

80 Greenridge Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605
July 12, 1977

Dear Family,

Have we ever got a story to tell you this week! Forget the four-page, two-sided limit. President Jex has asked me to sit down and write a detailed account of my experiences at the Women's meet, and in the interest of time I'm combining that with this family round-robin. And no griping about all the postage, either! You ought to pay me for this edition. I might even let you see it before it gets copyrightied.

These past two weeks have probably been the most exciting, strenuous, traumatic, exhausting and testimony-building of my entire life. Also the most reducing. I lost ten pounds! Now if I can just keep them off. So much has happened, I hardly know where to begin.

The events this week actually started last year and the year previous when I worked in Illinois and New York fighting the Equal Rights Amendment. I was able to testify shortly against the ERA at the Senate Judiciary Hearings in Albany last year, and my experiences at that meet opened my eyes to a lot of the political realities in New York that left us all shaken and aghast again this year. I came home from the ERA experiences filled with a sense of extreme urgency that we as a people wake up and get seriously involved politically. I tried to convey this urgency to my friends here, but met with little success. When I sometimes had to turn down opportunities to participate in ward-level assignments and activities because I was involved in the ERA fight, I felt certain several of my friends thought I was on the sure road to apostasy. A real disappointment came when I learned that the sisters in one of the wards in our Stake were told they could not hold "Political Process" workshops on Homemaking Day in Relief Society because it did not fit the category as "basic homemaking skills." I became increasingly impatient as we instead tied macrame knots and made soy-bean roosters to hang in our kitchens.

I can't really blame our people. It's like a testimony. You have to experience and feel it to be motivated. I had only a couple of years before been quite oblivious to the entire Equal Rights movement. At any rate, this week at least 35 members of our ward, about 200 from our Stake and perhaps 7-800 of our members from the six New York stakes felt it at the New York State Women's Convention held in Albany, July 8-10. We as a Mormon community have had a rebirth of political spirit and involvement, and I dare say there will be a baptism by fire in the years ahead.

In the ERA effort I became friends with Lillian Koegler who began her public activities fighting abortion and then moved over to the Stop ERA campaign. A Catholic, she became fascinated with our Family Home Evening Program and invited me to visit the P.T.A. of one of their Catholic schools and explain the program to them. With her encouragement I also wrote an editorial against the ERA which was published in the Gannett Chain and participated in a debate on the subject. But I hadn't heard from Lillian for a year and was surprised when she called.

When she called, June 28, she said she had been under the impression I had moved, and she only recently had learned I was still around. She asked if I had heard about the upcoming Women's Meet in connection with International Women's Year. I had not heard a word about it. She had to explain everything from scratch--how the Federal Government had appropriated five million dollars to be divided among the 50 states, so that each could hold a state woman's convention. Women from all walks of life, all races, creeds, religious background, economic status--all women everywhere should come together, vote on resolutions and nominate delegates and then send these delegates and decisions to Houston for a national

1. J. -> expense... around. Just think I'll am' go on paye. Ad course you all have to understand that I don't deliver 9 lb. babies as you all do - this is the best I can muster (sorry you all have to pay for my delivery costs, tho' (h, h, h))

national woman's convention November 18-21. The resolutions passed by this national conference would then be submitted to Congress by President Carter for legislation. It also would influence state legislation, as the results of each state woman's meeting would be used as evidence as to the desires of women in that state.

Lillian told me that in other state women's conventions such vital issues as abortion, the ERA, homosexual rights, sex-education in the schools, day-care centers, welfare for the displaced woman, etc. came up in the form of resolutions. She also told me that in most cases the state committee was pro-ERA and groups against the ERA and abortion were conveniently not told about the meetings in time to formally organize or to help in formulating convention rules, nominations procedures, etc.

While she was talking I remembered that Sister Bonner had showed me a letter on the way out of Church two days before. It was from Barbara Burke of the Citizen's Review Committee in Brewster, writing to ask if the Relief Society (she also sent the letter to many other organizations) had been notified by the IWY Committee about the Convention and if members of the Relief Society had been invited to the planning meetings and asked to submit ideas, questions, or other types of input. Sister Bonner, who is our New York Stake Relief Society President, had written back that "No," we had heard nothing, but that her instructions had been that the Relief Society, as an organization, could encourage its members to be active as individuals in such conventions, but that as an organization it could not become involved. Barbara Burke had called Sister Bonner Saturday to invite her to send a representative to a planning meeting to be held Monday at 8:00 p.m. on Madison Avenue in the "City." In that meeting conservative groups would plan their strategy for the Albany Women's Meet. Alma (Sister Bonner) asked me if I would like to go--but I couldn't see how I could arrange it on such short notice and suggested she show the letter and invite Marva Jex, our Stake President's wife--who is a fireball, to get involved. As it turned out, none of us attended that meeting. If I had known then what I know now I wouldn't have missed it.

Lillian had also joined the Citizens Review Committee and, as such, invited me to attend a get-together the following night to hear a tape about what happened at the Oklahoma Women's Meet. I told her we had planned to attend the BYU "jazz" concert the following evening, but I would be happy to distribute print-outs about the Conference to my friends who would be there.

Dan and I had had an extremely busy two weeks of Public Communications efforts. We had just held a seminar for all fifteen units with their ward or branch PC directors, sent out mailings to each of them, and I had been working day and night trying to open up the Reporter Dispatch, having just the month before received the go-ahead from Bishop Simmons to be the ward's official representative to that paper (which has a larger circulation as a chain of local papers than the New York Times.) After more than a year of trying, with Dan, to direct the activities of the other PCD's, I was thrilled to be back into the nitty-gritty of actual editorial and reporting work.

The following might seem irrelevant to the Women's Convention--but plough on--it will prepare you for an irony of what happened at the press conference later with Bella Abzug.

In a period of a couple of weeks I had submitted three meeting schedules, with sermon titles to Betty Lewendon, religion editor, which she published, including an article about Wayne Young, our visiting High Councilor who talked about genealogy. Another article I submitted about a public lecture with Salvatore Trento, a non-member archeologist who has discovered astounding evidence right in our back yards in New York ~~that the American Indian has Mediterranean roots~~ (He is a Spaniard). She reduced that one to a one-or-two liner and put it under "Church Services"--though it was on a Friday. An article on the Mormon Fast which I submitted for the Fast-service listing went unpublished. Someone at their paper had an aversion to the full name of our Church and continually edited out the "Jesus Christ" in our name under Church listings.

I hoped to cultivate some new editors at the Reporter Dispatch, so I submitted an article with pictures about the coming of the BYU "Synthesis" instrumental ensemble which was on its way to concerts behind the iron-curtain. They were to put on a free concert on the church grounds, so I submitted an article with pictures. It was chopped considerably and printed without a picture by Elaine Bissell, their "Life-styles" editor. However, considering the limited space the Dispatch has for religious news, I felt fortunate to get it in period.

Hoping to inspire them to do an article about the Family Home Evening Program similar to the full-page spread I got in the Naperville Sun, in Illinois, I had xeroxed that article and prepared it with other Family Home Evening materials to give to Mrs. Bissell. I called ahead and asked if I could briefly meet with her, tell her about the Program, and suggest three local families who could be interviewed about it. But she said she was too busy and would I leave it at the desk. A week later when I brought in an article about Claire Freedman, chosen "Outstanding area Den Mother" (which went to the City News editor), I asked the receptionist to call Mrs. Bissell and see if I could talk with her shortly.

Mrs. Bissell came out and I told her the photos I had ordered from Provo for the "Synthesis" group came, but they were just repeats of the ones she already had--I was disappointed, as I had wanted a particular one that was featured on one of their posters. She had been holding the article waiting for that picture. I took advantage of that opportunity to ask her if she had had a chance to look over the Family Home Evening materials I had given her. As she walked away, obviously in a rush, she said she just hadn't had time to even look at it, having just returned to stacks of work from vacation. I managed to suggest before she was out of sight that the Family Home Evening idea might be appropriate as a National Family Week feature just before Thanksgiving. I knew she was terribly busy, but I did feel a little snubbed and unimportant in her eyes.

However, the next day I received a call from Shirley Friedman of the "City Desk" saying they wanted to do a big feature about Claire in their "Westchester Woman" section and asked me to arrange pictures and report on her den circus that week and make her a list of names and phone numbers of church, neighborhood, school, and community persons who knew Claire and her family; also, to provide her with general information about her activities and interests. I was thrilled. Finally, a real breakthrough with that paper. It took me two days to get all that together, and I also wrote up another article about one of our scouts who won an area honor for a Space contest and hand-delivered that to the paper, along with the other info.

Now you'll understand why when Lillian called, my housework and laundry was piled sky-high, and I was not in the mood to start a new campaign. I had reached the breaking-point where I felt I had to stop and catch up on work and sleep. I said to myself that as urgent as the cause might be, this was one time when I could not in one week drop everything, round up all my friends, arrange babysitting for our children and attend a three-day Conference. I also hoped that when I passed out Lillian's print-outs at the jazz concert, someone (namely Marva Jex) would take over for me. The month before (perhaps even earlier) when Marva came to visit-teach me, she said a friend had called her and asked her to get our people involved in the anti-ERA fight, and since she knew I had had experience with it, she wondered how I would like to do it. I had told her I'd already had my turn and it was her turn. This year, I said, I was going to stay home, mind my business, and keep our garden weeded. She said she was going to do genealogy.

The day after Lillian called I listened to the tape about the Oklahoma Meet while doing three meals' dishes and mopping up two weeks' stickiness. Half way through the second side of the tape I felt those old familiar motions inside and with a growing sense of defeat realized I was going to be doing this thing. In a very timely way, my Church News arrived with a big article from Sister Barbara

Smith encouraging us to participate in the IWY conferences.

However, as I talked with our local Church leaders, I was encouraged to participate but cautioned that what I did would have to be on an individual basis. I should not use the Church meetings for announcements, distribute materials inside the Church walls, or use priesthood or Relief Society organizational structure to "round up" members to go.

Dan and I had talked about trying to do something through our positions as co-Directors of Public Communications in the Stake. We had been sending weekly mailings to our fifteen units for some time, each on a specific topic, including recent mailings on pornography, abortion, statements of Church policy on homosexuality, the ERA, etc. In fact, our most recent, just-finished seminar had been on the importance of ~~calling community representatives and how to get~~ involved in community affairs. It seemed very logical at this point to promote this Women's Conference through our Public Communications channels. But when I called Charles Graves, our Area Co-ordinator about it, he said he would check with Salt Lake later, but he was very doubtful. He said the Church had recently been challenged with suits against it--that some interests felt our tithes should be taxed because the Church lobbies against certain causes.

It's a sad commentary on the times when the churches in our nation can't lobby for the cause of happiness and righteousness and don't dare lobby against sin. After all, wasn't our whole revolution plotted and chartered in Boston's churches and churches in other places? Bro. Graves said we certainly should do all we could as individuals, but he had little hope we could do anything through the Church.

For a day there, it seemed everywhere I turned, my hands were tied behind me. President and Sister Jex were in full sympathy with the cause, and Pres. Jex called directly to Salt Lake for me to order copies of the Family Home Evening leaflets that were distributed through the "Family and Other Living Things" TV show (we received 400 air-mail for our "Family Booth" which we were denied when we got there. Then we asked Pres. Jex for permission to have the Relief Society President in each ward make the announcement about the Albany Meet and distribute materials about it to them, if we could get them copied and to the wards by Sunday morning. When we found out the voting at the Convention was to be on a Sunday, Pres. Jex called the Relief Society General Presidency to ask what had been done in other states about Sunday voting. He was told that because in each state the Church members had such short notice about the Convention, the First Presidency had considered the matter and had decided that under these urgent circumstances, the usual restrictions would be waved and we could go "full steam" ahead, using the Relief Society organizational machinery and encouraging our members to, indeed, go and vote--even on Sunday--especially on Sunday!

It was such a relief to feel we could use the Relief Society. But then I remembered that Sister Bonner's daughter's wedding reception was that Thursday night in their Connecticut home. In fact when I called her with the news from the General Relief Society Presidency (Pres. Jex had called her, too), she was rushing around in the middle of baking. One of her counsellors was living in a motel between homes while moving and the other counsellor was brand new, just getting introduced to her new responsibilities. My plans to turn everything over to the Relief Society had been frustrated. Marva Jex and I decided we'd have to get busy ourselves. Marva contacted Helen Hicken and some of the Albany people to see what they had been doing--they, too, were caught in a time-pinch, and using information provided to me by Lillian Koegler and the Citizens Review Committee, I typed up the attached "Let Your Light So Shine" page, took it to the Bonner reception in Connecticut where Sis. Bonner signed it between hand-shakes and hugs, met with Marva (Jex) in Bonner's family den (she was already up-to-her-ears making arrangements for housing, breakfasts, booths, etc. etc.). The next day I picked up 1,000 copies of two pages of instructions from the Citizens Review Committee, made 1,000 of the "Let Your Light" letter, and Marva had picked up copies of statements of Church policy and Pres. Barbara's Smith's Church News article *which*

Linda, Charles Graves' secretary had agreed to run off for us by the hundreds (to inspire on the members). Marva opens the doors and assists in the genealogy branch library in Manhattan and that facilitated a lot of our picking up and distributing in the "City."

We felt half of one of the sheets the Citizens' Review Committee had had copied (we paid for them, however, on pic-up), did not reflect the tone we wanted our efforts to reflect, so Tim Jex and I got to slice 1,000 pages with my blunt paper-cutter, 10 pages at a time. I remember that Friday, July 1 as a bad day. Dan and I were tired and tense under the strain and pressure of general lack of household order or routine. I managed to keep an outward calm through a number of minor crises until about 2:00 in the afternoon, about two hours behind on my assembling deadline (we had arranged chain-rides with the materials all over the stake--some timed to a certain hour, and I was behind getting them assembled in the first-place). Then my stapler clogged and would not be fixed. The calm was on its way out the reef when the doorbell rang and Lillian Koegler like an angel of light said she had a feeling I might be able to use some help. A few minutes later Tim Jex, Marva's son came over to help assemble and transport. What a relief. Our good Catholic neighbors loaned us another stapler, Lillian went back home and got another, and we were in business. Marva was busy that day decorating and baking a wedding cake for a dear friend (reception that night). As soon as enough copies were assembled, Tim took them and some "Oklahoma" tapes to the Scarsdale chapel where a devoted sister from Long Island Stake made the trip all the way down to pick them up. Meanwhile, Sister Bonner had called all the stake Relief Society presidents to arrange the Sunday morning announcements and explain the distribution of the materials. After Tim came back he took copies for five of the wards to Kitchawan where a chain took-off, and the next day Lillian Koegler took blank delegate forms and copies of our print-out to Manhattan, to the Visitor's Center (her husband went with her) and also made trips to the Bronx and Brooklyn people. We were anxious to get as many delegates from the city area as possible and left 30 forms at the Visitors Center for members to come in and fill out. Then we placed dozens of calls trying to find people home, to tell them to fill out the forms. It was that Friday night, as I recall, July 1, that President Jex was contacted through our Regional Representative who had been contacted by Elder Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve. The First Presidency now urged us to FULLY participate in the Conference and had given the go-ahead for us to organize our attendance through Church, priesthood channels. We were still to act and vote as individuals and not participate in the name of the Church. But at least we could work through the Church organization and now could count on the full support of our leaders and members.

A subsequent call to Georgia Peterson in Salt Lake City, who was referred to us as a sort of "Church expert" on these Women's Conventions revealed that in Utah, just the week before, they--also on short notice--had gone through the same thing, and had been successful. She told us that the leaders there had told the people they had never had a more important Church assignment--than to go and vote righteously at that Conference. That greatly spurred our drive here--to know that. Now we were really in business. What a great blessing and relief!

Relief as it was, it took me a day or two to adjust to the change in authority. For a while I had been taking action on my own initiative (with Sister Bonner's blessing) and in the next couple of days I had to be reminded it was no longer my ship. I remember telling Marva I was going to spend the next day trying to round up delegates, get them the forms, and type up their resumes as they called them in by telephone. "I'll ask President Jex if you have his permission to do that," sez she. Unfortunately, he thought that was a good idea.

Actually, all the wedding receptions were a great blessing because members of the Church from all over the state were attending and we could pass out materials to key people in our stake and other stakes in New York (six others, I believe) at them. Claire Freedman took some copies I brought her to the Edwards' reception, also in Connecticut, Friday, July 1. This was vital, as Sunday was our last chance before the Conference to alert the general membership.

By Saturday, July 2, we had the new mandate from the First Presidency, and literally hundreds of phone calls we made all over the Stake, to other stakes, to Salt Lake, and back and forth among ourselves and Bonners in Connecticut had brought in new data, as well as, I'm sure, an unheard of phone bill. We needed to write a new letter and new list of instructions.

Brother Bonner called me on the phone and using much feed-in already received from Marva, we worked out the details of the letter which they typed up and ran off. Brother Bonner was "on fire" with purpose, and it was such a wonderful feeling to see him take rein and action with such insight and experience. He had a number of good questions which I couldn't answer, so I gave him Lillian's number. They worked late at Lemmon's (Marva came later and helped them) assembling the materials and then Brother Peter-Paul Mendel and Bro. Bonner (James) played "Paul Revere" and got up at 3 or 4:00 a.m. Sunday morning and distributed the letters all over the Stake all over again.

Mark Bench recovered in a timely way from a severe bout with the flu and was able to go up to the Spanish American Branch in Manhattan Sunday morning to translate the materials for them. That blessed little branch sent 34 of their members to Albany.

Sunday, July 3, we all met together physically for the first time. Elder Earl Tingey, our Regional Representative called in Pres. and Sis. Jex, Bro. and Sister Bonner, and me for a conference in the stake office. At his request, we told him the history of how this whole thing got started, and he confirmed that we had received the "go-ahead" from the First Presidency. We then all put our heads together and listed some priorities and made plans for action. President Jex was in agony with pain in his shoulder and arms which he had been experiencing for a few days. But even under those circumstances, he showed such remarkable courage and patience. It was a thrill to feel that priesthood power and leadership and feel the Spirit of the Lord in the room at that meeting. We ended it with a special prayer, and I knew then that we would be blessed.

I don't remember in sequence what happened the next four days. It was generally more of the same (panic). Tuesday night we had a meeting at Westchester Ward with representatives from each unit in the Stake. What a joy to feel the unity and sense of purpose in that group. I felt I was in the midst of the most outstanding assemblage of persons I had ever experienced. Ideas flowed, enthusiasm bounded, volunteers competed. Marva Jex chaired the meeting and was absolutely outstanding. She had put much preparation into her presentation and her fantastic sense of organization and timing made the meeting a guaranteed success. She was filled with enthusiasm and purpose. The meeting was efficient, yet relaxed. A spontaneous spirit of common purpose and excitement was present and the serious intensity was pleasantly interrupted with good humor and exuberant laughter. We chose our delegates without one hitch or squabble. Right down the line. We had more purpose than ego--more commitment than pride. I wish the rest of the world could have seen the Mormons at work in that meeting. What an example. I went home high with excitement. We knew these people would take that spirit back to their wards and that we were all a great team, now. Brother Bonner had already chartered the buses and worked out a lot of details which were also conveyed at that meeting.

The next night, July 6, we met at the Church for more planning with Lillian Keogler. Present were Pres. and Sister Jex, Lillian and me. I had completed forms for I believe 27 "Mormon" delegates, but as I had not been able to contact all of them to type their resumes, I arranged to give them to her the next day when she would go into the "City" to turn them in to meet some deadline. That day I had called Bonnie Balliff-Spanvill to ask if she could help with some research on the proportion of New York State women who stay at home to care for their children.

She graciously arranged for a young researcher () to help and he took an entire afternoon and searched the 1970 (latest) census and found that roughly one-third of the women living in New York fit that category. Then Mike Anderson, a Manhattan Lawyer worded a resolution for us to the effect that since that proportion of New York women were mothers at home with young children, that then in fairness that proportion of delegates to Houston should fit that category. We were ready with delegates who could fit that Bill. He had a lot of other interesting statistics worked into that resolution. I'm not sure what happened to that resolution at Albany. It probably went the way all our other resolutions went.

Thursday, Marva came over during the morning and we ran some errands, made some copies, and did some assembling. Sometime during the week, Dan saw an ad for a mimeograph machine in the paper, and feeling we might need it for this Albany project (and having needed one a long time for our Public Communications work), he went and bought it for \$45.00. It was the same kind I used to use when I was a secretary for the Language Department at BYU. A box of the stencils which I had on instinct picked up months before was ready and waiting for us to use. I typed up some Public Communications materials that had been long waiting and Dan learned how to operate the machine, running them off (I got to re-type some sheets in the process).

The mimeograph machine proved to be a blessing from the blue as, Thursday night, long after other printing places were closed, we finally had time to type some stencils which told the Church position on various topics to be distributed to members and also from an official "Mormon" booth (this booth also didn't materialize, as the IYW Committee said we had not received official permission to have a booth; yet other booth tables went empty). At any rate, that night we ran 300-500 copies each of six stencils (some stencils held up under printing longer than others) and went to bed about 2:00 a.m. We had managed with only two to four hours of sleep for most of the week--yet did not get sick or suffer unduly. We truly felt the sustaining influence of the Lord through all our activities. Under normal conditions, I would have had an eye infection after two days of such abuse in terms of rest. Most nights during that time I would go to sleep so fast I could hardly remember climbing in bed; but then I would wake up very early in the morning with all these thoughts, ideas, and reminders running through my head. Since I then couldn't sleep, I would get up and get a good start on my usual household duties before it was time to start making calls.

In reviewing all this, I just realized I missed Monday, the Fourth of July. Maybe it was a sub-conscious slip, as that was such a bad day. A friend had offered to come early in the day and pick up our children, so we could make calls, etc. without interruption and so they could get some real attention. However, there was some misunderstanding, and she didn't come when I expected her. When I called her three hours later, she had had a change of plans and, as it turned out, she never could come that day. The children were competing for attention while the telephone rang, and as Bonners were having a last reunion-picnic with their family before they all went their separate ways to marriage and school, and the Jex's were tied up in meetings--all the questions were being phoned in to me, and by then word was spread around the Stake and all kinds of questions were coming in from seemingly every quarter. I was desperately trying to meet some deadlines and I'm sure I was not giving very patient and whole-hearted attention to the needs of my family. Dan was upset because for two years he had been trying to get the house painted, and it seemed every weekend something like this came up that seemed more important. He had really counted on having the Fourth of July holiday weekend to paint. At one point, Dan even suggested that I was at cross-purposes to neglect my family for attending a convention while fighting for the right to stay home with my children. The children wanted a Fourth of July picnic, and Dan thought they deserved it. I felt so anxious about the importance of this Albany Meet and was not sure that a picnic was as vital to the 4th of July spirit as the work at hand. Then someone mis-advised me that the Jexes had gone to play tennis.

By then I really felt like a martyr---nobody really cared but me, I was sure. I had a good cry, QUIT everything, put a note on the door telling people not to bother me, I was asleep--and left all the materials in the mailbox different people had planned to pick up. Dan took the kids to go buy some picnic supplies and I went up to nap. I tossed and turned and tossed and turned, gave up, came down to the kitchen in time to find Dorothy Bench who had come to the side door ("I knew you were bluffing--you're not asleep!") She had brought me some more delegate forms that were filled out by various Scarsdale residents and assured me I was a case, my husband was absolutely right, I got too carried away with these things, and she was glad she showed up in time to help nail down my coffin lid. By evening I had talked things out with Marva and my family and I realized I was over-reacting and I realized that Satan was working hard to create disunity and misunderstandings among members of the Committee and in our family. Dan and I had a long talk and he let me know he was with me 100% and, he, too realized the urgency of the situation. But he couldn't stand by and just watch while I took things all out of any sensible proportion. I offered to quit everything and forget it and told him my family had to be more important than "causes," and he offered to forget his paint and Public Communications goals and help me with the children full-time so I could meet all these deadlines. I promised to try and strike mere of a balance, and we talked out a lot of things and I felt much better, though exhausted.

I did, finally, get a very short nap, after which Dan commandeered the phone to make some Public Communications calls and advised me he had promised the children I would walk down to the high school with them to see the fireworks. At that point, we already heard them exploding in the air, and Daniel and Laura about dragged me out the door. I was not in the mood to go watch fireworks, but as the three of us walked hand-in-hand down the car-lined street towards the highschool, the children's excitement and awe at the glory bursting around us put a little pink around my blues. After walking about four blocks, there was a break in the trees and all of a sudden a siren whistled through the blackness and gold stars shouted glory. The words of the Star Spangled Banner went through my mind and for two or three minutes I had a spiritual experience in an emotional height of patriotic feeling. The Spirit whispered peace to me then and told me not to feel sad, that what I was doing was right and good and that He would help me--my family would be all right through all of this. I also received the distinct impression that I should not feel so helpless in the face of all that lay before us--that I would get a lot of help. I thought of the joy Francis Scott Key felt with the sight of victory and felt it with him for a moment. Those few minutes I possibly experienced the most soul-filling Fourth of July emotions I ever have or ever shall experience.

Just as Satan worked hard, though, so did the Lord. We needed mimeograph paper that Fourth of July, and with the holiday no stores were likely to be open. As I looked through my delegate forms I realized I did not have Tony Peers' form, though I had specifically told her I needed it, filled out, before Church let out Sunday. I was sure I must have lost it and called her in Bronxville to tell her I was sorry. "No," she said, she had forgotten and taken it home with her and was on her way to bring it to me. Then I told her about our need for mimeograph paper and asked her if she knew any outlet that would be open even on the holiday. Then she told me her mother-in-law had once had a mimeograph machine, but had sold it; however she still had a closet full of mimeograph paper and how many reams would I like her to bring when she came to bring her form? Was that just a coincidence? I know not. Little, BIG things like that happened over and over and over while we were making preparations for the Conference. Tony also stayed when she came and helped us address our public communications mailings while I took and made phone calls.

Friday morning ^{July 8,} we were almost ready to go when we noticed something not-exactly sweet smelling rising from our drain in the basement. We realized we had failed to put the chemicals down the drainpipes and the summer root growth was clogging the system. So Dan had to go find a hardware store and get the chemicals and put them down. We

were ten minutes late getting to the bus, after we had told everyone else they absolutely had to be on time. All week I had been concerned because I really had not been able to make arrangements for someone to take our children when we went to Albany. But after spending several hours one day calling around, only to find everyone was filled-up, going themselves, on vacation, or indisposed--I decided to leave that one up to the Lord--I had to do the work at hand. The day before we were to leave, Joan Jackson called and said all the impossible situations in her life had cleared up in such a way that she would be free, and could she take our children while we went to Albany? Well, I couldn't think of a family in the world I would love more to leave our children with. When we came back, we could tell our children had had a love-filled, personal, happy experience. I didn't worry about them a second while we were gone--I knew they would be all right. Another little, BIG miracle.

When the bus finally pulled out, I couldn't believe we were actually on our way. I couldn't get my mind to stop racing--I was sure I was still supposed to be dashing about meeting deadlines.

We passed out our "Church statement" sheets to everyone on the bus, and Detlef Lehnardt, our local lawyer, megaphone in hand, led a discussion all the way up on the resolutions extracted from that terrible "TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION blueprint for socialism that the feminists had created as the manual for all the nation's conferences. There were lively discussions on the way up and I was pleased to finally meet Maren Mauritzen, who is absolutely outstanding, has a resume that is absolutely astounding, and a head on her shoulders and faith to go with it. She has one of the best minds I've met. She went through the jargon of the summarized resolutions to be discussed and voted upon at the Meet and told us some things to watch out for.

It was a very profitable few hours on the bus. We arrived at the Albany Stake Center, unloaded our sleeping bags and suitcases, picked up our lodging assignments (Dan, Tony Peers, Nancy Braithwaite and I went to the David Cavanaugh home), made arrangements for meeting them after the conference, and went to register after viewing once more in awe all the marble at the Capitol Building (which we will be paying for for who knows how many more years--thanks to "Rocky.")

I should mention that on the way up in the bus (each bus going up had a pre-assigned bus captain who had been given materials and instructions for discussion on the way up), we divided into small groups of four or five persons and each group was given a "captain." That captain's job was to keep in touch with the office we shared with the Citizens Review Committee and make sure each person in his group received each and every instruction. That way we were able to keep hundreds of our people informed (along with the walkie-talkies arranged by one in our Stake who also managed to put them on a frequency no other walkie-talkie could pick up).

When we got ready to register (we were there early afternoon), we learned that we could not register until 4:00 p.m. I had heard that in other states people were told this and then when they came back, they were told that because more people registered than expected, a cut-off had been established and they could not register. So I spent twenty-five minutes getting a signed statement from one of the officials that registration would not be cut off before 3:00 p.m. the next day.

A woman saw me do that and later met me in another part of the building. She suggested to me that she was with me all the way, but that I should be wise and not go near the Citizen's Review or other anti-abortion or Right to Life booths--that I should maintain a neutral identity and that if I signed in at the Press Conference, I could sign in as a member from any women's organization and get a Press card. That's what started my Press Conference experience. I later saw that lady dressed in a feminist disguise quite different from the suburban-type, conservative dress I first met her in. I really never did decide who she was with or what she was doing. I wasn't sure whether I wanted to follow her advice or not, but then when I couldn't find out from anyone when the Rules would be voted upon, I thought of the press

Conference and hoped maybe that Rules meeting would be mentioned there.

Most of my other adventures are detailed in the "minority" report I wrote to the Chairman of the Coordinating Committee.

Before I left for the Conference I felt a deep sense of frustration that in getting people out to the Conference and just managing all those details, I had not had time to study my Roberts Rules of Order, the national rules, the resolutions, the TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION manual and other vital things. So I knelt down one morning and prayed out loud and told my Heavenly Father that I knew I was a rusty tool. But I prayed that, nevertheless, he would bless me and help me that I could be an instrument in His hands to make a contribution to the "cause" at the Conference that would be significant.

With His help I was able to speak out at the press conference. And though the article made me look a bit silly, still the point was made that mothers with young children and other conservative and suburban groups had been left in the dark about the Women's Meeting. I got two-thirds of the page with my views, and Bella Abzug only got two lines. And, just for the record, the editor who sat right next to me in that press conference, who personally interviewed me later and wrote that article in the Gannett Chain that went throughout the whole state was no other than Elaine Bissell, Lifestyles Editor of the Reporter Dispatch. Looking back, I feel certain she didn't realize I was that "Mormon" Reporter who had been bringing things in to her (until later that afternoon).

Attached is the article she wrote and my "Letter-to-the-Editor" response, which has not yet been published (probably won't be--oh ye of little faith).

I also felt an impulse at one point to go up to the meeting room we shared with the "Citizen's Review Committee"--and, though up to that point, I had avoided it like the plague, I did go up and walked right in on a T.V. camera crew. I was standing there watching when the TV man whirled around, shined the light on me, took my name and told me to start talking. I opened my mouth and out came words to the effect that the Friday night "Gala Celebration" had just been a big lobby of Bella Abzug's for the Equal Rights Amendment and that the truth of the matter was New York Staters had voted down the ERA in a referendum just last year by a 60/40 margin. I said many people equated equal rights for women with the ERA and they shouldn't--that I was for women's rights but felt it should be done through stiff legislation at the state level and not through a sweeping amendment. Or something like that. I wasn't quite sure afterwards what I said.

Well, that was shown on the 11:00 news, Channel 7, and I missed it. Friends who saw it said it was shown Sunday, July 10. That night I went to sleep in the middle of the 10:00 news. Other friends said I was also shown on the 11:00 news that night on Channel 2--this time shown while I made the resolution in the nominating session correcting Senator Burstein on the national rules and moving that the nomination time for delegates be extended. The day before we left for the Albany Meet, I looked in the mirror and about cried. I realized I had absolutely nothing to wear to any convention--just Sunday dresses and jeans and pants at home. I wanted something in-between like culottes--but didn't have time to sew. I even prayed about that--told the Lord I was a mess and to please help me look presentable for the Conference. I only had one hour and a half. Deanna DeBry and Kathy Woodbury had taken the kids for the afternoon, and I dashed out. The thought came to me to go to Bloomingdale's, so I did. I hadn't shopped there in ages. Wouldn't you know, they had all their summer sports outfits on sale, one-half and one-third off. My big thrill was in trying on things and realizing I had lost a size during the week. I found three darling culotte-vest-blouse outfits, one a bright-blue with matching jacket--and got red, white and blue combinations all with interchangeable blouses. I couldn't believe it--and at such great prices. Then the thought came to me to go

to Altman's to try and get my hair out. I had never even been in that store before, never-mind to get a haircut. I went up and asked, and "Bruce" there said he would modernize me beautifully if I could wait 25 minutes. He said he wouldn't charge me more than \$15 for shampoo, cut, and blow-dry--which is reasonable for this area. In the twenty-five minute wait, I went downstairs and looked over the cosmetics, trying to avoid the mirrors. I hadn't put any makeup on for over a week and had huge, black circles under my eyes and looked absolutely ghastly. This fantastic woman salesperson came up and asked if she could help me with something. I told her I was going to a woman's conference in the morning and felt like a hag and needed some help, fast. Well, this woman just took over and gave me matter-of-fact advice about what to do about this problem and that problem--and my type should use this color and that blusher and reshape my eyebrows this way and cover up the black circles this way, etc. etc. Then she gave me a make-up job, showing me how to do it--and all of a sudden I looked glowing, healthy, and really very natural. Amazing what they can do nowadays. Of course that new face cost me \$27. worth of new cosmetics.

"Bruce" gave me the best haircut I've ever had. It just fell naturally in place, lasted without a fluke the whole three days of the Conference and did a nice job of modernizing me. I felt like a whole new person.

At any rate, so many of my friends said they couldn't believe how beautiful I looked on T.V. Humility, and all that. But I was so humbly grateful to hear that. Because that was a direct answer to prayer--and it all happened in an hour and a half. I can't tell you how many times I've gone shopping half a day and come home with nothing because nothing fit or I couldn't stand to pay the prices. I feel the Lord knew I was going to be on T.V. and have my picture taken all over the place because of that press conference business. And He blessed me. And I was so grateful to be an improved image because of the importance of the causes I was trying to espouse. Without that help, I just may not have had the confidence to speak out that way all the time and people may not have paid any attention.

By the way, Joan Mohr, my neighbor told me later that Bruce, who gave me that fabulous haircut and who was so pleasant to me in every way (I kept telling him about the Mormon Church) is a homosexual. She said she used to go to him all the time and he told her so once. Sort of ironic in light of one of the things I was espousing at the Conference. Well, I shall go back to him again and still talk to him about Mormonism.

One very serious drawback at the Convention was that we couldn't tell people we belonged to any particular organization. We weren't supposed to speak in the name of the Church, yet it was obvious to others (much as we tried to hide it) that we were highly organized (highly?--another miracle BIG). So that just aroused rumors and suspicions.

The day after we returned home, I awoke at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning with thoughts racing through my head again. These thoughts were that we should organize immediately--that it should be an organization of Mormon people, using Mormon organizational frameworks and including men and the Priesthood. However, it would be separate and distinct from the Church--sort of like Catholic "Right to Life" groups. That we should get a firm foundation and then let other religions and groups join us, with the understanding that things would be done the "Mormon Way." (The conservatives at the Conference in their slate meeting, similar to the feminist-coalition one I attended--bickered and fought and could not agree on a slate. When it finally looked as though they would have a slate with only a few on it, Pres. Jex took reins and formed his own Mormon coalition of 15 delegates (I was one of them--and did get nominated in the "Hall" nominating session I attended) and invited other Conservative groups to join--that's the only way we finally did get together a slate of 42 delegates.

So we're convinced things have got to be done the Mormon Way with our organizational abilities. Other groups are absolutely astounded that the Mormons, at a word from their First Presidency, can get hundreds and hundreds of people at one-week's notice (or less) to drop everything and attend a three-day convention. We have the conviction and unity that can make it work. And it takes something like that to fight the Devil.

I also received impressions to the effect that we should hate evil, but not people. That we should love those feminist coalitionists and keep channels of communication open. However, that we should fight the ERA, abortion, and pornography and homosexuality and all other evil with all our power, strength and ability. That we should have a positive platform--to be for things, rather than against--to have positive programs and resolutions to go with them. That we should not be just an organization of women--include the men, too, and use our Priesthood power.

As soon as I knew Marva would be awake, I called and we talked about these ideas. She had been having many along the same lines, too. She said she would talk to President Jex about getting permission from Salt Lake leaders to form such an organization. Later we talked again and ^{Marva} suggested that until such authority should come along, we should get something started on our own. For information and fun. We would have our little Thursday afternoon political club.

I have told Dan that one of the greatest blessings out of this whole experience is that I have become such good friends with Marva. I have admired her for so long, but we just hadn't had an experience like this to really get to know each other. We decided to form a core group which would be added to later and to meet at "Camp Liahona" at Whaley Lake next Thursday, July 21. We decided to invite Jane Jordan, Seila Lehnardt, Maren Mauritzen and Louise Green (our master spy) to join us and start things with this core of six. This is going to really be a ball. We're bringing our swimsuits for a dip when the politics get a little too hot.

We had a Stake Fireside Sunday, July 17, and Pres. Jex spoke and then several of us ladies and two of the men told some of our experiences and had our say, telling our impressions of the Albany experience and encouraging everyone to write their legislators.

We had a pleasant surprise upon our return. Dan had submitted a draft "Pioneer Day" proclamation to Governor Carey, and we had received word just before we left for Albany that the Executive Office was going to change it to make it more general, but that something would be forthcoming. Well, we received it yesterday, gold-seal and all--and it is beautiful. Not changed that much, really--and very complimentary to the Mormon people. The only trouble is, we don't have much lead time to follow through on it. Called Del-Vecchio of White Plains and DelBello of the County and they may do something with it. I took it down to Elaine Bissell today (just left it at her desk) along with a write-up (for the religion editor) of our local Pioneer Day activities and the Cumorah Pageant photo and press-release kit. Also left for Mrs. Bissell a copy of my letter to the editor to her article about me and a little note telling her that whether I agreed with what she said or not, I had to say her style was always lively and readable down to the last period. I hope she won't object to that. Also sent (gave) her a copy of Dan's and my minority reports. Wonder if she'll ever have time to read it. Also left a Pageant kit with their County desk editor--just to be sure the field was really covered. Told each of them I'd get them a press pass if they'd just let me know they would attend the Pageant.

We're taking the kids to Pageant this year. We've been reading them Book of Mormon stories from those illustrated sets all year, and now they're old enough to really get something out of the Pageant. We're also going to take them to Broom County and Colesville and all the early Mormon sites. Did I ever tell you Dan is a direct descendant of Joseph Knight Sr.? Both of us have ancestors who joined the Church, lived in New York, and were not too popular at the time. It just seems appropriate that we had something to do with Governor Carey's proclaiming a New York State Pioneer Day honoring these brave souls.

That's all for now. Our other experiences are on the attached reports.

Love, Dan and Sherlene

Dan and Sherlene