racists and black nationalists;

— work fulltime in someone's home and then work a second fulltime shift in her own home;

— be viewed as an 'Aunt Jemima,' 'castrating Sapphire,' super-work horse, super-chick, sexually promiscuous and insatiable.

"Black women can not be free until all black people are free; black women can't be free until all women are free."

Brenda Eichelberger
Founder of the National Alliance
for Black Feminists

woman can't turn her back on racism.

"We need to change the attitudes of racist white women," continued Ms. Friedman.

"There is a wall between white and black woman that goes back to their differences based on history (slavery, inter-racial sex, rape, broken families, black women raising white children) and life experiences (nuclear family/woman in the home v.s. matriarchal family/working woman)."

She feels white and black people of both sexes need to sit down together and sensitize one another, however painful it may be.

"These differences need to be shared before there can

sexism," said Ms. Collins, who sees sexism even among black men.

"My sex, my looks and the way I act determines how I will be treated (by both white and black men)," she said.

She read the lyrics of several old blues songs and the words of contemporary black poets to make her point.

Both treat the black woman as a "sex machine" to be pursued by the black male whose "got so many women, I don't know what to do."

"What we are really talking about is a 'Humanist Movement.'" Because this movement hasn't come into its own, Ms. Collins chooses to put her energies into the Feminist Movement.



Section 1 Chicago Tribune, Wednesday, June 21, 1978

ERA vote won't end fight: NOW

By Barbara Hipsman

Chicago Tribune Press Service

SPRINGFIELD—Women's rights will continue as an issue in Illinois no matter what the outcome of an impending vote on the Equal Rights Amendment, a representative of the Illinois Chapter of the National Organization for Women said Tuesday.

Naomi Ross, president of Illinois NOW, said the group has decided to set up a political action arm to get involved in specific campaigns as well as to continue lobbying for the controversial amendment.

"We are not going to quit come win, lose, or draw," said Ross after she finished instructing a group of women on how to effectively lobby their legislator.

"ILLINOIS NOW has decided on a four-year long-range plan to continue to show our support not only for women's rights, but for people in general."

Ross said if ERA is not passed by the General Assembly this session, proponents will be back each session.

The original sponsor of the amendment, Rep. Allan Greiman [D., Skokie], said Tuesday he expects another try at passage this week, but admits even he won't know until he's on the floor.

"I am out of the predicting business," said Greiman as he watched supporters gather in the capitol rotunda for a rally with Housewives for ERA.

"I got out of it June 7—the last time we took a vote."

Rep. Corneal Davis, [D., Chicago], who is House dean and a chief cosponsor of the latest ERA ratification resolution, said ERA forces gave up hope for a Tuesday vote after counting heads.

"I am going to try my best to call it Wednesday," Davis said.

THE LAST VOTE tipped the scale in the wrong direction for Greiman when a group of legislators who had voted previously for the amendment abstained from voting, bringing the measure short of passage.

About 200 women were in the Capitol Tuesday to talk to legislators from their home districts. Ross said she encouraged them to "be firm, fair and friendly."

Included in the lobbying groups were representatives from Chicago PUSH, the National Alliance of Black Feminists, Housewives for ERA and busloads of supporters from the South and Northwest sides of Chicago, Elgin, Palatine, and other parts of the state.

"We are here to see that the Equal Rights Amendment is passed and we will be talking to all legislators," said Brenda Eichelberger, executive director of the National Alliance of Black Feminists.

Sun., Feb. 18, 1979

Waterloo Courier 21

Speeches, music, food highlight black history activities at UNI

Courier News Bureau

CEDAR FALLS—The University of Northern Iowa will acknowledge Black History Week this week with a number of events.

"Emancipation-Confirmation-Affirmation: A Week of Strength" is the theme of this year's recognition, which is co-sponsored by UNI's Ethnic Minorities Cultural and Education Center, University Speakers Committee, College of Education, and the Department of Educational Psychology and Foundation.

Two speakers will be on hand for the celebration.

They are Dr. Alvin F. Poussaint, associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard University, and Brenda Daniels Eichelberger, executive director of the National Alliance of Black Feminists.

Ms. Eichelberger will speak at 7:30 p.m. Monday at the Old Auditorium. Her presentation will focus on such topics as "Black Super Stud," "White Princess Syndrome" and "Black Women—Power or Powerless."

After her lecture, an informal "rap session" will be at the cultural center.

According to Patricia Edwards, director of the cultural center, Ms. Eichelberger will focus on the black woman's participation in the feminist movement.

Poussaint will speak at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, also in the Old Auditorium.

Author of "Why Blacks Kill Blacks" and "Black Child Care," Poussaint will concentrate on the theme of some of his publications such as "The Black Child," "Black Women" and the "Black Administrator in the White University."

An informal rap session also will follow his lecture at the cultural center.

OTHER ACTIVITIES include presentation of black films at the Keyhole Room in the Maucker Union on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The shows are "Black History—Lost, Stolen, Strayed," "I Have a Dream" and "History of the Negro in America."

The cultural center will have open house each day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

A soul food dinner will be in the Towers East Dining Center from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday. Students may use their meal tickets and those without tickets may attend for \$2.15.

Magistrate George Stigler of the First Judicial District will be guest speaker at an informal rap session at the cultural center from 3 to 5 p.m. Thursday.

"I Like the Music," a musical extravaganza, will begin at 7:30 p.m. Thursday and will feature Stone, Prince, Revolution, Dexterity and Voyage.

A "disco soul set" will begin at 9 p.m. Friday at the cultural center.



Brenda Eichelberger



Alvin Poussaint

The finale to the week-long celebration will be the dance-concert of "Faze-O," a popular soul rock group from Dayton, Ohio, beginning at 9 p.m. Saturday.

Tickets are \$5 in advance for the general public and \$6 at the door. Students may purchase tickets for \$2.50.

Other than the Saturday concert and Wednesday dinner, all activities are free and open to the public.

"We feel that it is an outstanding program," said Ms. Edwards. "Our speakers have broad appeal and we hope people will come to participate."

Black History Week has been a tradition among American blacks since 1926, when Negro History Week was originated by historian Carter G. Woodson to draw attention to the achievements of blacks who were generally not included in most history books.

Those wishing more information or to purchase tickets may call the cultural center at 273-2250.

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Horizons

Black women's movement growing strong

By ANDREA BLETZINGER
Of the Horizons Staff

APPLETON — "When I was a girl, I felt the discrimination of sexism in my own family," Brenda Daniels Eichelberger told an audience at Lawrence University recently.

The executive director of the National Alliance of Black Feminists was a guest speaker during the Lawrence University Women's Week, sponsored by the Downer Council.

Growing up in Washington, D.C., she felt that her parents discriminated against her. Her younger brother was given a bike, but she was not; he had a choice of jobs and could push off on her the task of baby sitting for a younger sister. She felt she always had more chores to do in the home.

As a fourth grader she discovered another kind of discrimination. She learned that a nearby playground was not for her, but for the white children.

"When children are little, they don't notice color of skin. They just know there are boys and girls," she said.

"Later I realized there were all shades of black in our neighborhood. I found there were women 'who could pass.' They got the good jobs downtown because they looked white."

Ms. Eichelberger earned her bachelor's degree at the University of the Dis-

trict of Columbia and her master's degree in counseling psychology at Chicago State University.

Before moving to Chicago 12 years ago, she was named the outstanding elementary teacher in Washington. She also was included among the Outstanding Young Women of the Year and is listed in *Who's Who Among Black Americans*.

She told her Lawrence audience about women of the 19th century — in particular Harriet Tubman — who took risks for their beliefs but received little recognition until recent years.

"The abolitionist movement led to the women's suffrage movement. Virginia Stanton and Susan B. Anthony were active abolitionists and then became prominent suffragettes, working for voting rights for women."

"But black women didn't really organize until this past decade," she continued.

She noted that it was a woman, Rosa Parks, who refused to move to the back of the bus in Alabama, and many other women held sit-ins at lunch counters in the South. These activities — at the beginning of the civil rights movement — raised the consciousness of black women.

"Still the leaders of the black movement who were striving to do away with



Brenda Eichelberger...

Jim Crow laws were all men. The women were involved, but not in the forefront.

"Yet, where did the money come from to finance the bus boycott, to form the car pools? From the fund raising chicken dinners prepared by the women!"

Later, the black women in the student non-violent committee were making coffee or typing — and having babies.

"The men said the position of women was prone, and the women got the message," Ms. Eichelberger continued. "We were supposed to walk five steps behind the men. Yet the civil rights movement brought about the black feminist movement, while at the same time helping the environmental movement and the establishment of the rights of the handicapped. Do you know some Chicago office buildings now have the elevator buttons marked in braille?

"Women also gained control over their own bodies with the pill. We were less likely to be barefoot and pregnant."

Further awareness resulted from Betty Friedan's book, *Feminine Mystique* with further consciousness raising, and from the large numbers of both white and black women entering the labor force.

In 1973 a black feminists organization was founded in New York City.

Soon chapters were being formed in



discusses feminism.

large cities across the country; and, later, the original organization was replaced by the National Alliance of Black Feminists.

Currently the alliance is lobbying for the passage of the ERA in Illinois. Members will rally in Washington D.C. to bring attention to the unemployment situation.

"There is a much higher rate of unemployment in the black community and it is higher for women than for men. The jobs for which black women have trained, such as teaching, are fields in which there are fewer and fewer jobs available. Chicago is firing many teachers. So are Cleveland and New York City."

"We are looking to form coalitions with other groups, including white women's organizations."

Ms. Eichelberger described more specific activities of the alliance: meetings in members' homes, monthly forums on issues affecting black women, study groups, writing groups, and groups to train and encourage women to speak before clubs, on radio and television.

"We have an information service to provide medical and legal aid to women."

"But the bottom line is just plain being supportive of one another, talking to each other and sharing, being friends."