'For Better or For Worse' gives a woman's view of family life, 3-D

Miss Manners, 2-D

Splitsville, 3-D

Single-minded cooking, 3-D

Giancarlo Giannini plays eight comic roles in a hilarious Italian film, 4-D

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The up-and-down life of the ERA

By RONALD WRAY BOYD
St. Petersburg Times Staff Writer

Initially feminists saw it as the ultimate victory. Now they fear it as the ultimate defeat. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is in trouble.

Nothing in the history of constitutional amendments quite matches the ERA story. What seemed a simple enough question at first — *Should the Constitution be changed to specifically protect the rights of citizens regardless of sex?* — would later become an emotional rallying point for liberal and conservative forces, rural and urban antagonisms and the focus of dyed-in-the-wool traditionalists who said it was time to put the whammy on a season of social change ushered in by the turmoil of the '60s.

AT FIRST, ERA appeared to have it made. When Congress finally passed the amendment and dutifully sent it off for the necessary state-by-state ratification, the women's movement was estatic, calling ERA the crowning achievement in a 50-year lobbying struggle.

It appeared American women would soon have a constitutional foundation for sure-footed equality with men in jobs, legal proceedings and finances, rights that were clearly denied in the not-too-distant past and which feminists feared could be easily taken away from them in the not-too-distant future.

The incredible push of women into America's labor force and the tide of change sweeping traditional notions of family appeared to be conspiring to put the three-letter word "sex" in the Constitution right along with "race," "creed" or "color."

So this single sentence went before the state legislatures for the required two-thirds approval before the U.S. Constitution could be amended: *Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.*

Thirty-eight legislatures needed to pass favorably on those 24 words. At first, approval appeared inevitable. Only hours after the U.S. Senate's final action on the ERA, Hawaii's House voted 51-0 and its Senate 25-0 in favor of ratification. The pro-ERA bandwagon was off and running. Within one week, seven states passed the ERA. Within one month, 14 states had ratified. At the end of the first year of the seven-year ratification period, the ERA had accumulated the support of 30 state legislatures, only eight short of victory.

BUT THEN something happened; something bad for the ERA.

ERA supporters had apparently misjudged the opposition.

"Success came too easily and we were not prepared," political scientist Dr. Jo Freeman told *The Christian Science Monitor*. "There's always a backlash to social movements, and we were caught sleeping."

Under the leadership of Phyllis Schlafly of Alton, Ill. the anti-ERA forces swung into action.

Mrs. Schlafly, long active in conservative Republican politics, hit a nerve when she argued that ERA was not a question of legal rights for women — those were already provided for by most state laws, she argued. Instead, the issue was the changing role of women in society.

To Mrs. Schlafly and her supporters, the ERA was really an endorsement of the *Annie Hall* world of liberated urban women, a world where abortion, divorce, government financed day care, sex education in the schools and gay rights went arm-in-arm. Such a world was not what most American women wanted for the future and certainly not with the backing of the nation's highest legal document, argued Mrs. Schlafly.

Overnight ERA supporters were placed on the defensive. Arguments no longer centered on how the ERA could benefit society and women, but on whether the ERA would mean male-female restrooms, homosexual marriages and a host of other emotion-laden issues.

Conservative Christian groups, perceiving the ERA as a threat to the family and church, took Mrs. Schlafly's side. Politicians, who had been undecided or had given lukewarm support to the ERA, were having second thoughts. The lobbying efforts of Mrs. Schlafly's team cast a large shadow over the future of the ERA.

AT THIS POINT, many state legislators jumped on the anti-ERA bandwagon for a variety of reasons, including a long-building resentment over the shift of national focus from statehouses to the halls of Congress. Here was one issue state legislators could shoot back in the faces of the Washington lawmakers with a clear message — we understand the mood of the country better than you.

Add to all this a bickering leadership within the feminist movement and a growing identification of women's rights as a mostly big-city, radical movement, and it becomes easy to see why the ERA was increasingly in hot water in America's more conservative states.

Since January 1977, when Indiana was the last state to ratify the ERA, the movement has suffered serious setbacks. The legislatures of five states — Idaho, Nebraska, Kentucky, Tennessee and South Dakota — rescinded earlier ratification. The legality of that move is challenged by the pro-ERA forces.

Of the 15 states where the ERA has not been ratified, the opposition remains well-organized. In many of these states, the ERA has failed to pass on several occasions.

IN FLORIDA, the ERA has consistently been passed by the House only to fall as few as two votes short of passage in the Senate.

But all has not been bleak for the pro-ERA forces. They gained a major victory last year, when Congress decided to extend the deadline for ratification until 1982, the first time an extension to a Constitutional amendment process was granted since Congress started setting deadlines in 1917.

The legality of the extension however has been questioned by the anti-ERA forces who promise to go to court should the amendment gain another three states, bringing the total to the necessary 38 ratifications (And that 38 figure assumes those five states which voted to rescind their previous approval did so illegally and will be overturned).

DESPITE THESE legal and political snares, ERA-backers say they are not giving up. The fate of their cause now appears tied to a few states where passage is considered most likely — Florida, Illinois, Virginia, Nevada and Arizona.

As the ERA question focuses increasingly on these states, Florida has found itself squeezed by friend and foe of the constitutional amendment.

In a let's-throw-the-hot-potato-to-someone-else routine, the Legislature placed a "mini-ERA" question on last November's statewide ballot. The question, in the form of an amendment to the state's Bill of Rights, would have made it illegal to discriminate on the basis of sex. The measure lost by a large margin, as all eight state constitutional ballot revisions were defeated, an act of voter disenchantment that led one state legislator to remark: "The Ten Commandments would have lost if they were on the ballot."

What the defeat of the mini-ERA means depends on whom you listen to. Anti-ERA forces said it is a clear message from the people of Florida — no ERA here. Proponents of ERA said it was meaningless, a constitutional question that went down to defeat because the voters were asked to change too many things at once.

Further, pro-ERA forces point to numerous public opinion surveys that show the nation's populace, including Floridians, support women's rights in general and the ERA in particular.

After the ERA failed once again this year in the Senate, the focus moved to next year's elections for the state Senate.

"Next session won't see a change in the cast of characters in Tallahassee, so I don't think many ERA supporters see it as productive to invest much energy on getting the issue passed," says Seth Gordon, an ERA lobbyist from Miami.

GORDON SAYS the ERA in Florida "has gone beyond the issue itself and has become a symbolic battle of wills within the Senate." In particular, Sen. Dempsey Barron, D-Panama City, powerful chairman of the Senate Rules Committee, has turned his opposition to the ERA into what Gordon calls Barron's "last hurrah."

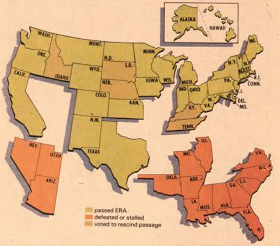
Barron antagonizes pro-ERA forces with observations such as, "Women don't need any more help. They have 50 percent of the wealth and 100 percent of the other thing men need."

If pro-ERA backers think Barron will be vulnerable for defeat next year (an unlikely possibility), they may devote time and money to his opponent, says Gordon. In any case, the ERA forces will keep a close eye on the positions of state House and Senate candidates on the ERA question and work for those whose vote could finally add Florida to the list of ratifying states.

And, of course, the anti-ERA forces plan to do exactly the same thing, mostly under the leadership of the Florida Federation of Women for Responsible Legislation.

"I AGREE things are now centered on the state elections in 1980. If we win there, then that's the ballgame. There will be no ERA in Florida," says Shirley Spellerberg of Miami, founder of the federation, an anti-ERA lobbying group.

Once pushed as the crowning achievement of the women's movement, the ERA now languishes on the critical list with two teams attending to its condition — one working for its survival, the other for its death.



Present status of the Equal Rights Amendment. St. Petersburg Times — FRANK PETERS

How working women view the ERA struggle

By RONALD WRAY BOYD
St. Petersburg Times Staff Writer

Now that the Equal Rights Amendment has become an arm wrestling struggle between politicians, many working women are confused and angry.

St. Petersburg beauty salon owner Karen Mahan, for one, cannot understand it: "I'm not afraid of the ERA. It's a very important thing for women. You may not be able to stop people from having negative attitudes about women, but you can pass laws to protect women from being discriminated against."

Mrs. Mahan says most of the women who come into her shop are for the ERA, as far as she can tell. As for the state legislators who come to get their hair done at Karen's Head Shop, Mrs. Mahan has let them know how she feels — "women need equal rights protection."

TYPICAL OF the attitude of many working women on the Suncoast was that of an employee of a local savings and loan. She would talk about ERA, but did not want her name published for fear of repercussions from her employer.

"Men get the higher positions while women are looked down on," she said. But if ERA was approved, job equality might improve. Or so she hopes, adding: "We shouldn't need a constitutional amendment to get what should be ours — but we do."

During a random telephone survey, it was hard to find an anti-ERA working woman. One who would talk, but again declined to be identified, worked as a checkout clerk for a large supermarket chain: "I think women should be treated as equals on most things, but I really don't think we can demand the same jobs as most men have. What would it accomplish if women put men out of work?"

There's no 'mystique' about Betty Friedan, — she's tough, dedicated and to the point

'Poll after poll shows that Americans and especially women are for the ERA. Support has increased enormously among women in recent years as more and more women have had to go to work for economic necessity.'
— BETTY FRIEDAN

By RONALD WRAY BOYD
St. Petersburg Times Staff Writer

Betty Friedan did for feminism what John Travolta did for disco.

The 1963 publication of Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* is generally credited with galvanizing the modern-day feminist movement.

In the pages of her bestseller, Friedan raised the notion that not all American women were satisfied with the world of ring-around-the-collar and dishwasher-spot blues. Women, at least those Friedan knew in New York, wanted more — they wanted careers that would allow them to contribute beyond the confines of home.

WHETHER MOST women shared Friedan's outspoken attitudes or simply needed the money, they did just what she predicted. In the 16 years since *The Feminine Mystique*, women have grown from about 30 percent to about 50 percent of the American work force.

And Betty Friedan has trailed right along, articulating in her sometimes abrasive way the hopes and needs of American women. Her persistence and never-shy-from-a-fight spirit have earned her the title "The Mother Superior" of the women's movement.

In the last few years, the 58-year-old mother of three has stumped the country for the Equal Rights Amendment.

Stopping briefly on the Suncoast last week for a paid appearance at a St. Leo's College lecture series on ERA, Friedan talked about one of her favorite subjects:

Aren't you frustrated by some of the setbacks ERA has suffered?

There's always the darkness before the dawn. We'll get it. There's no question that it is the will of the people. Poll after poll shows that Americans and especially women are for the ERA. Support has increased enormously among women in recent years as more and more women have had to go to work for economic necessity. They know they need all the protection they can get. I lecture a lot at colleges and tell the women there that the doors that they see open for them today may not stay open and so we must — *must* — get the constitutional underpinning for all we've won in equal opportunities, so we don't have to have their generation or their daughter's generation do it all over again.

Yet ERA appears stuck. Why?

It's "stuck" three states short of a ratification. We did pull off a political miracle the summer before last because in the conservative mood of Congress we got the deadline extended . . . All the lies and obfuscations that have been done by the reactionary right to obscure the real issues and to delay the ratification didn't work. We are three states short and one of those states has to be Florida. I must say that if half the political muscle that the President of the United States put into winning a popularity contest in Florida this month had been used to educate the leadership of the Democratic Party and Democratic Legislature in Florida to the absolute necessity for the Florida Legislature to ratifiy the ERA, we would have had the ERA ratified in Florida. We would have had it in Illinois and all the other states would be vying to be the third state. So don't give me this nonsense that people aren't for it. It's the obsolete, irrelevant politicians like Jimmy Carter and the like that don't understand the necessity of it and they will be retired as a result.

Are most women supporters of ERA politically involved enough to retire politicians they don't like? Haven't a lot of people given up on politics, leaving it to the special interests?

ERA is a gut issue for women. Women should sit on their hands in Florida for Jimmy Carter. He hasn't delivered on his promises. If the politicians are obsolete, if the politicians are irrelevent, if the politicians don't meet your real needs, who needs them? Who needs to keep these people in luxury in the White House, if they don't meet your real needs. Yes, there's apathy, but it's because the way the politicians have acted. We have a bunch of corrupt and absolutely cynical politicians in this country, not just as far as women are concerned, as far as everyone is concerned. That's why there's apathy. If any politician — and I don't care if his name is Jimmy Carter or Teddy Kennedy or Baker or whoever – wants to be elected president and have the people behind him, then *he's got to do something*. You know what I think the response to the Pope was in America? An absolute hunger for real leadership, for honest leadership. But even there, because the Pope has a blind spot on women, the nuns and women in the church had the courage, despite all this charismatic popularity of the Pope, to stand up and say 'You must recognize the personhood of women, the equality of women.'

Do you think continued economic problems will slow the move towards women's rights? Some historians say people become socially conservative in tough economic times.

See FRIEDAN, 7-D

savvy FARE

Collegians pick 'best' brews

Nine students from nine colleges — selected "for their contributions to the field of beer drinking" — were empaneled recently as a testing board for *College Papers*, a specialty magazine published by *Rolling Stone*. The taste test, conducted with unmarked glasses, included 26 brands of foreign, domestic and local beers (darks, "lights" and ales were excluded). The champion brand was Budweiser, with Hamm's in second place and Australia's Foster brand third. The other beers, in descending order, are: Kirin (Japan); Ballantine; Pearl; Old Milwaukee; Rolling Rock; Schaefer; Carling; Coors; Labatts (Canada) and Rheingold (tie); Molson (Canada), St. Pauli Girl (Germany), Schlitz and Olympia (tie); Michelob; Pabst Blue Ribbon; Miller; Stroh's; Schmidt's (Philadelphia); Beck's (Germany); Heineken (Holland); Superior (Mexico); and Anchor Steam.

'Thissh time for sure . . .'

Speaking of beer: Successful maker of TV ads Steve Horn, profiled in the current *New Yorker*, tells about making a commercial for Miller Lite with champion pool player Steve Mizerak. The spot called for Mizerak to make an intricate trick shot. "He tried that shot 193 times," says Horn. "And it didn't work once." From 7 a.m. until 7 p.m., the hapless Mizerak blew the shot. On the 194th try, he got it. That explains the hearty applause viewers might have noticed at the end of the commercial.

Just say: 'Yes, dear'

A program for men only, titled *How To Deal With The Liberated Woman*, will be given tonight at the Women's Survival Center at 305 Hyde Park Ave. in Tampa. Conducting the two-hour session will be Tampa psychologist Tony Moore, who will speak, lead a discussion and show a movie on the topic. Admission is free. For details, call Tampa, 251-8437.

Health tip

Substantial quantities of long-acting aspirin can sometimes induce hearing loss, according to the Nov. 1 *Family Circle* magazine: "A study by Dr. R. R. Miller of Boston University Medical Center found that 28 percent of patients receiving an average daily dose of 4.9 grams of long-acting aspirin over extended periods suffered deafness as compared to 8 percent of those receiving plain aspirin in comparable doses."

— [illegible]ss

Correction

The phone numbe[illegible] volunteer for the F[illegible] Center is 823-03[illegible] number ran in Sun[illegible] [illegible]rg *Times*.

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