

Thursday August 30, 1979

LAS VEGAS VOICE

Community
Highlights
By Sarann Knight

Through the thoughtfulness of my good friend Woodrow Wilson, who is not only chairman of the Nevada Equal Rights Commission (ERC), but also serves as chairperson of the Nevada Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, I have received a report issued by that Commission this month which is a summary of a public forum on women's rights and responsibilities sponsored by the Nevada Advisory Committee in October, 1978.



The report quoted a statement made by Steward E. Oneglia, director of the Federal Task Force on Sex Discrimination in which Oneglia made the unsurprising admission that "The benefits are provided to the men and the burdens are imposed on the women."

Woody said that highlights of the forum included disclosure that women are working today because it is necessary for them to work....that the 14th Amendment changed the legal status for slaves, but it did not change it for women---that many States still have laws which do not guarantee the homemaker any say in any family decision...that Legislation introduced in the previous sessions of the Nevada Legislature to offer redress for women have a startling rate of failure, and that in the Federal judiciary, of over 500 appointed positions, 12 are women. This includes the Supreme Court of the United States on which no woman has ever served.

By the way, one of the Las Vegas serving on the Nevada Advisory Committee is Erma O'Neal, founder of Poor People Pulling Together, a service organization for poor people which does a monumental job in the Black community, particularly in the area of housing problems. Erma is a dynamite young lady whose presence on the Advisory Committee gives me comfort because I know "our" interests are being taken care of.

I suppose everybody who knows me knows how I feel about the role women have played in our and every community without which, it is my firm conviction, we would not have had near the number of successes we have enjoyed. I also have as equally a strong conviction that if women were given more opportunity and credited for their achievements, we would, indeed, be able to enjoy the abundant life. Face it, fellows, the ladies get the job done. What is needed is what the information at the forum clearly pointed to - "a need for a national standard of equality for the sexes" as friend Woody pointed out.

The Las Vegas Family Abuse Center have announced the official opening of its Crisis Shelter sponsored by the Center's Women's Advocate Program. Naturally, the address of the Shelter is kept confidential but those who are interested can arrange for special tours through the Family Abuse Center's main office at 3135 Industrial Road.

E.O.B. has been operating a Women's Shelter for some time and we hear nothing but first rate reports on that operation. It is unfortunate there exists a need for Women's Shelters but how lucky we are in Las Vegas that there are those who recognized that need and have responded to it.

Vivian Martinez, Executive Director of the Family Abuse Center, also announced a "Latin Music Festival and Disco Contest, September 2 at the Silver Slipper Ballroom, proceeds of which will benefit the Crisis Shelter and Family Abuse Hotline.

Emily S. Hadland, Program Coordinator and Acting Director of the Senior Citizens Center at 450 East Bonanza are planning a gala celebration which they have imaginatively dubbed an "Elderfest". The event is

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scheduled for Saturday, October 6th from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m.An Elderfest with lots of ethnic food, dancing and entertainment is designed to bring in the fall and winter months with a bang, and make everyone feel happy and good all over, according to the partygivers. They wish you would give them a ring at 386-6454 and offer to participate in the fun celebration.

Things are livelier again at the E.O.B. administrative offices over on Comstock Drive now that Delia Gonzales, the ebullient Cuban lass who came to work there a few years ago as a refugee, is back from an unexpected, but welcomed, trip to Cuba to see family and friends Delia says the people speak openly of their disenchantment with Castro...Conditions there are so sad, Delia tells us. She said meat or chicken rations are a pound a week (one or the other - you can't have both). Apparently, the honeymoon between Russia and Castro is over and the Cuban dictator is planning a trip to the United States in October. Delia expressed the concern of those at home that the U.S. will not welcome Castro with open arms or be prepared of offer aid. We assured Delia, Cubans don't have to worry. The only reluctance our Congress displays is in giving aid and succor is to our nation's poor and needy.

I am delighted at the response of various women's organizations to our (NAACP Women's Auxiliary) invitation to participate in the NAACP Membership Drive Kick-Off Tea. The affair will be in the Convention Center Gold Room Sunday, September 23 at 2:00 p.m.

Those Ladies groups who have consented to serve as co-hosts are working enthusiastically on the project and the invitation is still open to the organizations from whom we have not yet heard. All participating women's organization will decorate their own table for serving tea and refreshments. Prizes will be awarded for best decorations...Lots of entertainment is planned also - so mark September 23 on your social calendar.

Media Reviews:

(Poetry for young adults
—at heart)

A COSMIC SPRITE

A review of *Cotton Candy on a Rainy Day*, by Nikki Giovanni, William Morrow & Co., New York, 1978, 95 pages, Hardcover, \$5.95.

Nikki Giovanni is a glowing little sprite—a diminutive genius whose power of words and sensitivity to the human spirit make of her a young adult of greatness, whose messages we should all hear...if we, too, are—or would be—young of heart!

Seeing her in the 1960's and being with her in a group of busy people at a Wilmington, Delaware settlement house for a full day prior to the evening when Martin Luther King died, revealed—even then—a young woman with a rare gift for quiet in the midst of busy-ness and confusion; made her "an unforgettable experience." That she remains today such an experience is evident in *Cotton Candy on a Rainy Day*, a selection of poems designed for those who are open to today's perceptions of what the fountain of youth should hold.

President Lauds New HEW Chief

From the White House Press Office

Washington-President Jimmy Carter called former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Patricia Harris "a manager with a heart" and praised her performance as HUD secretary during her swearing-in as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare recently.

"Hers has been a sterling performance...All who know her realize that She is bold, strong, outspoken," the President told a group of more than 500 people gathered in the East Room of the White House to witness the event. "Anyone who looks to Pat Harris as a 'yes woman' would be both foolish and ill-advised.

Harris takes over the HEW post from outgoing Secretary Joseph Califano.

The President said Harris "fights for her beliefs and her beliefs are sound and she wins her fights...She's got a superb batting average on the Hill [Congress] in getting legislation passed."

"There is no doubt in my mind that there will be no slackening of effort, no lessening of commitment, no deviating from a path of superior service" on Harris' part," the President said. "And I know Pat Harris well enough to look forward with great anticipation to her ability, once a path has been described and delineated, that she can work harmoniously with every other member of the Cabinet, all the other Federal agencies, the local government, the state government officials, the constituency groups, the Congress, in an effective way," he said.

Harris told the mixed group of government employees, civil rights leaders and others that she would bring the same dedication to HEW that she had at HUD in serving the young, the poor, the handicapped, the infirm and the aged.

"I want to assure everyone...that I will work tirelessly and resolutely to establish a separate Department of Education - to bring reform and dignity to the American welfare system - and to enact national health insurance. We're going to do them all," she said.