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Female executives plan national support group

By Diane Andersen

been valuable.

Female executives and entrepreneurs may soon be able to join a national support network that will publish a "yellow pages" of women business owners and a directory of women belonging to local networks to contact when relocating or traveling, according to Kitty Kilmer and Sally Cowan, two Lincoln career women.

They spoke Wednesday as part of the Women Speak series, sponsored by the Student Y. Cowan, a member of the National Association of Female Executives, tried to start a Lincoln network that no longer is active.

She and Kilmer said they plan to try again with a membership drive promoted by advertising. Their group would be typical of the growing number of women's job networks around the country which offer seminars and information through contacts between working women.

Kilmer called networking the "phenomenon of the 80s." Cowan said it developed to replace "the good old boys grapevine" among male executives who have traditionally made business contacts through sports or over a drink.

New to management

"Women are relatively new to management positions," Cowan said, so they have no such informal networks to help them get to the top. Cowan said college women should be aware of the benefits of networking.

"It grew out of the feminist movement, but networks want to join the system before they try to change it," Cowan said. Many types of women join networks, which are not "militant" organizations. Cowan said, but are used by members for their individual career goals.

Cowan runs an audio-visual production company involving "all facets of business." She is also a professional musician who performs in Lincoln bars. Kilmer, who was a regional sales manager for a Minneapolis photographic equipment company, contacted her through a network listing when she moved to Lincoln.

Kilmer said that although she is currently unemployed, her contact with Cowan and the defunct Lincoln network have

Diverse backgrounds

Cowan said the Lincoln network failed because it was too small and the women were of diverse work backgrounds.

They had to be generalized in discussions, she said, because of the range in age and experience of the 10 members.

"Perhaps what was lacking was a vision of what it could have been," Kilmer said. The group started an exchange of book listings they found useful and gave presentations, but only a few people did all the work and interest lagged.

"We want to start over with a small core of ambitious women," Kilmer said. Organization, followed by ads, should help the Lincoln group get off the ground, she said.

Some networks have been boosted by political situations, Kilmer said. A Washington, D.C. group was inspired by President Carter's efforts to put more women in government jobs there, she said. The Denver network challenged the city's lack of day care centers and attracted publicity and members, Kilmer said.

"In adversity, networks can become gangs," she added.

Seminars and contacts

Networks offer such things as seminars on financial investments, lists of contacts for specific jobs, and subscriptions to the magazines *Savvy* and *Executive Female Digest*. Some networks take members by invitation only, similar to the successful "Twig Daniels" social luncheon group for Lincoln businesswomen.

But Cowan said she wants to "avoid exclusivity" in the Lincoln network. She also said she wants to avoid formulas and money-making gimmicks such as "dressing for success" rules and subscriptions to mediocre publications.

Kilmer said a prerequisite for belonging to a network should be a sense of self-esteem and "not being scared of using women colleagues." Networks are not mutual aid societies or clubs, Kilmer said, but should make women aware of what other working women are doing around the country.

"The timing is ideal right now," she said, for women to become informed about networking. She said she is "excited about the fast-changing scene of national networking."

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Abel-Sandoz residents toast state's birthday

Students in Abel and Sandoz residence halls will toast Nebraska's 113th birthday tonight with a dinner featuring buffalo meat, quail, steamed pudding, pioneer apple cake and corn bread.

Li. Gov. Roland A. Luedtke will be featured speaker.

The Abel-Sandoz Residence Association and the Abel-Sandoz Food Service are co-sponsoring the dinner, which will be served at 5 p.m. to the guests and an anticipated 1,200 to 1,300 residents. Luedtke will speak at 6:15 p.m. in the Abel North Lounge on legislative concerns affecting students.

"We felt this would be a way for our student-residents to become aware of what's happening in our state government, and for some of our state government people to become aware of the environment here," said Ina Lühring, Abel-Sandoz complex program director.

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