

The

HERLAND VOICE

AUGUST, 1990

A LEGACY OF CHANGE

by Pat Reaves

In the Fall of 1977, Laura Choate, then incarcerated in a state-operated juvenile institution, asked her parole officer how she could contact an attorney. That simple event led to a landmark case which drew national attention to the juvenile justice system in Oklahoma. The lawsuit, known as the "Terry D. case" was filed in Federal Court by Legal Aid of Western Oklahoma on behalf of Laura, 7 other named juveniles, and the entire class of children in custody of the Department of Institutions, Social, and Rehabilitative Services (now Department of Human Services). The National Center for Youth Law, National Prison Project of the ACLU, and the National Juvenile Law Center also joined in the suit.

The Terry D. case challenged the practices in the juvenile justice institutions. The suit charged that children's rights were routinely violated. Children were subject to long periods of solitary confinement in inhumane conditions without due process, and physical, sexual and psychological abuse by institutional staff. Children were discouraged and prevented from contacting attorneys. Addi-

tionally, the suit charged that the Department of Institutions, Social, and Rehabilitative Services (DISRS) violated children's rights to due process of law and to rehabilitative treatment by failing to provide effective educational, vocational and therapeutic programs.

Laura Choate recalls the conditions which led to the lawsuit:

"There was no fear of retribution for what they did so they would do anything. It was general practice forever in Oklahoma that children did not have constitutional rights. When a person doesn't have constitutional rights you have nothing and no one cares. It was slavery. It was abuse. It was prostitution. It was sexual abuse. It was anything you can ever name. Animals had more rights in this state than children.

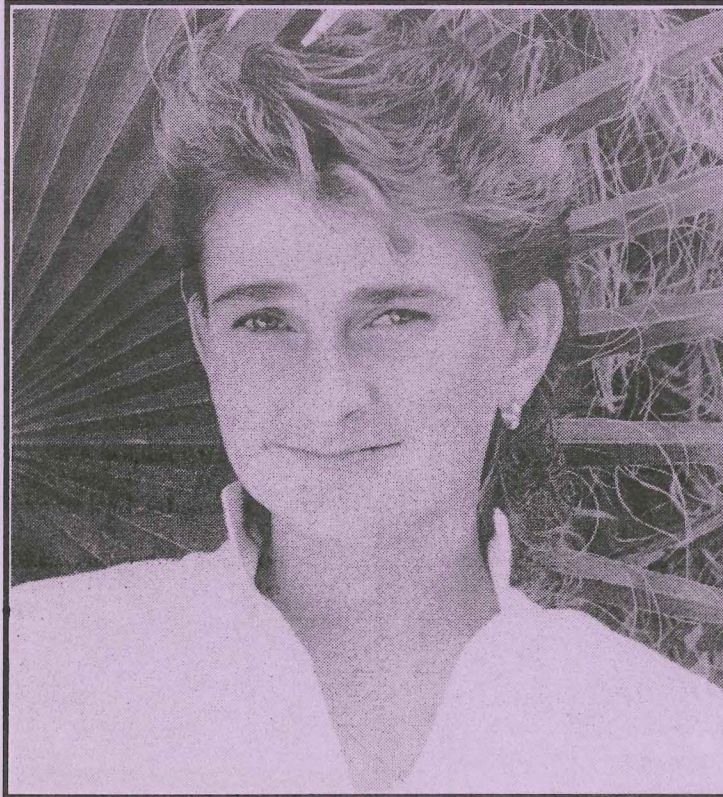
"A group of judges would come once a year and tour the institution. They would make a physical check and leave... There was no documentation of anything that occurred there. You went to cells, the solitary confinement, you could stay as long as they wanted you to. I stayed up to 2½ weeks one time in solitary. Girls were raped down there. That was common practice as

part of the punishment - to be raped. But it wasn't understood as rape. That word wasn't even used. I wasn't familiar with that term for years. It was just what happened.

"The conditions in the cells... they were critter infested. You'd be stripped naked. If you went into the padded cells, the men would send the female houseparent away and the men would strip the girls and hogtie and rape them. That was part of the whole routine—you knew if you went in the padded cell that was what was going to happen. I only know of three girls that went in there. That was something—the last thing you wanted to do because of their form of control. ... There was one girl who was a deaf-mute... She was one of the people who got sent to the padded cell. Her biggest problem was she couldn't communicate... None of the staff knew sign language. She would get real frustrated and have temper tantrums and kick people. They took her to the padded cell—we always knew what happened.

Part of your punishment for going AWOL was an immediate pap smear—a pelvic exam

(continued on page 2)



**RETREAT!
RETREAT!
RETREAT!
RETREAT!** **YES!
YES!
YES!**

Join Cruz Devon (left) and the rest of us for the famous annual Herland Fall Retreat, being held at Arrowhead State Park on Lake Eufala, August 31 thru September 3. We'll feature our usual Open Mike, along with a Sunday night dance with a live band. See back page for your registration form.

SEE YOU THERE!

LEGACY OF CHANGE

(continued from page 1)

because they just assumed you had been screwing and they didn't want you to bring any disease back. It was just a way of dehumanizing and it was all controlled and male dominated.

"At Taft the girls were used as prostitutes in the town. They would be drugged or offered drugs and prostituted. They were taken into town off campus off the grounds by the men and put in a motel. The townsmen were brought in and they paid to have sex with children within the state's custody.

"We were completely cut off. We didn't have the right to newspapers. We didn't have the right to watch the news. We didn't have the right to an education. While you were in cells you had no rights whatsoever.

"The people that worked there had no training—there was no required formal training. If your uncle knew Rader or Rader owed somebody, you had a job. When Gannett went in there, they found 9 convicted felons, some of which were on parole, working as child care workers in institutions. Two were convicted rapists on parole, a couple for murder and a lot of drug dealers. That was really common. If someone had a record and had been in prison it didn't matter.

"We had one psychologist for the whole campus and would sometimes see him once a year at the most. There was one medical doctor who came twice a week to campus and saw the most immediate cases. You could see him once every six months if you needed to—if you absolutely needed to.

"They used drugs a lot. The doctor would prescribe medications on the advice of a houseparent. Just anybody could say, 'This person is acting out' and they would drug people to the point of completely out cold. That was a way of punishing people, to be drugged. 'Well, you hit a staff two weeks ago, this is what we're going to do' and then thorazine people unconscious and keep them out for a while. Then they put them in the cells and they were down there unconscious.

"They used choke holds on kids. They killed a lot of kids that way. Things that in the adult system were absolutely illegal.

"We were treated like criminals but according to the Gannett articles only 7½% were actually delinquent. The rest were there for in need of supervision—psychiatric reasons... There was one violent offender when I was there—she was a murderer. The rest were there for running away from home. A lot of them were there because they were taken away from violent homes but that was no place to put them. You take them away from a sexually abusive father and place them in an institution where most of the males there would have their turn at you.

"Nobody cared about kids and children had no right to be cared for."

The Terry D. suit focused national attention on the child abuse in the Oklahoma

Department of Human Services. The Gannett News Service published nationally articles documenting case after case of child abuse by institutional staff, mismanagement of the institutions, graft and dictatorial management of the Department of Human Services by Human Services Director, Lloyd Rader. The U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice conducted an investigation and public hearings on the conditions in Oklahoma juvenile institutions.

"What was amazing is that there were no indictments because it was so widespread. . . . Rader should have been indicted. All the directors of the institutions should have been indicted. Individually, the men that worked in these facilities should have been indicted for rape, sodomy, child pornography, white slavery. All these things but they weren't. It was covered up. Still, even with all the attention it received, people were asked to resign from the state department and the merit system and that was the end of it. . . . Rader was retired on pension with a nurse-a private caretaker."

For Laura the personal consequences of participating in the lawsuit were severe. "They emancipated me when I was 16 and said I should go to the adult system [prison]. I was put out on the street with \$100 and was taken to my father's house who didn't have custody. Because I was emancipated, I lived on the streets."

The Terry D. suit was settled in 1984. The suit and the surrounding publicity brought major changes to the Oklahoma juvenile justice system. The settlement acknowledged the right of children to receive care and treatment in the least restrictive setting and established a preference for community-based programs. The use of confinement and mechanical restraints as punishment was forbidden. D.H.S. juvenile institutions were required to comply with standards of national accreditation for corrections and psychiatric treatment facilities.

"I [the settlement] states the fact and Oklahoma had to acknowledge the fact that children in Oklahoma have constitutional rights and that children have the right to treatment instead of incarceration. Children have the right to treatment without the use of cruel and unusual punishment. Part of the bill of rights was that food cannot be used as punishment, medical treatment cannot be used as punishment, physical punishment can not be used. The basic human needs cannot be withheld as a form of punishment. It basically stated what the Constitution had to say but it had to be restated for children in this state because of Rader's hold for over 30 years. It recognized the fact that kids need psychiatric help and created the 'in need of treatment' adjudication category which a lot of kids fall under and have always fallen under. . . . Most of them were abused kids."

According to Laura, the Terry D. suit has had significant long-term impact. "Child abuse at this time came up in everybody's awareness all of a sudden. As a result nationally there have been several class actions of this sort. . . this was the first, and kind of opened the door for other people to take a look in their systems. It brought the words 'child abuse' into the forefront. And who could be a child abuser—certainly not the people who cared for them. Well, yeah, especially the people who cared for them. That's who you need to be watching the most closely. And now if something happens within the system—within any facility—that person is going to be fired."

Laura has continued her struggle for children's rights. She currently works with a treatment program for children. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy, as well as having been a past member of the Herland board. ■

One Day in the Lives of American Children

17,051	women get pregnant
2,795	of them are teenagers.
1,106	teenagers have abortions.
372	teenagers miscarry.
1,295	teenagers give birth.
689	babies are born to women who have had inadequate prenatal care.
719	babies are born at low birth-weight (less than 5 pounds, 8 ounces).
129	babies are born at very low birthweight (less than 3 pounds, 5 ounces).
67	babies die before one month of life.
105	babies die before their first birthday.
27	children die from poverty.
10	children die from guns.
30	children are wounded by guns.
6	teenagers commit suicide.
135,000	children bring a gun to school.
7,742	teens become sexually active.
623	teenagers get syphilis or gonorrhea.
211	children are arrested for drug abuse.
437	children are arrested for drinking or drunken driving.
1,512	teenagers drop out of school.
1,849	children are abused or neglected.
3,288	children run away from home.
1,629	children are in adult jails.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM

THE LETTER VS. THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW

In Oklahoma, a "child" is defined in the state statutes as "any person under 18 years of age." Children receive special treatment under the law, at least according to the law books. Although, depending on the circumstances, how the law treats that child varies greatly. Usually, the intent of the law and the practice of the law are miles apart. Children generally become entangled in our legal system in one of two ways, either 1) through no fault of their own, but through the actions of those responsible for their care and welfare or 2) through some action they have taken themselves. In the first case, these children have either been abused or neglected by their parents or primary caretakers or their parents have decided to get a divorce. In the second case, the child may have done anything from stealing food from the corner 7-11 to murdering someone.

Children who have been abused or neglected are defined in the statutes as "deprived." Last year in Oklahoma County, there were just over 2000 referrals (each referral is on a family; the actual number of children involved varies) to the Child Abuse Hotline with about 700 of these allegations confirmed. About half of the cases concerning these children become court-involved while the rest are handled in a "preventive" manner. At any given time, about half of Oklahoma County's deprived children are at home or with relatives and the other half are in a foster home. The average length of stay in foster care is 22 months. Deprived children are represented in court by an attorney. Federal mandates require that all attempts be made to reunite the family, if at all possible, and the legal process focuses on reunification. As a result of this mandate, court hearings focus on the parent(s) because the parent is the one who is required to correct the conditions that brought the case to court.

During many court hearings, the children's needs and interests are not fully addressed because of this focus on the parents. One group that tries to focus the court process on the needs of the child is Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Volunteers. The CASA researches the case to which they are assigned, monitors each individual's progress and reports to the court making their own recommendations. The lack of social workers in the Child Welfare Division of the Department of Human Services results in many referrals not being investigated, contact with the family and children being at a minimum and sometimes court delays. DHS is trying to serve these children properly, but they simply cannot do it with the current level of resources. In addition, the children are repre-

sented either by a Public Defender or a court-appointed attorney. In either case, the child is just one of many clients who receives legal counsel, but it is not the role of the attorney to ensure that other needs are met.

Children whose parents are involved in a divorce have limited protection under the law. Although the state law mandates that support and visitation be addressed in the court decree, the child's needs are minimally considered during these deliberations. These children are not represented in court by an attorney and there are few if any resources available to help assist children deal with their emotional reaction to a divorce. In Oklahoma County, there are 3000 *disputed* cases each year. Again, that is the number of families and not the number of children involved. These children receive little to no direct services. The state law has a child support formula and support is included in each divorce decree, but only between 5 and 10% of non-custodial parents pay their children support in full, if at all.

The last group of children involved in the court are the so-called "delinquents." State law focuses on rehabilitation of juveniles over punishment. Therefore, most delinquents are required to make restitution or do community service work plus attend school, special training, counseling, drug rehabilitation, etc. As a result of the Terry D. case and Federal mandates, juveniles cannot be placed in jail with adults or detained without a hearing or as punishment. You simply cannot lock kids up for any length of time. These young people are represented by an attorney in court. Again, usually a Public Defender or other court-appointed attorney represents the child. The law makes exception for anyone 16 or 17 years of age who has committed a Class I Felony (e.g. murder, rape, distribution of a Controlled Dangerous Substance). These young people are automatically charged as an adult, but there is a hearing held to determine if that individual would be better served by being returned to the juvenile system. This is the process known as reverse certification. A younger child may be certified as an adult if they have committed a Class I Felony and sufficient evidence is provided to the court that the juvenile system cannot work effectively for this individual. Because of the number of offenses committed by juveniles in Oklahoma County, only the felonies go to court. Lesser charges are dealt with through the three Youth Service Agencies in the county. Last year in Oklahoma County, just over 3000 juveniles were charged with about 4500 felonies.

The state law does try to protect children;

however, the system is so overloaded and prevention efforts are so poorly funded that children do not receive the kind of care and attention that they deserve. One of the things I hate most about stories about kids, is that you are told about all the problems, but rarely given any ways to constructively vent your rage. Therefore, I am going to make *lots* of suggestions about what you can do to improve the lot of children in Oklahoma.

First, you can educate yourself about the signs of child abuse and neglect and be willing to report any suspected cases to the Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-522-3511). You can also learn about the dynamics that put children at risk for teen pregnancy and suicide, drug abuse, school drop-out, etc. Then you have to be willing to get involved. These problems do not belong to someone else in another neighborhood or town or state. These children live next door to you, you work with their parents, they may even be children in your family.

Children, need, first and foremost, positive and consistent attention. Volunteer to work a hot-line, be a mentor for teen parents at Emerson School, work with Planned Parenthood, help the Literacy Council with tutoring, help abusive parents learn new parenting skills at Parents Assistance Center, get involved with your church's activities for children, watch out for the latch-key kids that live next door, smile at a child, give positive strokes. The list is almost endless and there is a niche out there that is just perfect for you.

For the politically active who would like to see things change on a grander scale, you can ask candidates in the upcoming elections if children are a priority to them and how they will help to improve services to children (e.g. would they increase funding for preventative programs such as WIC, how will they help ensure families have access to safe and affordable day care), encourage the schools to teach life skills including sex and drug education and positive decision making, encourage the City Council to increase funds to the Parks and Recreation Department so that programs can be offered which not only keep kids off the streets, but help them to build strong self-esteem.

You can make a difference in the life of a child. If you want to get involved in some organized way, please give me a call at 841-0456. I will gladly discuss any of these issues with you and help you to decide which program would be best for you. ■

—submitted by Loretta L. Pecchioni
Volunteer Services Coordinator
Oklahoma County Juvenile Bureau

THE DEVALUATION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

by Deborah Fox

What do children have a right to? They have a right to exist, to have a childhood and a future, food, shelter, clothing, protection, nurture, love, play, to loving, intelligent guidance, to an education, they have a right to their bodies, their own individuality, to all their feelings and their expressions, they have a right to say no, yes, I don't know, they have a right to the truth, honesty, to be told "why," to receive validation, approval, praise, acceptance, and children have the right to inherit a planet that has not been ruined and discarded to them. Unfortunately, compared with what most children *actually have*, what I've just listed sounds utopic.

The general premise is that children are property, someone to carry on the family (father's) name — to gain eternal life, decorations for one's life, glue to hold a marriage together, someone to make in one's own image and fulfill one's own thwarted ambitions, future christians, someone to dominate and control, slave labor, war booty, playthings, trophies/rewards, and then, too; children are to be seen and not heard, and to "spare the rod is to spoil the child." The bible (that not-so-good book) even sanctions the brutal murder, beating, and rape of children (see: Psalms 137:9, Deut. 3:6, Ezekiel 9:6, Gen. 19:8, Judges 19:24, and Exodus 21:7).

Even today children are bought and sold like a common commodity, not only via surrogate mothers, expensive adoption agencies, and lawyers, but as child prostitutes. Take for example Northern Thailand where children are sold for prostitution, sometime before they are even born! (And note: it is the Western tourist's demand that perpetuates Thailand's exploitation of the poor and their children. South of Bangkok the Navy docks for "the sex capital of the world," and mind you, these are mostly child prostitutes. In fact, sex with a child is Thailand's highlight tourist attraction). At the root is poverty. Poverty, crime and the degradation of the body go hand in hand. Dig deeper and you find Patriarchy. Many children's issues are the same as women's issues, Native American issues, black issues, etc. because all issues stem from the same source: white, male domination hierarchies and the ensuing oppression of the rest of the people.

There are laws in America to protect children from physical and sexual abuse, child labor and exploitation, prostitution, pornography, murder, etc. Each state has its own laws (see Oklahoma's Criminal Statutes under Title 21). But we have only to watch the news or look at the statistics of incest, murder, etc. to see that these laws are only minimally effective and offer little protection. Why would men actualize laws they

themselves fall prey to? This reality drives home the point that you can't fight the system using the system's tools.

Children everywhere are given the message that being a child is inferior to being an adult, and they are subjugated by the etiquette that instructs them to address adults as Mr., Sir, Miss, Mrs., etc. (I would like to remind here that respect cannot be forced, it must be earned). Consequently, children are over-eager to be adults and do adult things like smoke cigaettes (to look older), drink alcohol, take drugs, have sex, swear, etc. Society teaches them these things. It is the modern "initiation into adulthood."

In general, children are not shown that to be a child is special, and that they have special abilities, talents and wisdom of their own that adults need and value.

"A dominator-dominated way of relating to other human beings is internalized from birth by every child brought up in a traditional, male dominated family (system)." (Riane Eisler) For example, look at the main staples of the toy industries: babydolls, homemaker sets, "wet and wild" Barbie dolls, the new "Real Model Collection™" of Beverly, Christie, and Cheryl, for girls; G.I. Joes, Rambos, and various other war toys and weapons for boys. Our children are being programmed! Our daughters are being taught that the alpha and omega of being female is to be quiet, sexy, decorative, subservient, to live for men, to "win" a husband. Our sons are being taught that war, "might," destroying and conquering/dominating are the epitome of manhood. If they show interest in "girls' toys," they are humiliated for it. Yet, boys will one day live on their own and need homemaker skills, girls will need careers. Why not weighty female executive dolls? If children's rights were honored they would not be pressured to mimic the status quo, but encouraged to be true to themselves and be their own unique individuals.

"When childbearing is not a punishment, but self-chosen, and when raising children is not an economic-survival disaster, most of us enjoy being around children. Most men do too. In prepatriarchal cultures, children were raised comunally—not closed up within four nuclear walls, not as property—but as the fruit of all. Most of all, childbearing and childraising were a part of each woman's life, a nourishing as well as nurturing part—but not her whole life." (*The Great Cosmic Mother*, Monica Sjoon and Barbara Mor.) The split between motherhood and self-realization inflicted by Patriarchy has caused a terrible stress upon women, the "right" to dominate (and abuse) women and children given to men by the patriarchal system, and the high tension, financial struggles resultant of hier-

archy, are the main contributing factors of child abuse. What was once the joy of the community and the fruit of all has become a personal struggle and a debilitating burden for our children to bear. Children's rights are pulverized by Patriarchy, much as the rights of all minorities.

Children are the hope of the future. They are the generations to come, and their value is inestimable. What they learn now will determine whether human evolution continues to be diverted/stunted or takes a quantum leap to catch up to where it could be. **They have a right to know the truth.** They have a right to the wisdom of *all* of the ages. I trust that our children would opt to restore and preserve the planet, and advance human evolution. Blessed Be.

In the eyes of the Great Goddess, all life is equal. ■



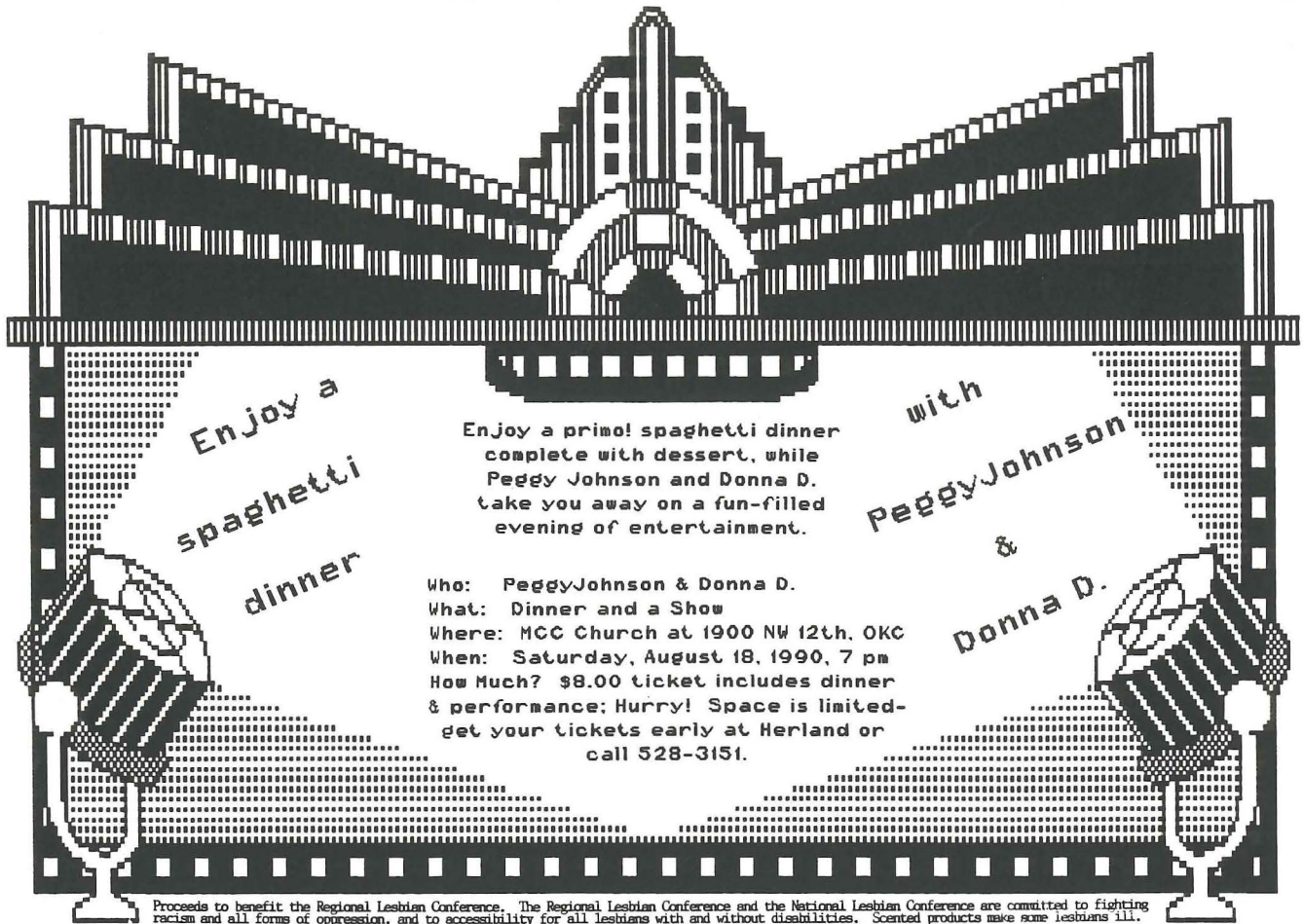
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Sanctuary
FRIDAY & SATURDAY
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Enjoy a spaghetti dinner

Enjoy a primo! spaghetti dinner complete with dessert, while Peggy Johnson and Donna D. take you away on a fun-filled evening of entertainment.

with Peggy Johnson & Donna D.

Who: Peggy Johnson & Donna D.
What: Dinner and a Show
Where: MCC Church at 1900 NW 12th, OKC
When: Saturday, August 18, 1990, 7 pm
How Much? \$8.00 ticket includes dinner & performance; Hurry! Space is limited- get your tickets early at Herland or call 528-3151.

Proceeds to benefit the Regional Lesbian Conference. The Regional Lesbian Conference and the National Lesbian Conference are committed to fighting racism and all forms of oppression, and to accessibility for all lesbians with and without disabilities. Scented products make some lesbians ill. Please refrain from wearing them at all RLC and NLC gatherings. All donations are tax deductible.



**REGIONAL
LESBIAN
CONFERENCE**

(Okla., Ark., Louisiana & Texas)

hosted by

HERLAND SISTER RESOURCES

LABOR DAY WEEKEND

at ARROWHEAD STATE PARK

in Eastern OKLAHOMA

For: Getting Acquainted

Identifying Common Issues

Workshops

Election of four delegates to

the NLC steering committee

Fun.

This Conference and the National Lesbian Conference are committed to fighting racism and all forms of oppression, and to accessibility for all lesbians with and without disabilities. Scented products make some lesbians ill. Please refrain from wearing them at all NLC gatherings.

All donations are tax deductible.

CALLING ALL LESBIANS
IN ARKANSAS, LOUISIANA, OKLAHOMA AND TEXAS :
FOUR-STATE REGIONAL LESBIAN CONFERENCE PLANNED

A Regional Lesbian Conference will be hosted by Herland Sister Resources, an Oklahoma City-based women's resource center, at their Fall retreat at Arrowhead State Park in east central Oklahoma on August 31 - September 3, 1990. This conference is in preparation for the National Lesbian Conference which is to be held in Atlanta, Georgia on April 24 - 28, 1991.

The regional meeting will bring together lesbians from Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas to get acquainted, identify common issues, learn from each other, and identify resources within the four-state lesbian community. There will be workshops on oppression, co-dependency/addictions, and other issues of importance to the lesbian community.

A primary objective of the meeting is to elect four regional delegates to the National Lesbian Conference steering committee, the decision-making body for the national conference, so that this region's issues may be brought to the national agenda. As the National Lesbian Conference endeavors to have all of our community's diversities represented on the steering committee, women of color and lesbians with disabilities are encouraged to attend this regional conference.

With the conference being held in conjunction with Herland's retreat, a popular semi-annual event, participants in the conference will be treated to a week-end of fun and entertainment as well as meetings of dynamic import to regional lesbians who are interested in the future of the lesbian community as a whole. Saturday night highlights include a performance by Missouri singer-songwriter Cruz Devon. Sunday night events include a traditional pot luck dinner (so remember to bring your favorite dish to share) and a dance with a live band.

Registration fees for the combined conference and retreat are on a sliding scale from \$30 - \$40 with on-site registration \$45. This price includes accommodations and morning and evening meals (5 meals). Some scholarships are available. Contact Herland at 405-521-9696 or 405-528-3151 for more information.

This event is being held at a state park group camp with kitchen facilities and cabins. Participants will need to bring their own sleeping bags or other bedding to use on the bunks provided by the camp, a pillow, toiletries, a flashlight, beverages of choice, snacks for in-between meals and a dish for the Sunday night pot luck.

This conference and the National Lesbian Conference are committed to fighting racism and all forms of oppression, and to accessibility for all lesbians with and without disabilities. Scented products make some lesbians ill. Please refrain from wearing them at all NLC gatherings. All donations are tax deductible.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM IS THE SAME AS RETREAT REGISTRATION FORM

SEE YOU THERE ! ! !

STEP FAMILIES: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

by Nancy D.

When the opportunity came up to write an article on children, I jumped at the chance to compose one about my own experiences with step-families. My lover and I share the "joys" of having 4 children, so I felt very qualified to address the problems, but I could not think of any legal solutions to these problems. This article became a form of self-help for me. It pushed me to find solutions through professionals, books, and interviews of other women. I'd like to share my findings.

We are currently raising 2 daughters, ages 8 and 13, and 2 sons, ages 12 and 19. The fun starts where they are all in various stages of growth and maturity and, as I am repeatedly told, they are normal. I hate the word "normal."

The 8-year-old feels that she is the "town cryer." She tells everybody everything about us. The 13-year-old has a telephone receiver permanently attached to her ear. The 12-year-old is starting to get interested in the 13-year-old's girlfriends and the 19-year-old knows everything.

When we decided to combine our families we had to make certain decisions: what rooms do the girls get, which room do the boys get? What about an extra room, so it doesn't look as if 2 women share the same bed?

A major issue was discipline. "Do I correct only my kids and you yours?" What about differences in discipline style? A more lax style may not be compatible with a stricter style. Talking out problems may not work with all children.

From interviews with other couples, I have learned that communication with your partner is one key to a successful step-family. Not all situations can be thought out ahead of time, but through the continual sharing of ideas and feelings, your position as parents is

strengthened.

Many issues women with children and step-families face are similar to those of heterosexuals, but there are additional pressures when you are a lesbian. Listed below are some of those concerns:

- How to talk to the children about your sexuality. If a child is younger, there is more acceptance than with an older child who is faced with peer pressure and concerned with his/her own emerging sexuality. Children with gay parents tend to pick friends who are liberal-minded and tend to be more liberal themselves.
- Fathers who threaten legal action against the mother in order to get custody of the child, strictly because of the mother's sexual preference.
- Sending the children to public schools and daycares. How do you introduce your lover? As a "friend" of the family or the child's "aunt?" The schools often want a next of kin to call in cases of emergency, so this is important.

I am not attempting to be a legal advisor or a counselor, but I do recommend as solutions: communication between you and your lover, respect for family members, joining a support group and counseling.

In the Oklahoma City area a support group titled "Women with Women with Children (WWWWC) has been formed to provide a climate where women can gather to discuss children, various ways of dealing with legal problems, stories of pain and humor. They are also trying to schedule social events, so the children won't feel that their families are too different and that they are alone in dealing with gay issues. For more information, call (405) 942-4331. ■

civic groups here and in Asia.

She also gave generously of herself to her many communities, serving as vice president of Delta Kappa Gamma, and president of the Oklahoma City Women's Political Caucus, which twice gave her their meritorious service award. She was an executive member of the Friends of the Library, a consulting member of the Oklahoma Foundation of the Humanities, was a member of Amnesty International, National Women's Studies Association, and the American Association of University Professors.

The Oklahoma women's community joins Abigail Keegan and all the friends and family of Ann Carlton in mourning Ann's death on July 4. We are poorer for her parting, and we will miss her. ■

SOUTHWEST GAY AND LESBIAN PAGAN COALITION FORMED

On Sunday, June 17, 1990, history was made in Oklahoma as the newly formed **Southwest Gay and Lesbian Pagan Coalition** marched openly down the scorching streets of Oklahoma City in the Third Annual Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade. It was the first step taken to organize a coalition of gay Pagan voices and spirits to say, "We Are Here And We Are Reclaiming Our Ancestral Birthrights As Gay Pagans."

Paganism can briefly be described as a polytheistic system of beliefs that date back to the early Greek, Roman and Egyptian periods. Many Pagans view deity as manifest in all life forms, therefore Paganism can be considered a pantheistic system of beliefs as well. Paganism, as a general rule, has no set doctrine, however Pagans do revere that which is considered to be our home, the Mother Earth. We consider environmentalism a top priority in daily living.

The Southwest Gay and Lesbian Pagan Coalition is forming a mailing list and will soon send out a newsletter in order to network with other gay Pagans located in the southwest region of the U.S. The Coalition will be an information gathering and dissemination organization as well as providing needed services to the gay Pagan community in the form of spiritual support, discussing and taking an active role on environmental issues, and coordinating social services as the needs become apparent.

Many gay people feel alienated from traditional Judeo-Christian religions and have turned to our ancestral roots of Earth-centered spirituality. Here, in myriad forms, we can find both our sexuality and our love and concern for our Mother Earth and each other affirmed.

If you are interested in the concerns of this organization, contact Desmond Stone through S.W.G.L.P.C., P.O. Box 26442, Oklahoma City, OK 73126. ■

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Ann Carlton was born in Tennessee in 1921; received her bachelor's and master's degrees from Middle Tennessee State University, and her doctorate in American Literature from Ball State University in Indiana. She taught in the OCU English department from 1959 until her retirement last year.

Her life's work also included associate editing of the Tennessee Folklore Journal and coediting *Piecework*, a local Magazine of Poetry by Women. Dr. Carlton co-owned an adult education program, *The Learning Connection*, and was a collective owner of *Red Dirt Press*. She published articles on literature, in addition to teaching literature, linguistics, the arts, social justice and creativity to

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SUBSCRIPTIONS to the *Herland Voice* are free upon request.

Chatterbox

The Oklahoma Coalition Against Abortion has filed an initiative petition to ban abortions in Oklahoma. They are seeking to place a measure on the ballot for the November general election which would prohibit abortion except in the case of rape, incest, or severe fetal deformity. Now is the time to enlist in the war for women's right to control their own bodies. Organizations working to ensure that Oklahoma women continue to be able to exercise the right to choose include NOW (918)-687-7006), Planned Parenthood (528-0221), the Campaign for Choice (842-3791), Oklahoma Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (946-6523), Oklahoma Women's Coalition for Abortion Rights (946-6523) Oklahoma Women's Network, (918) 744-0303) and the Oklahoma Women's Political Caucus. Call one of these organizations today and invest your time, energy and money for choice.....

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Senator Joseph Biden (D-Delaware) has introduced a package of federal legislation addressing violence against women. The legislation would designate gender-based violence as a violation of civil rights laws to seek compensatory and punitive damages from her assailant. The legislation would also increase minimum penalties for sexual assault committed on federal property and authorizes federal funding for law enforcement and advocacy programs.....

Lesbian veterans or active duty military are being sought for interviews for a forthcoming book, *Lesbians in the Military, Past, Present and Future*. For more information reply to: LITM, P.O. Box 680701, San Antonio, TX 78268-0701. No name is required.....

The Gay and Lesbian Helpline of Central Oklahoma has announced its incorporation as a non-profit organization. Donations toward operation of the hotline are now tax-deductible contributions. Helpline offers telephone crisis intervention and information about community resources for lesbians and gays. The Helpline number is 842-4297 (842-GAYS).....

The National Women's Political Caucus is looking for its founders. They would like to identify the 300 women who gathered in Washington, D.C. on July 11, 1971 in order to honor them at the 20th anniversary convention in 1991. If you are one of the NWPC's founding mothers or know someone who was, contact the NWPC, 1274 K. Street, Suite 750, Washington, D.C. 20005.....

The Mississippi Womyn's Educational and Cultural Retreat Center is wanting to purchase 160 acres of land to become the home of the Annual Gulf Coast Womyn's Festival. Also, home to womyn's retreats, a retirement community, and/or whatever anyone can envision that is a safe space and empowering educational experience for womyn. For more information contact Terry at 681-3469.....

The contribution deadline for the anthology *Cats and Their Dykes* has been extended to October 1, 1990. Essays, poems, stories and narratives can be sent to HerBooks, P.O. Box 7467, Santa Cruz, CA 96061.....

Contributions are being sought for an international collection of writings by *Battered Women and Survivors of Domestic Violence*. Journals/diaries, autobiographies, letters, essays, and even fragmentary accounts can be sent to Miriam Harris, P.O. Box 670-655, Dallas, TX 75367-0655 by September 1, 1990.....

DENTISTRY PRACTICE OPENS—Debra K. Browning, R.Ph.,D.D.S. has announced the opening of her practice of dentistry at 1501 N. Rockwell. She will serve the public with a wide variety of dental care.

Dr. Browning is a recent graduate of the University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry where she graduated with honors. She is also a pharmacist and obtained her degree in pharmacy from Southwestern Oklahoma State University in 1986. Dr. Browning extends a special invitation to the practice to all *Herland Voice* readers. ■

Abandoned

Outside the rain is falling,
Inside my heart is calling
Your name
Into the darkness.
But you don't hear me;
You can't hear me.

Forever reaching toward you
Forever trying for you,
It's just a game,
You're not to blame
That you can't hear me,
May never hear me.

Lonely Child inside is aching,
Can't understand the making
Of Her pain.
It feels insane,
That you don't hear Her;
You can't hear Her.

The hardest thing I've ever done
Is looking deep inside of me;
Searching deep inside to see
The One that was abandoned long ago,
Precious Child no one
would take the time to know.

She craves your understanding;
She needs no one remaining
Her their shame.
For it's not Her shame
That you don't hear Her;
May never hear Her.

Shunned by all in Her time of need,
Now I alone can plant the seed
To stop Her pain;
No one's to blame
That you can't hear Her;
Will never hear Her.

Karen Lewis, March 1990

GROUP COUNSELING OFFERED

Karen Lewis, L.P.C. is forming a therapy group for women. Group counseling facilitates healing by offering feedback, reality checks, and intimacy skills development. Counseling will focus on current issues in each woman's life and exploration of the origins of today's problems, along with methods and strategies to overcome them.

Fees for each weekly session are set up on a sliding scale from \$15.00 to \$1.00, based upon one's ability to pay. Any woman who wishes to take part in the group is welcome.

The group will start meeting at the Herland building each week as soon as enough women have expressed interest in such a group. Call Karen at 528-3151 for more information or to join the group. ■

THE LOONY-BIN TRIP: A BOOK REVIEW

Twenty years ago, Kate Millett published *Sexual Politics*, a landmark book and runaway bestseller that galvanized the women's movement and catapulted her to fame. Millett made headlines across the country, including the cover of *Time*. Eventually, however, she disappeared from public view, enduring forced hospitalization and even attempting suicide in a private battle against the stigma of mental illness—a struggle which became for Kate Millett a fight for her very self.

The Loony-Bin Trip is Kate Millett's shockingly frank autobiographical account of this struggle. Written with cinematic immediacy, *The Loony-Bin Trip* chronicles a dramatic cycle of events beginning with Millett's decision to go off lithium. After six years of coping with the diarrhea, hand tremors and sluggishness that were its side effects, Millett is determined to give up lithium and the shame and collusion it represents to her.

Readers are then swept along the course of a full manic episode, beginning with Millett's elation over what seems to be "the happiest summer of her life," marred, however, by the mounting pressure to prove to those around her that she is well without lithium. The atmosphere becomes increasingly ominous

as the author begins to doubt her own sanity and the loyalty of her friends and family.

The autumn is a time of escalating mania, and a fight from the threat of forced hospitalization, which culminates in Millett's being committed against her will to a mental institution in Ireland. She experiences once again what she calls "the loony-bin trip, the shame, the terror of being locked up," and conveys a frighteningly real insider's look at a mental ward.

Following her release, Millett returns to New York and sinks into a paralyzing bout of depression which soon leads to thoughts of suicide, and which forces her to seek help. Slowly she comes out of the abyss and regains control of her life by finally coming to terms with the disease that threatened it.

The Loony-Bin Trip is a compelling tale of a woman fighting to overcome the stigma of mental illness. With her haunting evocation of the shame, anger and fear she experienced in her battle with family, friends, the medical establishment—and herself—Kate Millett shows readers from the inside what it is like to "go crazy," and to finally triumph over mental illness.

The Loony Bin Trip is available now at Herland. ■

NATIVE AMERICAN GAY AND LESBIAN QUARTERLY

"Two Eagles," an international Native American gay and lesbian quarterly, made its debut in June 1990. "Two Eagles" features articles, writing and art by Native American gays and lesbians with special emphasis on spiritual and cultural concerns. Submissions from gay and lesbian indigenous peoples worldwide are welcome.

Goals of the publication are to break down the isolation that exists for many Native gays and lesbians, to celebrate and reclaim Native gay and lesbian traditions, and to promote healthy lifestyles and positive identities.

Anyone is welcome to subscribe to "Two Eagles." Rates are \$8.00 U.S.A./individual and \$10 U.S.A./institutional. Checks or money orders can be mailed to: A.I.G.L. P.O. Box 10299, Minneapolis, MN 55458. ■

TON-O-PENNIES!

Start saving your pennies now for Herland's upcoming "Ton-O-Pennies" fundraiser. Prizes to be given away for the most pennies brought in. Watch the *Voice* for further details!

BE A PART OF HERLAND

Herland is the collective effort of the women of Oklahoma. You can be a part of creating and sustaining this very special community we call Herland. Join a committee, volunteer to work in the resource center, or make a contribution to help meet the monthly expenses. Herland will be what you make it.

YES, I want to help Herland continue to grow.

- I'm interested in working on a committee. Please have the committee chair call me.
- I'd like to volunteer at Herland. Please have the volunteer coordinator call me with more information.
- Here's my contribution of _____ to help support Herland.

Name: _____
 Phone _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State/ZIP _____

FIRE STRIKES LESBIAN CONNECTION

For the second time in its 16-year existence, fire has struck the offices of *Lesbian Connection*, the free nationwide newsletter for lesbians. The fire, which occurred at approximately 11:30 p.m. on June 7th was apparently started accidentally by a male youth who was indiscriminately shooting off fireworks. One of the Ambitious Amazons (the caretakers of LC) was in the building at the time, but she escaped uninjured. However, her car was parked next to the building and was totally destroyed, as was the building's back storage area. Damage was initially estimated at \$17,000, but the actual costs for repairs and cleaning have yet to be determined.

The fire was contained to the rear portion of the building. The first floor areas used for production of the newsletter (i.e. layout, printing, collating, bundling) were relatively unharmed in the blaze. All 18,000 copies of the July/August issue of LC escaped the fire, and were mailed on June 15th as scheduled. The second floor suffered extensive smoke damage, however, and it is unknown how this will affect the free lesbian lending library and the equipment housed upstairs (computer, copier, etc.)

The building is fully insured, but at this time it is unclear exactly how much of the loss will be covered. Lesbians who would like to make a tax-deductible donation to help with the rebuilding process, or who would like to get on the *Lesbian Connection* mailing list, can write to Elsie Publishing Institute, P.O. Box 811, East Lansing, MI 48826. ■

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business card or 1/10 page . . .	\$ 15.00
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1/2 page	\$ 60.00
full page	\$100.00

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first 10 words	\$2.50
each additional word	\$.10

DISCOUNTS: available on advance

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PLEASE NOTE: There will be a minimal charge for typesetting done to any advertising.

Leave message for Ginger at HSR, (521-WMYN) to place an ad.



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NAME(S) _____

Number of Pets _____

ADDRESS _____

(Pets must be kept on leash and no pets in main building.)

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE (_____) _____

I would like a scholarship

I would like to lead a discussion group on _____

I would like to attend a group on _____ and a possible leader is _____

COMMENTS: _____

Registration (including meals) is from \$30 to \$40 based on your ability to pay. Registration on-site is \$45.00. Return this form to: HSR, 2312 N.W. 39th, Oklahoma City, OK 73112