

# Hits From the Mrs.

Schlafly and Co. Mark  
The 'End' of an ERA  
With a Shot to the Lib

By Megan Rosenfeld

In the reception room, a big red, white and blue banner hung from the drapes saying "Welcome Phyllis." On the back of the printed program, there was a smiling picture of her, Phyllis Schlafly. And the event itself, which she conceived last September, was called "The Pro Family Gala honoring Phyllis Schlafly."

Of course there are other, organizational nominees, like the national Stop ERA movement and members of Congress, but it was Schlafly's name that was in bold type. About 1,200 of the Eagle Forum faithful from 45 states showed up last night at the Shoreham Hotel to dance on the grave of the Equal Rights Amendment, which, they have proclaimed, is "legally, morally and constitutionally dead."

The recent congressional extension of the ratification period to June 30, 1980 is "invalid," Schlafly claims.

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The Pantanas in drab, left, by Gerald Martineau; and Phyllis Schlafly, right, by AP.



SCHLAFLY, From CI

briefly by a bomb scare and buoyed by their claim that as the originally legislated seven-year ratification period expired last night, so did ERA.

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It was a group goat for conservatives, many of them women, who cheered at the mention of names like Anita Bryant and Sam Ervin, who weren't there, and Sen. Jesse Helms, (R-N.C.), who was, and hissed at the mention of Jimmy Carter, Gloria Steinem and the numerous references to Bella Abzug.

"We like to have fun," Schlafly said earlier, having dubbed the event a "victory celebration." Specially for the occasion she had penned lyrics to songs to make up the "ERA Follies of 1979."

These festivities were interrupted temporarily, however, by a bomb

threat, announced from the podium by Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah). "There have been two bomb threats," he said. "Phyllis has been threatened a number of times in her work."

Hatch said he was sure the threats were not real but "rather than take the chance" he evacuated the room for half an hour. A hotel spokesman, vice president Richard Abati, said the switchboard had received a phone call from a male voice saying only that there were two bombs set to go off between 9 and 9:15 p.m. "in the room that Phyllis is in." They searched her guest room and then decided to call in the Metropolitan Police "bomb dogs."

Meanwhile the crowd amused itself singing songs like "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy" and "Dixie" in an adjoining room to the accompaniment of Vickie Harvey playing the violin and Rudy Schuessler on the bass. Harvey noted that she is the first woman to hold office in the musicians union since it was founded.

One of the singing Pantana Brothers from Lynchburg, Va., (Phil and John Pantana teach at Liberty Baptist College and their wives Joy and Linda join

them in a singing quartet) sang "Who's Laughing Now" which went something like:

*Now with the end of this ERA  
Our victory is sweet  
Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha  
Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha  
Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha*

That one brought the house down. In another put-down of non-sexist terminology, the Pantanas sang to the tune of "I Want A Girl Just Like the Girl Who Married Dear Old Dad":

*I want a person  
Just like the person  
Who married dear old parent.*

The crowd was largely middle-aged, and female, although there was a sprinkling of youths, including Schlafly's six children. One of her sons, John, 28 and a law student, played the piano for the Follies. Her daughter, Liza, is a senior at Princeton University majoring in economics. She was asked if any of her fellow students give her a hard time for being Phyllis Schlafly's daughter. "Uh unh," she shrugged. "Not really."

Virtually the only blacks in the

crowd were a few reporters and writers.

The bomb threat, while a tedious intermission in the Follies, was nonetheless treated largely with aplomb. "It's the liberals," huffed a lady with red braids as she hustled out of the ballroom. "They try to wreck everything."

One of the emotional numbers was Prudence and Bill Fields who come from Marietta, Ohio, singing "The Impossible Dream," with heavy borrowing from the original: "To fight the most unequal war ... fight on when they changed all the rules ... this is our goal, to stop ERA, no matter the polls or what Congress might say. To be willing to work night and day for a heavenly cause, this is our quest. ..."

There were numerous references to this being "the most significant political victory" ever. The crowd cheered loudly at any mention of a state that had rejected the ERA.

Much of the crowd was composed of people such as Minnie Lincoln, a stout housewife in a velvet blazer and plaid skirt who came on a bus with 47 other women from Nashville, Tenn. The trip, she said, cost \$106 including last night's \$25-a-head dinner. She said her Pro-Family group had a bake sale and sold pizza to raise the money to send

her and her daughter to Washington, but her husband, an engineer with the L&M Railroad, would have sent her anyway.

Among the crowd were such conservative lions as Rep. Larry McDonald (D-Ga.), Carolyn Gerster, president of the National Right to Life Committee and Rep. Henry Hyde (R-Ill.).

Schlafly opened her speech with a joke. Referring to her husband, she said, "Fred never interferes with my civil liberties. Whenever we have a fight he reminds me of my constitutional right to remain silent."

She said reporters are always being put up by "ERAs" to asking her, "Who's taking care of your children?" At that point she introduced her "six jewels," and as she reeled off their accomplishments—the one studying to be a lawyer, the one working on a Ph.D. in math, the one at Princeton, etc.—a lot of the women stood up to get a look at the kids, and oohed and aahed as she recited their achievements.

She said Stop-ERA had won a "constitutional landmark," and told the crowd, "We are the most powerful positive force in America today because we have been able to give the



bureaucrats in Washington a stunning defeat."

She offered some "clues" on how they did it. "First it was a battle that had to be fought by women—women are like teabags, you don't know their strength until they get into hot water."

Then, she said, they used the "principal of judo—using the strength of your opponent. When they made all those personal attacks we just smiled sweetly and said that proves they don't have an argument."

A few minutes later she referred to Sen. Edward Kennedy's support of the ERA ratification extension. "A lot of those libs would like to jump on the Kennedy bandwagon—if they could be sure he wasn't driving," she said, to the somewhat scandalized "oohs" of the audience.

"What is now inevitable is that our side is going to come out on top. The women's lib movement is going to self-destruct because they are not going to have any babies—and if they do have them, they won't take care of them, so our children will be the ones who are well-cared-for and well-adjusted. . . ."

"I've always said, women would rather be loved than liberated."