

ERA

(EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT)

What does the ERA say? It's simple and straight-forward.

"Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex;

"Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article;

"Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification."

ERA first got its head start when the original constitution of 1787, which was founded upon English common law, owned by husbands or by masters, without independent individual rights under the law. Secondly, the courts have failed to interpret the 14th Amendment to include all women.

For blacks, the 15th Amendment conferred citizenship and the right to vote upon the emancipated slaves and the 14th Amendment has not included women within its guarantees. Women have but one constitutional right, the right to vote, for which a specific constitutional amendment was necessary.

The leader of the National Women's Party, who played the dominant role for women's equality was Alice Paul. She was founder and Honorary President Emeritus, which introduced in Congress the first ERA bill (1923), ever proposed for women.

Since the passage of the ERA in Congress, the National Women's Party has exerted all of its efforts and money to obtain ratification of the ERA in the States.

The National Women's Party is a non-partisan and non-profit organization, depending on dues and contributions for the ERA and restoration of the Sewall-Belmont House.

Essentially, the proposed amendment provided that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex." The measure was first introduced in 1923 after it became apparent to the suffragettes that simply achieving the franchise did not solve the problem of discrimination against women. In fact, for the following 35 years, the amendment was a project of the National Women's Party, an organization founded by suffragettes, which maintains a headquarters only a block from the Senate Office Building. It was primarily this group of women, aided by the business and professional women's clubs, which keep the proposal alive for decades and did most of the lobbying. The amendment was routinely endorsed by the major political parties, having been part of the Democratic platform for 26 years and the Republican platform for 30 years.

When Congress approved the ERA to the constitution nearly 5 years ago, it seemed a logical, even perhaps perfunctory capping of women's renewed struggle for equality. Within 9 months, 22 states had ratified

the amendment and the necessary 16 more were expected to do so long before the 1979 deadline. Then in early 1973 various groups mounted a power opposition driven protesting that the amendment would abolish many legal safeguards for women, like protection labor legislation, and would require women to be drafted and go into combat. Only 8 more states approved the ERA in 1973 and 3 in 1974. Meanwhile, Nebraska and Tennessee voted to rescind their ratification. (Congress decided recently that once a state votes yes it cannot rescind).

The ERA in standing to the states is; the states which have not ratified the amendment are: Nevada, Utah, Arizona, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Florida, and Mississippi. The majority not ratified is the southern states. Update, 35 states have ratified the ERA with 3 more needed by March 22, 1979, for it to become part of the United States Constitution.

As for North Carolina, ERA cleared the North Carolina House of Representatives 61-55, February 1977 and was sent to the Senate where survey indicated the measure was sufficient strength to win approval.

ERA, very simply assures that rights under the law shall be shared equally by men and women regardless of gender. It puts women where they have never been before, the United States Constitution. However, the ERA does not belong to the "Women Liberation Movement". The Movement began in the mid-1960's, but ERA was authored and sponsored for 49 years by the National Women's Party. Their role purpose and dedication over 49 years and their role activity, was to help women attain a legal status — to become a person — by an Amendment to the United States Constitution by passage of the ERA. For passage of the ERA will give a legal guarantee of equality, full citizenship and true justice for half of our population — women.

Questions about ERA

1. Why should we have an ERA? Because women have never been accorded legal status as persons or guaranteed equal protection of the laws under the Fifth and 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

It is also necessary because women's rights are not fully protected; Title Seven of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972 are limited in their scope.

It would also write into the United States Constitution the principle of individual liberty and freedom of action upon which this nation was declared to be founded.

2. How does ERA affect employment? Federal laws already prohibit discrimination in employment because of sex. Further, the Equal Rights Amendment would simply prohibit any discriminatory

action by the government. It is agreed that the amendment would have no effect on the private employer.

3. What is the reality the ERA can influence? First it is essential to realize the ERA is a law affecting other laws. It applies to laws and situations specifically covered by laws. The ERA cannot directly affect areas not controlled or regulated by law. It cannot and will not have any legal impact on the workings of an outgoing marriage relationship. It can, however, have a profound and positive impact on marriage and the security of the family by its effect on other areas of women's lives. Support, in the form of both money and child care, will be the responsibility of both parents. The women who have devoted their lives to caring for their husbands and children will be treated more justly than they are now.

4. How would ERA affect the

custody and support of children in case of divorce? The welfare of the child is the legally established principle of determining custody and support of children. State courts would not be deprived of their functions in deciding cases, nor State legislatures be deprived of enacting governing laws. The ERA would not deprive mothers of child support payments nor of custody. It would make fathers eligible for custody rights and at the same time eliminate arbitrary preference given to fathers for custody of a son, as is the present law in some States. Both parents would be liable for support of children. The amount of liability would be based upon their earnings and economic circumstances, not upon the sex of parent. In balancing financial responsibilities a value would be placed upon the services contributed by the mother in the home, as provided in the Uniform Marriage and Divorce

Act.

5. How would ERA affect "homemakers" and property rights of married women?

The career homemaker has a most demanding job which utilizes enormous amounts of time and talent which women choose to do. ERA will give this career the dignity and recognition it deserves.

The laws of 42 States are grounded in the common law principle that the one who earns is the one who owns the property acquired with his or her earnings. The homemaker, having no earnings of her own, has no ownership in the property acquired during the marriage. Husbands and wives will not be required to contribute equal amounts of money to marriage. Homemakers will be homemakers and wage-earners can continue to provide financial support.

To be continued in the next issue of Ram's Horn.

Emma Lesane

Chaplain's Corner

Southeastern Community College has established and set up a Chaplain's Corner for the Students. A minister will be in the student lounge from 10:00-12:00 noon on each Tuesday and Thursday. The first session was held on April 5, 1977. A minister from the Columbus County area will be available to these students. This idea came about by a survey on campus of the students. One request in this survey was that students be given a minister on campus. Different races and faiths will be available, due to racial and faith differences of the students.

The Reverend Tommy Beaver was with us on the first session. Walter McDaniel, a SCC counselor and minister sat in with Rev. Beaver. The minister Beaver is from Whiteville, North Carolina. He Pastors at the Christ the King Lutheran Church, Whiteville, North Carolina. He is originally from Salisbury, North Carolina. He earned his degree at Appalachian State University. He attended also the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina. Minister Beaver, served in a church before coming here. He came to this area as a mission development for a Lutheran Church. He has two kids ages 7 and 3. He is always escorted in his life by his lovely wife, Rose. He says he enjoys the areas especially hunting, camping and boating.

Minister Beaver says he hopes this will work for the students. Beaver says he wants the students to know they are here to help. He says he wants students to know the conversation isn't limited to just religion. He wants students to feel free to talk to him (the Minister) about anything. He said he would just like for them to come over and say "HELLO."

McDaniel says things will go greater if participation goes okay. He says the hours will be

changed to the students needs. He says he wants this thing to be flexible. He also suggest a gospel hour, Bible study or prayer meeting, whatever suits the students. Minister McDaniel says the message we want to get across is quote, "We care and we are human." He says too that the ministers show their care by actions. The actions are being in the sessions.

Minister Beaver says it should be like going to church. He says one doesn't have to go to church every Sunday but go because

you feel the need. You feel you have burdens you need to resolve. He wants us to come on Tuesday and Thursday at the same time. He wants us to feel free to come by.

The ministers say if the students feel the lounge isn't an appropriate place, let them know. They want to know whether or not privacy is wanted. So, the students should feel free to correspond with these ministers.

JoAnn Munn

SCC's Weekend College

Southeastern Community College has established a weekend college. It is open to all who have the opportunity to attend. We know that there are many housewives and others who are not able to attend during the week and have wanted to take a single course or pursue a degree of some kind.

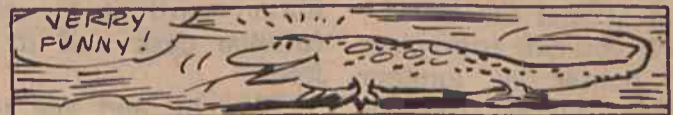
On March 12, 1977, in the lobby of the Main Building, registration was held at 8:30 a.m. Classes began at 9:00 a.m. on March 12, 1977.

There is an enrollment of 60 students. There are courses

being offered that are of interest and based on the course need. ENG 101 - Freshman English - and Beginning Tennis are the two courses that are most interesting to the students enrolled.

"We will run courses anytime we can get enough people interested" quoted Dean Brown. So, husbands, wives, and students who can't work a class into your weekly calendar, come by and look into our Saturday college at SCC.

ANN BROWN



The ancient Greeks believed the first lizard was a young man who dared to laugh at a goddess.



The odds against rolling a 12 and against rolling a 2 at dice are each 35 to 1.