

Se Habla Espanol



THAT headline, a familiar sign to San Franciscans indicating that Spanish is spoken where these words are posted, is your cue to what's going on here. These are part of a group of 55 students from Madison Junior High in Oakland, visiting the Mission Neighborhood Center yesterday as part of the Ford Foundation program for underprivileged children. From left, are: Darrell Fleury, Leona Jackson, Lloyd Gilbreath, Shirley Bernstine and Mrs. Shelley Fernandez, in charge of the tour. This was part of the school's Spanish program. Students met and spoke with the center's Spanish speaking nursery tots and adult English students.

SHELLEY'S EXCITING PURSUITS

By Caroline Drewes

IN THE OLD MOSCOW SYNAGOGUE, the man's voice was tight as he moved close to Shelley Fernandez and spoke two words, "Save me." A woman took her hand and asked, "Please . . . get my daughter out."

And there were others, appealing from their despair to this woman who had come to bring them encouragement. She had come here walking through the streets, followed, she believes, by the KGB. "In Moscow I began to understand what fear means."

That was a few weeks ago. It was, perhaps, the most dramatic moment in a tense journey undertaken because "if you really get involved in a movement, you have to know what is going on."

Now, in her comfortable home in San Francisco's Mission district, Shelley Fernandez says, "They thought I could do something. It affected me deeply. And I was helpless."

Helpless? Perhaps at that spot at that particular moment in time she was. But not always. And "helpless" is the last word one would apply to this strong, intelligent, vibrant woman, with the vivid face and the emphatic sense of her own role in life.

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Shelley was born in a New York City slum. "My father was from Mexico, he had no education and was on welfare, he couldn't get a job. My mother was Jewish."

She remembers refusing the free school lunches to which she was entitled. "If you were welfare, they put a wooden label around your neck . . . I left home at 16, mainly on account of family cultural conflicts."

Twenty six years later, at 42, Shelley Fernandez sees herself as a sort of "liaison and intermediary between the grass roots, the very poor people I came from and the establishment. I'm also a part of the establishment in terms of education and wanting to relate."

She is, too, by virtue of nature and background, a passionate worker for her fellow Chicano. And most recently, champion of another cause. She is chairwoman of the Women's Branch, Bay Area Council for Soviet Jewry — in which capacity she travelled to Russia, and has mounted local demonstrations.

Graduated from Mills College, she has a Master's



—Examiner photo by Bob Jones
Shelley Fernandez with Chula.

from San Francisco State. Her field originally was the theater. "I thought I was going to be the world's greatest director." She did achieve an assistant directorship with the Actor's Workshop, but "in this area there is prejudice against women. I realized finally I couldn't break through and to my sorrow I left the theater. However, my theater training has helped me with everything I've done in the field of human development."

Today, Shelley is on the faculty at Stanford University as instructor in Chicano themes. She is bilingual teacher for students who speak no English, in the Jefferson Elementary School District. And she is a consultant on health and education.

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"I survived," she says of her past, "with a strong memory of Dachau and Auschwitz. Many of the people in our New York slum came from concentration camps or had escaped Hitler. It affected my life. I remember my parents giving one couple their bed and sleeping on the floor. I grew up with an experience many Americans don't understand . . . Now, in the movement to help the Soviet Jews, I think of the holocaust."

Shelley Fernandez says she could not have gone to the Soviet Union alone, on her errand, if it had not been for her training in judo. Judo? Another, somehow surprising, influence in the life of this complex woman.

She became interested through one of her students, earned her brown belt diploma in Tokyo. "Women's judo," she says, "is mental and physical discipline. It has carrying-over value, you learn how to concentrate and you lose your fear."

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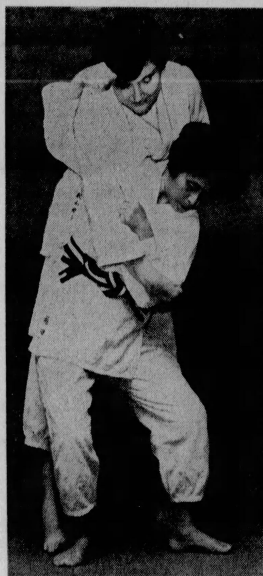
A friend in judo asked Shelley to a passover seder. Everyone present was involved in the problem of the

Soviet Jews. It was all she needed. Shelley threw herself into the cause.

"Anti-Semitism is a disease in Russia," says Shelley Fernandez. "I met scientists, doctors, lawyers with no means of support, because once you apply for a visa you are denounced as a traitor and lose your job. I met a brilliant mathematician, a physicist who was fired two years ago, and a sort of romance developed between us." She smiles, but only briefly. "It will take \$10,000 to ransom him out. I'm trying to raise the fund; it would be a test case."

Until the end of her visit to Russia, Shelley knew very little about the fellow "tourist" an Australian schoolteacher, assigned as her roommate. Except that she disappeared as mysteriously and as often as Shelley herself. In the end, the two decided to trust each other. "The shopping bags I carried were filled with clothes for the

Russian Jews. She was smuggling Bibles to Catholics and Protestants in hers. The Christians in Russia have as serious a problem as the Jews."



JUDO hold practiced by Shelley and teacher-friend Keiko Fukada

AN AMFAM COMPANY



NOW leaders Lorraine Lahr, left, Shelley Fernandez, Gail Gifford.

Examiner Photo by
 Mike Musura

NOW's goal: 'Human Lib'

By Mildred Hamilton

The National Organization for Women "has gone beyond women's rights to human liberation," says its new president.

But the work still to be done, highlighted at the group's national convention in Houston, covers a "money revolution," model rape law, ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, and aid to the older woman and the homemaker.

Three local leaders held a post-convention discussion session to talk about NOW's activities here, across the nation and spreading into international projects.

Shelley Fernandez, who was just elected to NOW's national board of directors, displayed her convention button, "You can't stop NOW" and reported, "NOW has come a long way since its 1966 founding with 28 members. Today there are about 80,000 in 700 chapters in the 50 states with affiliations in 18 foreign countries."

"The convention had 1,600 voting delegates, including some men, and at least another 1,000 participants."

Shelley, who is vice-principal of a Daly City grammar school, was able to report junior activity to the convention. Half of her school's restroom doors are now labeled "Ms." and the girls have "liberated" the basketball courts.

Gail Gifford, who is president of the local Golden Gate Chapter of NOW, hailed the increased emphasis on ending job discrimination. She helped spread the equality attitude

in a recent address to a Small Business Administration meeting when she opened her remarks with, "Distinguished Ladies and Lovely Guys."

Lorraine Lahr, president of the San Francisco Chapter, is just back from a trip to Israel where she enthusiastically distributed NOW's "Uppity Women Unite" buttons. "Today in Eliat on the Israeli-Jordan border a kibbutz worker is proudly wearing one," she said.

'We want to put money in the hands of women'

The local trio endorsed the "money revolution" national priority described by NOW president Karen De Crow of Syracuse, N.Y., attorney and author of "Sexist Justice."

"We want to put money in the hands of women in the country through better jobs," said the new national president. "Corporations, beware."

San Francisco's Lorraine Lahr sees litigation as the path to corporation compliance to end job discrimination. "Locally we will be in touch with employers who are not complying with affirmative action and we will ask them to open their books."

A model rape law is getting attention both nationally and on state levels, and local NOW chapters have pledged support for

legislation now in Sacramento to improve treatment of the victim in prosecution and to seek harsher penalties for rapists.

Other high priority items for NOW include special drives in states which have not yet ratified the Equal Rights Amendment, work to impede any antiabortion legislation, and adoption of a national uniform marriage contract "to achieve equality in the marriage relationship."

NOW members also want to guarantee homemakers an income and social security benefits in their own right rather than receiving a portion of their husbands' benefits. Making life better for the older woman, another aim, will be sought by more equitable social security and pension law reforms.

Attracting more minority members is another goal of the organization, which according to a recent survey, appeals most to women in their 20s, white, liberal, Ms. Magazine readers, and college graduates.

"One of our new projects," said Gail Gifford, "is a task force for women in prison. We are sponsoring 15 memberships for women in prison and efforts to help them on their release."

A report on all Golden Gate Chapter activities and the convention will be made at 7:30 p.m. June 26 at the Glide Memorial Church, 330 Ellis St. All Bay Area NOW members and the general public are invited.

The San Francisco Chapter is currently organizing a NOW Olympics for Aug. 24 in Golden Gate Park. Open to all women of at least high school age, it will include a variety of athletic contests. Details may be obtained from NOW, 2426 Chestnut St., San Francisco 94123.

Now, a New Channel for Activism

By MICHELLE CARTER

If ever there was a prime candidate for social activism, it would be Shelley Fernandez, the vice principal at George Washington School in Daly City, who recently was elected to the board of directors of the National Organization for Women.

Ms. Fernandez is a minority person three times over. Her ethnic background is Jewish and Chicano — and she is a woman. Until two years ago when she joined the San Francisco chapter of NOW, her activism concerned her ethnic oppression. She had been president of the largest Chicano organization in the county, Hermanos Latinos, and was founder of the Guadalupe Health Center where she "staged pray-ins against Mary's Help Hospital."

She's also involved herself in the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jewry and has expressed her disappointment with President Nixon's position of not interfering with the internal affairs of the USSR.

So no one who knew Shelley Fernandez was surprised when she sought a leadership position in NOW. "I'm interested in being in on the decision-making of any group I belong to — especially one that is so vital to the country as NOW is."

Participation in the decision-making was something often denied to her in her role as "token minority person" that she has played so often in the North San Mateo County area.

"I became a token on lots of boards in the area — both a token Chicano and a token woman. Women are consistently left out of decision making."

This week Ms. Fernandez is completing her first year as school administrator. For the past 10 years she has been teaching bilingual education at Colma Intermediate School and serving as a home counselor. She knows the area well and had long been anticipating the change.

"I was ready for this job, and I love it. I am able to see the overview of the situation from this position. At the moment I have no greater ambition. We do things here with a team approach, and I'm satisfied."

No such satisfaction met her first career efforts. Shelley wanted to be a theatre director, but found that field to be virtually closed to women. That might have been the first of a series of events that made her a natural exponent of the doctrines of NOW.

"At this point NOW is actively concerned in getting legal compliance with its goals. We would like to see more suits filed where women are discriminated against — like the suit that was just won against the Bank of America. The laws are already on the books. NOW wants to see them implemented."



Shelley Fernandez will appear on television Sunday on "Alma de Bronce" on Channel 4. Teresa Lowry hostesses the show, which starts at 3 p.m.

"We're also actively working on the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. Only five more states are needed, and we're planning rallies in the remaining states like North Carolina this summer."

She also supports NOW's efforts (and Rep. Bella Abzug's bill) to get Social Security benefits for housewives who have never been employed outside the home.

"Women have the right to choose to be housewives because that's as much a full-time job as mine. Women should receive Social Security benefits just as if they were employed in salaried jobs. Then they wouldn't have to be so dependent — particularly in old age."

"The older woman is a serious problem

in society. They're certainly not ready to go out to pasture. A great many are involved in the women's movement — from rural towns as well as the big cities. We all have the same basic things in common."

But one thing not many women have in common with Ms. Fernandez is a brown belt in Judo.

"Our society is becoming a more sharing thing. This kind of activity liberates men as well as women. In the future we'll be able to share all parts of our society. Right now women don't have to share the bad parts of Watergate because they weren't into it."

Who knows what might or might not have happened if they had been?

"Judo has helped me a great deal. You learn to get your mind and body together. They believe in maximum efficiency with minimum effort." Shelley explained in her soft, well-modulated and seldom raised voice.

"The kids (at George Washington School) often ask me 'How come when you're mad, you never yell?' That's from my Judo training. The first thing you learn in Judo is to lose the fear of falling, and when you lose that, you start to lose fear itself. When a woman loses that, she becomes very strong."

Is she concerned that her brown belt contributes to a "butch image" that is amplified by her activist feminism?

"No, not at all. My judo teacher is the most delicate, feminine woman you could imagine. Learning to control your body isn't necessarily a masculine thing. The same thing with sports. Just because a woman excels at sports, like Billie Jean King, for example, doesn't mean she has to be masculine."

Seeing that young school girls have the opportunity to develop skills in sports is part of Shelley's job as a member of a NOW task force on education. This work also includes efforts to remove sexual bias from textbooks and to maintain sexual equality in school sports programs and special programs such as woodshop and cooking.

She also chaired the task force on religion that has worked to open church hierarchies to women.

After two years of task force level work for NOW, Shelley decided it was time to seek part of the leadership of the organization, and she went to the Houston convention intending to win one of the 38 seats on the board which were elected at large.

She came to the convention with no printed campaign material, but with a strong conviction to win.

"I used the Harry Truman approach. I personally spoke to practically every person at the convention. I talked, talked, talked and asked what things they would like to see done. It was a real grass roots movement."

And it worked. Shelley is one of six minority persons on the board (seven if you count the single man as a minority person — and in NOW he is a minority), but she isn't the least concerned that she might be a token member of this board, too — a token Chicano.

Shelley is particularly encouraged by the presence of men in Houston. "Remember it's the National Organization for Women, not of women."



JAYNE TOWNSEND, NOW PRESIDENT
'Grounds date back over 100 years'



SHELLEY FERNANDEZ OF NOW
'It's not the business of the bishop'
—Examiner photos by Bob Bryant

NOW's abortion protest at St. Mary's Cathedral

By K. Connie Kang

"God never said thou shall not abort," a leader of the National Organization for women said. The group yesterday took its protest against a San Diego bishop's decree, denying communion to Catholic women favoring abortion, to St. Mary's Cathedral here.

"It's not the business of a bishop, a man who has never married or had children to decide whether a woman should or shouldn't bear a child she doesn't want," said Shelley Fernandez, a NOW national board member and vice principal of George Washington Elementary School in Daly City.

About 25 women and a handful of male sympathizers carrying placards reading, "A Child's Right to Be Wanted," circled in front of the cathedral. They passed out badges saying "I am a friend of NOW" as morning worshippers hurried inside.

Some churchgoers took the yellow NOW cards and pinned them on their coats, but most put them inside their pockets or purses and walked on.

"It's about time the church got with it," said one Catholic named Greg Gallipeau. "The church must remember, we're the church."

Others were less committal, but most said they felt

abortion was a personal issue, a matter between a woman and her doctor.

Bishop Leo Maher of the San Diego diocese last week sent letters, to be read in all the parishes under his auspices yesterday, ordering priests to refuse sacraments to Catholic women belonging to NOW or other pro-abortion groups.

He labeled NOW a group guilty of "a serious moral crime" for its "shameless agitation" for abortion which he called "sinful."

San Francisco Archbishop Joseph T. McGucken has not taken a public stand on Bishop Maher's edict, but he said abortion amounts to murder and Catholics shouldn't be involved in it as individuals or members of organizations.

NOW members yesterday called Bishop Maher's order "medieval" and a direct interference with the civil liberties of women.

Jayne Townsend, president of the San Francisco NOW Chapter, said a 1973 Supreme Court decision ruled that states can place no restriction on mother's right to abortion in the first three months of pregnancy.

She said in her study of the issue, the only ground for the Catholic Church's opposition to abortion dates

back to Pope Pius IX's order in 1869.

"That was more than 100 years ago when abortion was unsafe," Ms. Townsend said.

"If the church has modernized in other areas . . . nuns are no longer wearing habits, priests are working with labor leaders, why is it impossible for them to change their views on abortion?" Ms. Fernandez asked.

Church leaders ought to look around and see what happens to children who are unwanted, she said.

"They turn to violence . . . they spend a lifetime trying to straighten themselves out."



A reception at Guadalupe Health Center recently honored city, county and state officials and those who have assisted the center in various activities. Guests included optometrist Dr. Anacleto Gutierrez (left), Daly City Mayor Victor Kyriakis, Dr. San Wycoff, chairman of dentistry; board member Shelley Fernandez and County Supervisor James Fitzgerald (right).

Rotarians hit the road . . . but not in fear of feminists

Thousands of Rotarians from all over the world left San Francisco by bus and boat yesterday to visit Rotary homes in Salinas, Cloverdale, Sacramento and points in between.

A spokesman for Rotary International's 68th annual convention now being held here denied, with tongue in cheek, that delegates were getting out of town to avoid the wrath of women's liberation supporters.

Rotary's 400-member council on legislation, repeating a performance of three years ago, voted overwhelmingly Monday to keep Rotary's doors closed to women.

Shelley Fernandez, president of the San Francisco chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), said she couldn't believe it.

"This is incredible," she said. "We can't let this go by. We will meet next Tuesday night to adopt a resolution denouncing Rotary's action and call upon NOW's national board to take similar action."

Men-only vote prompts stunned reaction from NOW

Fernandez wanted to know how Rotary could reject women as members in this "enlightened" age. She said there are numerous successful women in business and the professions who are highly qualified to sport a Rotary lapel pin.

"Maybe we will have to do a kind of Lysistrata operation to bring Rotarians to their senses," she said.

Her reference was to a comedy by the classic Greek playwright Aristophanes in which women tried to put an end to war by withholding their sexual favors from the warriors.

Asked whether she would rec-

ommend such a strategy to Rotarian wives, Fernandez said:

"We would recommend that they withhold ALL social pleasures men seek from women."

Most of the 6,300 delegates, wives and friends who left yesterday to visit Rotary homes were bused to their destinations from San Francisco hotels where they are staying, but others, bound for homes in Marin and Sonoma counties, started their journey from the Embarcadero aboard Golden Gate ferries.

Before they left, a new journalism scholarship program for both men and women was announced at Civic Auditorium convention headquarters by trustees of the Rotary Foundation.

Twenty awards for 1978-79 will include travel, tuition and living costs for a year's study abroad.

Young men and women seeking such scholarships should apply for them through the Rotary clubs in their communities.