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joan nyland

editor's note

"Women, ladies, and girls will not be drug down to the level of men by the passage of the 25th amendment," said Oklahoma state senator Norman Lamb last January as he voted no on the Equal Rights Amendment. He meant to say the 27th Amendment.

No they won't, Senator.

Little minds and cowardly hearts defeated the ERA. State legislatures in Illinois, Florida, North Carolina, and Oklahoma supplied the final blows this year. Officially, the amendment's ratification time was up Wednesday. Unofficially, the National Organization of women gave up hope last week.

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

So harmlessly reads the ERA. It's astounding that anyone should object to this proposed amendment.

What scared the little minds is

the very rational fear that some of the traditions by which they operate would be threatened by equality. Equal work without equal pay or denied access to promotion would be federally unconstitutional. That hits the budget of some opponents.

ERA would have mandated that everyone is equally responsible to the government. The ERA stoppers translated that as women in combat and unisex bathrooms.

The little male minds projected that maybe their wives would actually seek equality in the organization of the family. That translates as loss of power to these men.

The little female minds asked, to quote Mrs. Phyllis Schlafly, "But what about the rights of the woman who doesn't want to compete on an equal basis with men?" She made the gross assumption that the federal government has the force to compel everyone to "compete" on an equal basis.

Schlafly implied that equal legal and social rights directly oppose the traditional roles of wife, mother and homemaker.

ERA needed big minds and courageous hearts who would have been willing to "drag women ladies, and girls" to the same level of constitutional

equality.

The defeat may have increased the knowledge of women in the American political tradition. Women advocates and opponents of the amendment learned that well-organized and well-funded campaigns spell clout. The defeat may lead to a block of women voting in solidarity as prophesied since the passage of the 19th Amendment.

However, ERA became an emotional issue. The legal focus of the amendment got buried in religious and social backwardness. The fight got sidetracked to dealing with the irrational opposition.

For now, the defeat represents the lack of trust the ERA opposition have in the ability of Congress to implement an amendment fairly. It shows the fear of little minds to change the status quo.

The amendment also was used shrewdly to divert the energies of NOW and other groups to the amendment and away from specific social legislation. It showed the power of little minds in the state legislatures and — despite polls which show an overwhelming support for the ERA — the silent acceptance of those little minds by the majority of people.

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DAIRY QUEEN

13th & Hilyard

City operations cut lean as 10 percent

The Eugene City Council unanimously adopted a budget Wednesday which involves reductions of up to 10 percent for all city operations.

The 1983-83 Fiscal year budget, which begins today, will affect all city departments from library to police.

Although the council adopted only a 3 percent cut in the 1982-83 Fiscal Year budget on Wednesday, total reductions will be close to 10 percent compared to the 1981-82 budget because of cuts made last year.

The addition of further "in-house" cuts will result in nearly 15 percent reductions for some

departments since the start of last year, says Dave Whitlow, assistant city manager.

Those in-house reductions do not appear in the actual budget but will be handled by the Administrative Spending Authority. The ASA may reinstate some of that money to prioritized departments but much reinstatement is unlikely.

That money, says Whitlow, will be used as cash flow to avoid the need for costly loans between property tax income.

Editor's note: Tuesday's Emerald will carry a story exploring effects of budget reductions on the operations of area law enforcement agencies.

Tax change starts today

Oregon employers will make two changes in withholding tax procedures starting today. They'll withhold additional state

tax for employees as new rates become effective. And most will send the taxes withheld to the state on a faster schedule.

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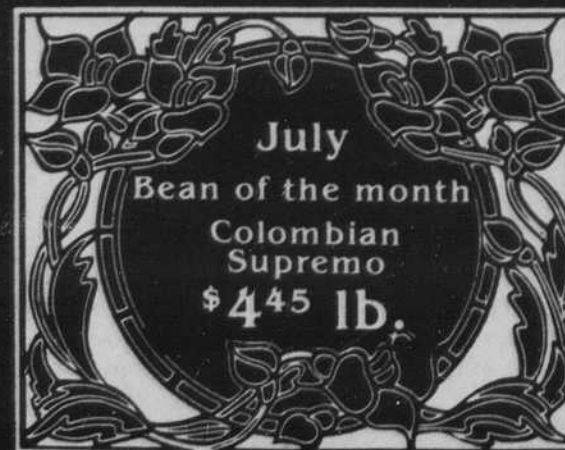
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