

A Dialogue Between Women

By Nancy Baker
Herald Staff Writer

Surrounded by microphones, tape recorders and vividly colored posters, Cherie Sannes of Pacific Grove interviews her radio show guests in a soft, low-key voice.

Her speakers, ranging from a pilot to a poet, have one thing in common: they are all women who have made it.

Cherie, who is careful not to label her monthly program on Carmel's KLRB "feminist," says she is broadcasting for all women, especially those who have become discouraged struggling for equal treatment.

"Some women sit around complaining about injustice. Others use their anger to act in a positive way to overcome discrimination." Those are the kinds of women she interviews. "My program tries to say, 'Look, here's somebody who made it, so don't give up easily,'" she added.

One of the women who made it is Cherie herself, a registered nurse with no broadcasting background, who decided in October, 1973, she wanted to produce and moderate a local program on the needs of women.

She had heard that KLRB

was interested in a women's show, so she developed her idea of the first program and, one year later, she was on the air.

The program is called "Radio Free Women," and Cherie is usually assisted by three other women, especially Noreen Keck, who handles the technical aspects of recording the show. The women are not paid, nor do they pay the station for the air time.

Everything from women's music and poetry to serious interviews and humorous skits are broadcast on the 9 a.m.

program aired the last Saturday of every month.

The format of that first show was casual, with a lot of humor. "Everyone is so television-oriented, I wanted a program which would hold people's attentions. Some of the women I was working with in those early days became upset, saying there was nothing funny about women's situations, but I felt humor was imperative, and I got a good response," Cherie explained.

Women in employment was the subject, and Karin-Strasser-Kauffman, an affirmative action consultant, was featured on the program. Job discrimination practices were dramatized with a vocal skit of a woman employer interviewing a prospective male employe. The man was asked questions which women job-seekers often face, such as the age of children left at home and the method of birth control he used. This reversal of roles sparked laughter, but also some serious thinking, Cherie said.

Another program focused on the need for increased child care services on the Peninsula, and guests included Wilhelmina Vaughn of the Infant Care Center in Seaside.

The women's health care coalition in Santa Cruz has been featured, and a poetry review with Pinky Peckler and Rita Guliotto, two nurses at Community Hospital. In that broadcast, the idea of womanhood in the Deep South was explored in Pinky's book, "Woman Honey."

One woman who struggled and succeeded was interviewed on Cherie's fifth show. She



REVIEWING the script for one broadcast of "Radio Free Women" is Cherie Sannes (foreground), the program's originator and moderator, assisted technically by Noreen Keck.



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Anne Germain, Editor

TAPING an interview with pilot Dell Hinn, Cherie Sannes and Noreen Keck prepared a recently broadcast session of their year-old program of women's issues (from left).

was Dr. Bertha Juarterama, the first Chicana to be graduated from the Stanford University medical school.

Her father had wanted her to be a teacher or a nurse, and the tension with him almost caused her to back out of her decision to go to medical school. "She had become tired of fighting and thought it would be nice to settle down, have a baby and join the PTA," Cherie explained.

Bertha Juarterama wrote to Stanford, explaining her decision. A Chicano instructor there called her to encourage her to continue her studies, and in her reply to him, she realized she wanted to go after all.

By then, she was married, and her time was split between keeping house, working and attending medical school. Eventually, the schedule proved to be too much, and she chose to end the marriage, rather than her career. Now she is interning at the University of Oregon at Portland, and hopes to work with migrant laborers. She will eventually specialize as an obstetrician and gynecologist.

Cherie said, "Women have a tendency to think being a doctor is too demanding a job, that it would not allow them time for a family. But the opposite is true. You can work part-time and still earn a good salary. And you have a knowledge of child psychology and the human body. If anything, it makes you better equipped to raise a family."

She said that a lot of women are still concerned with being wives and mothers, and she is not trying to discourage that. "What I'm trying to convey is that a woman can have it all."

The most recent broadcast featured two women pilots, Dell Hinn and her grand-

daughter Gail Champlin, both of Salinas, who flew together as the first grandmother-granddaughter team in the Powder Puff Derby, this summer's cross-country women's air race from Riverside to Boyne Mountain, Mich.

Mrs. Hinn, who began flying 30 years ago, logging more than 4,000 hours, said that she has never had many problems as a woman pilot. Women are accepted in more aspects in the field of aviation now, she said, serving as air traffic controllers and on maintenance crews.

Occasionally, as the pilot on a chartered flight, she has had customers hesitant to fly with her, but that only happens the first time. On the second flight, the customer usually requests her.

Cherie said that Mrs. Hinn sometimes has had to overextend herself professionally in order to be accepted as an equal.

Unlike many people who have succeeded against odds, the women Cherie interviews are not caught up in the "pull yourself up by the bootstraps." philosophy. They are not smug or self-satisfied, but more than ever are sensitive to the problems facing other women, and they realize their achievement is partially due to luck and the help of supportive people.