

Parents' Advocate Wins in Kentucky



Donna Shedd

A parents' rights candidate swept the primary election in a four-way race for Superintendent of Public Education in Kentucky on May 28. Donna Shedd won 41% of the vote on a platform critical of the Kentucky Education Reform Act 1990.

Mrs. Shedd's platform includes parents' choice of public or private schools; traditional education methods; strong academic curriculum; decentralization of education; a Pupil Protection Act; and repeal of KRS 214.185, which allows a physician to diagnose and treat diseases, addictions and other conditions of minors without parental notification or consent, especially as it applies to the new school based clinics established by the Kentucky Reform Act of 1990.

"Socialized medicine has come to Kentucky," Mrs. Shedd claims, with the initiation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. The reform established school clinics in or near every school with 20% or more "at risk" students (students on the free lunch program). This was the original intent of the legislation, but now these services are extended to the entire community served by the school. The medical services are free to the at risk students and on a sliding scale for everyone else.

The clinics provide daycare for children ages 2 through 12. "This," says Mrs. Shedd, "is an assault on the free enterprise system." Private daycare owners are upset because their tax dollars are paying for the clinics that are putting them out of business.

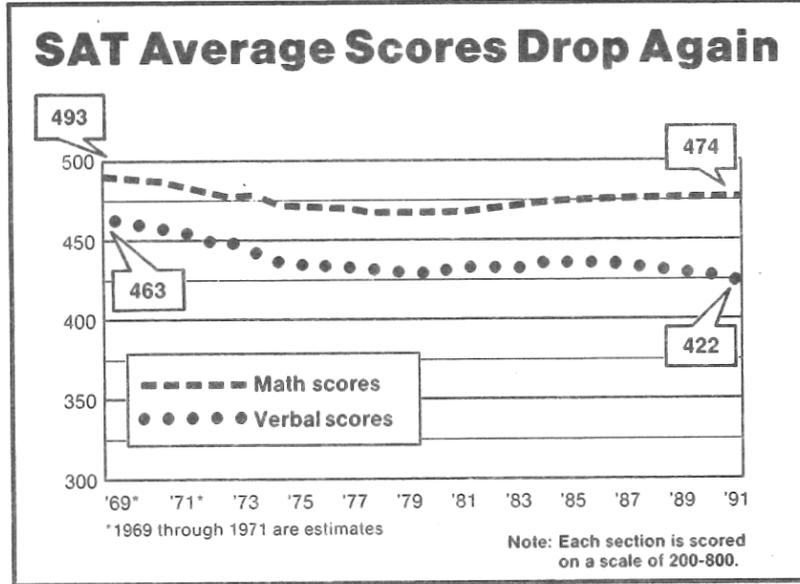
Also affecting the daycare owners is the pre-school provision. The state is now paying schools \$2,530 per child to set up a half-day program. Many schools jumped at the chance to qualify for this funding. The most expensive half-day program Mrs. Shedd could find was in Louisville, costing only \$1,250. Thus, the taxpayers are paying more than twice as much as the most expensive school program in Louisville.

The clinics are called Family Resource Centers in the elementary schools and Youth Service Centers in the secondary schools. Computer technology is used to keep information on the students and their families. The goal is to have everything about a student and his family in the computer when the student walks through the door. "This tremendous invasion of privacy, this elitist Big Brother mindset, is very frightening to those of us with children in the public school system of Kentucky," stated Mrs. Shedd.

The second reason Mrs. Shedd opposes the so-called reform law is that the curriculum is

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SAT Scores Plunge Again



The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores have dropped again for the sixth straight year. The verbal scores are lower than they have ever been. Despite a decade of increased spending on schools, reforms and reorganizations, the academic performance of American school children is going down, not up.

College Board President Donald M. Stewart blamed TV, saying, "We have a national problem of too much TV and too many videos that have decreased the amount of time spent reading."

This year, 1.3 million high school students took the SAT, which is 40% of all graduating seniors. A record 28% were minorities. Eighty-two percent of them were enrolled in public schools, 13% in religious schools, and 5% in independent private schools.

Students who attend independent private schools scored almost 100 points above the national average.

Asian-American students led all ethnic groups in the scores, followed by whites. Over

15 years, test scores by blacks were up 50 points, Mexican-Americans 23 and American Indians 22. However, those minorities remain far below the national average.

Fred Dietrich, who directs the board's test programs, said the declining trend on verbal scores occurs in part because the number of high school students who study four years of English is shrinking. Another influence, he said, was an increase in students who are either bilingual or learned English as a second language.

While acknowledging the changes in those who took the SAT, College Board President Stewart said there is a "genuine decline in ability levels of students taking the test, both majority and minority." The National Center for Fair and Open Testing, based in Cambridge, Mass., said, "We don't need test scores to prove that American education is in trouble."

College Board officials called attention to a curious fact: Although SAT scores are declining, grades are going up.

Indiana Subsidizes 'Sex Sale'

"I sell sex very well," Oreida Anderson boasted to the 30 or so teachers, administrators, and school nurses who attended a workshop sponsored by the Indiana Department of Education in South Bend, Indiana on April 24. Billed as an "HIV/AIDS Education Workshop in Elementary/Special Education," the program was, in reality, little more than a state-subsidized sales pitch for the James Stanfield Publishing Company of Santa Barbara, California, whose *Life Horizons* slide presentation is touted as "the most widely used sex education program for persons with developmental and learning disabilities."

A kit, offered for sale to the school officials attending the workshop at state expense, contains more than 1,100 slides, many of them depicting male and female genitalia, their development and use in reproduction, and the effect on them of birth control devices and sexually transmitted diseases.

Introduced as "a pioneer in the field of sex education" who has "conducted over 225 workshops on 'Sexuality and the Disabled' for professionals and caregivers," the 71-year-old Anderson urged attendees to "get rid of all your

inhibitions, all your sexual hangups." She insisted that they use specific terms for the body parts depicted in the slides and in the "reproductive anatomy models" which were prominently displayed during the entire presentation. (They were manufactured by Jim Jackson and Company of Cambridge, Massachusetts.)

One participant who found it difficult to oblige the speaker was Lois Stauffer of Spencer, Indiana, secretary of the AIDS advisory council for the DeKalb Eastern School District and mother of a school-age child. "I failed to see where all of that fits into public education," she said.

"Sexuality is something that's very private," Mrs. Stauffer continued. "You can't just remove all those inhibitions. They're there for a reason." She believes that the assault on modesty, to which she and the other workshop participants were subjected, would be even more disconcerting for adolescents and pre-teens. "When you remove those inhibitions from young people," she warns, "you're headed for trouble."

Mrs. Stauffer was perplexed that the subject of AIDS "was mentioned only three times at this AIDS workshop." Instead, Oreida Ander-

Golden Rule Gives Children Real Choice in Indianapolis

J. Patrick Rooney, CEO of Golden Rule Insurance Co., has responded in a unique way to President Bush's challenge for business to be involved in education. He has set up a \$1.2 million Choice Charitable Trust to award scholarships to 500 low-income students in Indianapolis. Each student will receive a voucher to pay up to 50 percent (capped at \$800) of the tuition at any Indianapolis private school.

Most private schools in the area charge less than \$1,600 a year, whereas the public schools spend an average of \$4,000 per pupil.

Within three days after Golden Rule's announcement, the company had received 1,076 applications. Golden Rule has expanded the program to take 686 students, invited other local corporations to participate (Eli Lilly has indicated it may), and put other applicants on a waiting list.

The 47,000-student Indianapolis public school district feels threatened by the impending departure of 686 students and has been busy rallying its friends to attack the Golden Rule plan. One group called it "disastrous" that the \$1.2 million will not be just given outright to the public schools. Another is urging parents to refuse the grants. A third charges that the Golden Rule project will "undermine" public education.

Indianapolis school superintendent Shirl E. Gilbert 2nd complained that the loss of 250 students would cost the district \$1 million in state aid. "What makes Golden Rule's plan controversial," *Education Week* reported, is the fact that it is "couched in the rhetoric of parental choice." Most liberal programs are based on the elitist notion that mere citizens, taxpayers and parents really don't know how to make their own decisions and spend their own money, and therefore tax-salaried "experts" should do these things for them.

The school establishment's reaction to the Golden Rule plan is similar to the public school-generated flap against the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, which is now into its second year, with 554 pupils participating. Known as the Polly Williams plan (after the black state representative who sponsored the legislation), up to one percent of low-income Milwaukee public school students are allowed to attend private, nonsectarian schools, each with a \$2,500 voucher from state tax funds.

State Representative Polly Williams said that the black groups opposing the Golden Rule plan are "speaking with a forked tongue." Putting her finger on the problem, she said that those who claim they represent black groups really base their objections on the false premise that poor and minority parents cannot decide for themselves what is best for their children.

son's primary objective seemed to be, in her own words, to "sell the community" on sex education, which she labeled "not a moral issue but a health issue."

Anderson warned that "fundamentalist groups" are determined "to deny us our

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BRIEFS

Cutbacks in school and other state services are predicted as the result of a federal court order that requires Missouri to finance the failed school desegregation program in Kansas City. State officials are predicting scenarios that include "school districts shutting down, college classes canceled at midyear, children and old people left in life-threatening, abusive homes, and infants developing mental retardation." On Aug. 23, the U.S. District Court of Western Missouri ordered the state to pay \$71 million for building projects for the desegregation program, which is currently opposed by nearly everyone, according to an article in the *American Bar Journal* of May 1991 called "Broken Dreams."

A teacher's role in a "Fatal Attraction" case involving the shooting death of his wife may prevent him from being allowed back into the classroom. Paul Solomon of Greenville School in Greenburgh, New York admitted in open court to having had an affair with Carolyn Warmus, the fellow teacher who was accused of killing his wife, Betty Jeanne Solomon. For 17 years Mr. Solomon was one of the most popular teachers teaching 6th grade, coaching soccer, basketball, and golf. Leon Leighton, an 88-year-old lawyer pressing the school board for Mr. Solomon's dismissal, claims that returning him to the classroom would be "an unforgivable outrage to the integrity of our school system."

Senior Gregory Baus of Woodlawn High School in Baltimore County, Maryland has sued two principals for censoring his pro-life T-shirt, claiming they violated his right of free speech. The dispute began on May 17 when Woodlawn Assistant Principal P. Delores Mbah ordered Baus to remove his controversial shirt and put on a school athletic shirt instead. Refusing to comply, Baus was driven home by Woodlawn Principal Louis J. Sergi and instructed not to return until he had changed. Baus's shirt displayed a dismembered, 10-week-old fetus with the words: "Kinda looks like murder doesn't it? It is murder, and it's legal. It's abortion." The student's attorney, David Noonan of the Rutherford Institute of Maryland, said his clients have a right to express their political and religious views — even on a shirt at school.

Americans say education reform will come with a national curriculum, national standards, national achievement tests, and the firing of teachers and principals whose schools do not show progress, according to the 23rd annual Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa education poll released August 22. This public opinion poll also showed that parental school choice and voucher plans continue to gain favor. The poll found the general public at odds with the nation's teachers unions, which are lobbying hard against meaningful testing and parental choice.

The Dade County, Florida history book, which claims that Fidel Castro improved living standards in Cuba and that upper-class Cubans bailed out because of land reforms, is inaccurate and offensive, according to the Florida State Commission on Hispanic Affairs. The commission was highly critical of the book, *Human Experience — A World History*, and asked for a state investigation. "It's completely biased, completely out of focus," said State Senator Javier Souto. "I lived through that in Cuba, and it didn't happen that way. The facts are twisted."

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Teaching Egocentrism and Self-Esteem

Tape of the Month

The Centered Student, Relaxation and Self-Concept Activities for the Classroom, by Gay Hendricks, Ph.D. Liberty Tree Publishing Inc. 1982.

The hardest part of reviewing a series of cassette tapes on "centering" is trying not to drift off while listening to them. After all, drifting off is what the tapes encourage. According to the teacher's guide that accompanies the collection, "*The Centered Student* is a program of classroom activities designed to foster and enhance a sense of balance and calm in students while simultaneously raising self-concept."

Developed by Dr. Gay Hendricks, the tapes begin with "a brief set of relaxation and centering instructions," and then impart to the relaxed and centered student "a message about an important skill area in building self-concept."

The theory behind *The Centered Student* is erroneous, but simple: "how much students learn depends upon how they feel and how they feel about themselves."

Tape C contradicts basic religious tenets and common sense by emphasizing "the importance of allowing yourself to experience emotions instead of talking yourself out of them," unmindful of the spiritual or physical harm that might result.

Tape D stresses the "uniqueness" of individuals (while treating them all the same, of course) and "combines a relaxation activity with messages about how to overcome feelings of unsureness," as though uncertainty were an intrinsic evil and not a warning sign that something is amiss. This program "focuses on giving students permission to try new things without fear of failure"—ignoring the obvious fact that countless thousands of students are already suffering the consequences of the delusion that life is risk-free.

Tape E introduces student to "the inner creative urge to which we all have access." Tape F defines responsibility as the willingness "to own all of your feeling and actions" and

A Classroom Lesson: *Just RELAX*

"Let yourself sit comfortably or lie down as you listen to the instructions. Feel free to close your eyes," Dr. Gay Hendricks suggests, before initiating schoolchildren into the drill of "tensing and relaxing different parts of your body." In a soothingly monotonous voice, he commands them to lift their right arms and "feel tension" in them. Then, to drop the arms and "feel all the tension drain out." Next the left arms. Then both arms together. Then the right legs, etc.

At the conclusion of this hypnotic hokey-pokey, he counts backwards from 10 and instructs participants to "sit up and open your eyes wide feeling rested and alert."

Participants are next instructed to make themselves aware of their breathing. Hendricks directs them "to think of a soft golden light . . . that grows with each breath"

they take. "Notice where you think and feel the center of your body is," he commands. "Where does that light come from within you, when you imagine it coming from the deep center of you?"

The golden light is meant to symbolize personal creativity. "Deep inside you have an unlimited supply of creativity," Hendricks proclaims. "All you have to do is open up to it and find ways to express it." Best of all, "anytime you want to feel more comfortable and more relaxed you can simply open up to that white light within yourself."

Before rousing his subjects from their state of "rested alertness," Hendricks reminds them: "Whenever you want to feel beautiful and bright, just relax and let that light shine through you." ■

Teachers who do not balk at that whopper will no doubt endorse the elliptical syllogism that follows: "One of the highest educational goals is to teach skills that can be useful to students throughout all of life. Certainly relaxation, self-concept and a sense of mental and physical harmony are paramount among such skills." *Never mind* that a student who has mastered his subject is bound to enjoy an improved self-concept, or that one who hasn't does not deserve to!

Unwarranted self-confidence is what the tapes seem determined to instill. Tape A is an introductory program designed to help teachers feel "better about themselves as teachers"—regardless, evidently, of their competence or achievement. Side 1 begins "with a short message on the importance of relaxation and centering," followed by instructions for using the program. Side 2 asks teachers "to use imagery to picture themselves experiencing success in their teaching"—without asking them to picture themselves doing any of the things prerequisite to success, such as preparing better, trying harder, or caring more.

Tape B offers a Nero-esque approach to reality in that it "focuses on the power of the person to feel good inside, independent of what happens outside."

"emphasizes the sense of power" that allegedly is fueled by that willingness. Tape G helps students "identify where they feel stress in their bodies" and offers suggestions on how "to release it."

Tape H makes the case that one of the main obstacles to realizing one's "unlimited potential" is fear (apparently fear means scruples). Tape H also "gives students permission to open up to their full potential and express it in creative ways." Parents might object that they would prefer to be the ones to give permission to their children. Parents might also argue that fear is what keeps some people from realizing their potential as thieves, murderers, and degenerates.

But then, what do parents know? They are removed as authority figures in this curriculum, which is used in some public school classrooms without parental knowledge or consent. *The Centered Student* is just one of hundreds of "self-esteem" curricula now flooding into the public school classroom to replace the basics.

When you hear your local school talking about teaching "self-esteem," it would be a good idea to check into the content of the course: it might be psychological; it might be a pseudo-religious fantasy; it certainly won't be academic. ■

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non-academic. Of the six goals, only the first two concern academics. One aspect of the reform is the ungraded, multi-age classroom. This, along with other gimmicks of the early 70s, was criticized in the *Nation At Risk* Report of 1983.

Mrs. Shedd said, "I don't want psychological tests given to my children without my consent. I don't want my children given medical examinations without my knowledge or consent. I don't want my privacy or my children's privacy invaded by anyone." The voters agreed.

Mrs. Shedd believes that, since there are many opinions as to what constitutes quality education, the only solution for America is choice in education. The Kentucky Bill of Rights, Section 5, guarantees that no man can be compelled to "send his child to any school to which he may be conscientiously opposed."

The office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, for which Mrs. Shedd is a candidate, has been stripped of power by the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. However, it is the only voice on the state level the people have in their children's education.

Kentucky's education system needs reform, but the Kentucky Education Reform Act now being implemented is not the answer, according to Mrs. Shedd. Number one, it is non-academic. Under the "reform law," according to Mrs. Shedd, "teachers are required to teach social attributes like self-esteem. They also must test for it and grade it. They are required to teach what can't be taught, test what there are no tests for, and then grade the outcome."

She call this reform "experimental in nature. Our children only have one education. I think it should be taught by methods that we know work, that we have proof will work. There are wonderful, proven-effective educational methods, but Kentucky didn't get them." ■

Sex Sale *Continued from page 1*

sexuality," and stressed that the teaching of sex education cannot begin at too early an age.

Mrs. Stauffer was so distressed by this "sales pitch" that she contacted State Representative Dennis Kruse and accompanied him to the office of Superintendent of Education Dean Evans to express her concerns. Having promised to investigate the matter, the superintendent, in a subsequent letter to Representative Kruse, relayed his staff's explanation that the "frankness" of Oreida Anderson's presentation was due to the fact that the materials involved are intended for special education students, who "are typically concrete learners."

The superintendent pointed out that "only a select few slides" from the *Life Horizons* collection "would be appropriate for a given audience." The kit's promotional material advertises that the slide format allows "sexually explicit materials" to be "edited to meet the requirements of student needs and community taste."

Evans conceded, however, that "some of the graphic, pictorial descriptions might better be handled in a different way — even for the most concrete, mentally handicapped learner." Evans assured the Representative that his staff understands that "abstinence must be a major part of our curriculum" and that "schools must (and do) teach values, as well as moral and ethical principles."

"Parents or other family need to be involved in learning what the school is teaching and, where possible, provide the school with proper direction through the local boards of education," the superintendent affirmed.

Mrs. Stauffer was pleased by the superintendent's receptivity to her criticisms, but she urges other Indiana parents to let Dean Evans know what they think of programs like *Life Horizons*. ■

FOCUS: Parents As Teachers OR Teachers As Parents?

by Laura Rogers

Missouri launched an experimental parenting program in 1981 called New Parents as First Teachers. The name has since been simplified to Parents as Teachers, or PAT.

PAT began as a voluntary pilot project in four school districts at a cost of only \$30,000 each. State legislators believed it would help disadvantaged children by screening them for "developmental delays." In 1985 the Missouri Legislature mandated the Parents as Teachers program for all schools and all children. The cost rose to over \$9 million and involved 53,000 families.

This program now covers 100,000 children at a cost of \$15 million in tax money, and the January 1990 issue of *Parents as Teachers News*, PAT's monthly bulletin, reports that PAT will be fully implemented "by 1995 or so." Since 1981 PAT has been introduced in 40 states and at least eight foreign countries, and in 1987, the Education Commission of the States announced eight spinoff programs with different names and similar goals. Edward Zigler, director of the Yale University Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy, predicts the future price tag will be from \$75 to \$100 billion dollars for the total life cycle package. All that money will go to pay for a program that is revolutionary in its approach to child development and parent involvement.

Much of the strategy behind PAT was laid out at a Governor's Conference on Education, held in Kansas in 1989 called "Schools, Goals, and the 1990's." At the Kansas Governor's Conference two years earlier, Dr. Zigler stated that "the child care system must become part of the very structure of our society. It must be tied to a known major societal institution." During the 1989 conference Lamar Alexander, then president of the University of Tennessee, called for "a brand new American school." These schools are to be open year round for children from birth, and a team of teachers will be assigned to a child from the day that child arrives at the school all the way through college.

Dr. Shirley McCune added definition to what she called the "strategic direction" for American schools. "It seems to me that far too much of our efforts have been focused on the issue of let's find a short term fix and fix up these schools and taking care of them, rather than the issue of understanding that what we're into is a total restructuring of the society. What is happening in America today, and what is happening in Kansas and the Great Plains, is not simply a change in the usual winds of change. What it amounts to is a total transformation of our society. We have moved into a new era."

Dr. Frank Newman, who is with the Education Commission of the States (and on the national advisory board of PAT), agreed. "We cannot expect these systems to change unless we change the basic policies that surround them. That means, for example, that new teachers entering the profession must come in from higher education and teacher education programs as change agents."

The PAT process in Missouri begins when a "parent educator," through home visits and school visits, bonds herself to a family. The January 1990 issue of *Parents as Teachers News* reports that the "purpose of these visits is to help the parents feel more comfortable about leaving their child at the center. Because the parent-teacher relationship begins in the home, parents see the teacher and the center as more responsive to their needs and to the needs of their baby."

Once that bond between parent educator and the biological parent is established, the

children and parents are eased into school programs that deliver a battery of services. First, under the guise of education screening, parents and children are evaluated, the child is given a parent computer code number, and a computer record is initiated that will enable Missouri to track each child for the rest of his life. All of the 12 computer code definitions label the children "at risk." If children don't fit in the first eleven "at risk" categories, they automatically fall into the 12th category called "Other." There is no code for the normal.

The next step of the PAT program is to change and usurp the relationships parents have with their children. The "change agent" will be working with the children in a "mentoring program" or perhaps as a "certified parent educator." This new "certified parent educator" delivers free medical care, free nutrition counseling, free mental health services, and free food -- all things formerly provided by parents.

As time goes on, children spend more time at school than at home. Services are increased. The parents discover that the schools will provide free daycare and free camps, as well as free education, and even free overnight care.

All these free services come, however, at the price of sometimes significant interference in the family life. One young mother, Gabrielle Copp, reports that she was outraged at the arrogance of the "state certified parent," who told her husband he could not spank their children. When her husband would not agree, the parent educator tried to get Gabby to side with her against him. The Cops are withdrawing from the PAT program.

Family advice is strongly discouraged not only by the parent educators but by a PAT-distributed booklet entitled *What Now? A Practical Guide for Parents with Young Children* by M.S. Linebarger and R.N. Bonebrake. "Ignoring information offered by a grandparent or relative is sometimes difficult," they write. "Family members often have the parent and child's best interest at heart, but too many suggestions can make the new parent feel incompetent or even feel like a failure. The new parent needs to learn to make decisions independently and not depend on others for advice."

Nida Clayton, a mother of five who left the PAT program, writes: "In light of these statements I find it very interesting that [Linebarger and Bonebrake] go on for the next three paragraphs to advise new parents to read parenting manuals . . . and books on child rearing and participate in educational programs provided by mental health of health departments, the Division of Family Services, and their local Parents as First Teachers." The goal is, clearly, not to encourage the parents to make independent decisions, because they might make wrong decisions (such as a decision to spank their children). The goal is to undercut the extended as well as immediate family, so that the parents depend on the state support system, whose experts know so much better what children need.

Some parents may object to the new goals of the change agents in the school. However, the parent educator isn't responsible to the parent but to the state. In Missouri, PAT is also called a child abuse prevention program, and the parent educator is also a child abuse investigator, one of whose jobs is to create abuse statistics. Missouri law (and similar laws are in effect throughout the United States) requires that "mandated reporters" report to the child abuse hotline anything they "suspect" might be abuse or neglect. Since the definition of child abuse or neglect is very broad, any subjective determination made by the "mandated reporter" — here the "parent educator" — must be reported to

the hotline. Failure to do so is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by a \$1,000 fine and one year in jail. As a home visitor, PAT's parent educator carries a big club.

For instance, if a father isn't happy at school or acts up, talks too much or otherwise misbehaves, the "certified parent educator" may prescribe mental health services or perhaps a drug like Ritalin. A booklet distributed widely by the Missouri Division of Family Services states that one reason for a child abuse hotline call is "refusal to take recommended services."

If the parent refuses the recommended services, the state can remove the child from the home, place him in a residential treatment center, and force the parent to take psychological counseling for an indefinite period. "Failure to provide" is, even now, a frequent reason for putting children in state approved facilities. Even if the child is allowed to return home, the state may choose to retain legal custody and control.

A couple of years ago I visited 17 DFS offices around the state to question these "mandated reporters" who are child abuse investigators. One of my questions was: "Just what is child abuse and neglect and how do you define it?" Each answer was different and often conflicted.

One man listed as a risk factor families who are part of a subculture. He couldn't define a subculture. Another said, "We don't have checklists or anything like that." Another gave me a copy of her checklist of "indicators." One said, "I would never tell a parent not to use a belt." Another said, "Whether or not to use a belt is 'a judgment call.'" Still another said, "Any instrument other than the hand is a weapon and that is child abuse."

There is a state-approved standard of living," said another. But he couldn't tell me what it was, although he said it was "higher now than it used to be." "Having a dirty house or diaper rash is neglect," said another. "Being late for school is an indicator." "Yelling at a child is emotional abuse."

All this attention has a financial motive. Head counts in public schools are essential, because the number of children served determines the funding level. There is a bounty on all living, breathing children. If the Parents as Teachers social workers can get one child into the system and keep him there, funding increases. So, increasing the school population becomes a task of primary importance. At the 1982 Missouri Education Conference on the Young Years, Ed Pino, an educator from Denver, declared, "The five to 18-year-old market is dead. We should have learned that a long time ago. Basically, we're in the two to five-year-old market. . . . The sooner we latch onto that market, the sooner we won't have to pink-slip teachers, the sooner we won't have to close up any schools because of declining enrollment, and the sooner we will be getting the kids when we need to be getting them."

The Parents as Teachers program doesn't wait until a child is two years old. PAT initiates children and parents into the system before a child is born by recruiting pregnant women in prenatal clinics and private doctors' offices. If PAT doesn't capture them there, the Department of Education in Missouri shows a video tape advertising the program to new parents in the hospital before they take their baby home. In a 1990 *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* article, Mildred Winter of the Parents as Teachers National Center at the University of Missouri at St. Louis said, "Some of our parent educators follow expectant women around the supermarket so they can ask them whether they know about the program."

Dr. Burton White began expressing his disenchantment with Missouri Parents as Teachers (PAT) program in 1989. He cites

three main reasons for his resignation from the Missouri PAT program.

First, while his pilot project used carefully selected, highly motivated "very special" parents and produced some measured results of increased verbal skills in children, the same norms for selecting parents do not exist in the Missouri PAT project, and Missouri's "parent educator" training is deficient. Dr. White states, "There is no evidence anywhere that receiving less than that kind of education will produce comparable benefits." (emphasis is in the original)

Dr. White adds, "It's my expectation that they [the children in the Missouri PAT program] won't look all that much better than comparison children."

Second, Dr. White cites educationists from Missouri who "are letting visitors from other states think that the Missouri PAT project is a proven program for dealing with high risk families." He clearly divests himself of any responsibility for using PAT to help high risk families, emphasizing his limited research "From the beginning," he says, "I made it clear to the folks in Missouri that I had no notion of how to help high risk families."

Finally, White criticizes the dishonesty in lobbying for taxpayers' money to begin the Missouri PAT program. "The state continued to publicize the notion that the program cost much less. . . ." In fact, the Missouri program now costs more than five times what the Missouri legislators were told.

The government isn't the only source of funds. Some of the supporters of the PAT program include the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation, the Danforth Foundation, New World Foundation, Edna McConnell-Clark Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the Pet Corporation. There are also the A.P. Green Foundation, the Kansas City Association of Trusts and Foundations, Maritz, Inc., and the Monsanto Fund.

Federal monies come through the Handicap Law, also known as P.L. 94-142. It may be in the interest of a "certified parent educator" to identify a normal child with the "newspeak" label "developmentally delayed" to initiate the flow of these funds. Should we be shocked that teachers admit the fact that certain tests are rigged to show that up to 75% of the normal population of children are abnormal? (Davis Gillam, a teacher who ran the "handicapped" education program in Potosi, Missouri for many years, left the system last year because her conscience would not allow her to continue to brand normal children as "developmentally delayed.") Or that a Missouri Department of Education publication reveals that social workers may choose to "rate selected aspects of the child's social development" without any public accountability for the result?

Parents as Teachers won't be fully implemented until 1995. Until then, the Parents as Teachers program is using "nice grandmothers from local churches" (as Missouri Secretary of State Roy Blunt put it) for home visits and screening, while certified educator parents are being trained at the Danforth Foundation's Teachers Preservice Institute. The Institute is recruiting people already working in day care centers to accredit them as "certified parent educators," who will soon assume for many families the primary parenting role.

Laura Rogers lives in St. Charles, Missouri, where she founded the St. Charles Christian School, which operated for 20 years. The mother of six, she was a lobbyist for the Missouri homeschool law, which has been used as a model nationally. An earlier version of this article appeared in Chronicles, a journal of the Rockford Institute, February 1991. ■

Oklahoma Tries to Repeal School Tax

The "corn" is as high as an elephant's eye as members of the Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) continue to make dire predictions about the effects of a statewide referendum to repeal the Education Reform and Taxation law passed by the state legislature in April 1990. Threats of layoffs of teachers, and predictions of "chaos" and "return to the Dark Ages" are continually repeated in the media in an effort to thwart repeal. Meanwhile, the real issues are rarely addressed.

With a five-year price tag of \$2.2 billion, HB 1017 squeaked through both houses by the slimmest of margins and touched off a successful petition drive to put the bill to a vote of the people. Oklahomans will have the opportunity to repeal the law on October 15.

A group named Stop Taxing Our People (STOP) led the initiative drive and successfully defended the petition against court challenges filed by supporters of HB 1017. A Midwest City school teacher, financed by the OEA, challenged the authenticity of the more than 150,000

repealed, that is what they will have."

STOP Chairman Stan Ward, a Norman attorney states, "Public education in Oklahoma has proven to be a failure. No one can dispute that public education needs to be revamped. The point of departure is how you approach the task of accomplishing effective educational reforms."

"We need to emulate those states that have been successful in the delivery of public education," Ward adds, "by: 1) strong adherence to basics and the three R's, 2) local control, 3) strong parental involvement — not the surrogate state parent, and 4) discipline."

When asked her opinion of the controversial law, State Representative Joan Greenwood (R, Moore) replied: "It's a travesty. The citizens of OK have been totally ripped off. The teachers think they are winners, but they could have gotten better salary increases without 1017."

Opposition to repeal of the law is being orchestrated by Growth Oklahoma (GO), a group closely associated with the OEA. An examination of the NEA resolutions (see August edition of the *Education Reporter*) reveals the vested interest the NEA/OEA has in preventing repeal of HB 1017 because the law's provisions advance NEA's current goals, including government daycare, more bureaucratic control, Family Life Education with sex ed even in first grade, AIDS education, "Parent Training," and Multicultural/Global Education.

A confidential August 9, 1990 memo to members of the GO coalition from OEA President Barbara Smith and OEA Executive Director Joann Waller stressed that the primary goal was "to keep the STOP initiative petition (sic) from ever appearing on a ballot."

A second memo to GO members, disseminated by GO strategist Gary Allison on the same day, discussed the potential for legal challenges to the petition, not assuming that this challenge would succeed, but rather with a view toward postponing the vote until the law was in place. He acknowledged that this stalling effort could backfire. "If it becomes perceived



Caroline Brown, Joan Johnson and Susan Hill

that a signature challenge was mounted just to delay a vote," he warned, "we could lose the support of pro-education voters who may become offended by our delay tactics."

Joan Johnson, another STOP supporter, reports the difficulty of countering the unbalanced reporting in the media, especially in the Tulsa area, where "supporters of HB 1017 have their people in key positions to deal with the media" and with the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce. "This aids them in conditioning the public to believe 'chaos' will occur if the law is repealed," she states. "Their influential spokesmen also enhance their ability to raise financial support for a paid media blitz."

She predicts that success for STOP in its efforts to repeal the law will depend upon a "grassroots effort," and states, "We have the numbers of well informed voters to win this election if they are alert — and if they will spread the truth about this law. We are optimistic because every day more people, including some of our best teachers, are becoming aware of the actual contents of the law and join in our efforts to repeal it."

Mrs. Johnson suggests that every voter should ask himself this question: "Does HB 1017 make proper use of our tax dollars, and is the type of reform in this law beneficial to children?" She is hopeful that on October 15, Oklahomans will answer that question with a resounding NO — by voting YES in favor of repeal. ■

Why Parents Oppose Okla Spending Goals

Taxpayers supporting the initiative to overturn the school funding law have been distributing information sheets giving facts typically ignored by the Oklahoma media. They assert that the law will cost nearly \$2.2 billion over five years, "nearly 10 times as much as the \$223 million price tag usually quoted."

While the law will add expensive, liberal programs costing even more than the added monies going to the schools, taxpayer groups assert that "it does not provide reforms necessary for improving academic performance." They say that state funding for education had "increased over 400%" in the past 15 years, "while overall performance . . . declined."

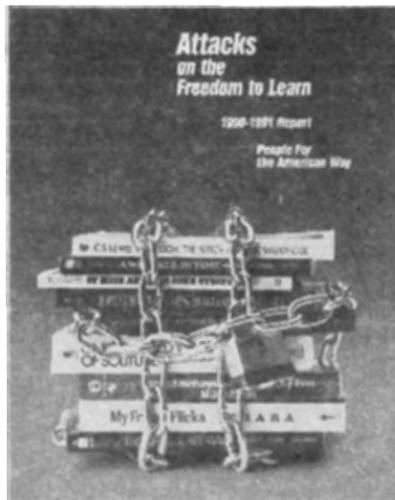
Many parents are especially concerned about some curricula which HB 1017 would introduce into the Oklahoma school system. These include the Healthy Living curriculum (a sex-ed program that includes school-based clinics), multicultural education, and a parental outreach program called "Parents as Teachers" (PAT). Although participation in PAT would be voluntary at first, parents assert that "the stated goal of its proponents is to include all families with children." The program provides for public school personnel to visit family homes to supervise and report on the home environment,

a process which some parents call "Orwellian."

An *Advisory Specialist Training Manual for Multicultural Education & Outreach to Parents*, published by the Human Relations Department of the Tulsa Public Schools in April 1991, recommends that school staff be "multiethnic and multiracial" and that "pluralism permeate all curriculum components . . . in all subjects." An introduction to the text states that achieving the "primary purpose" of fostering "better relationships of different races, religions, national origins, and socioeconomic backgrounds . . . will necessitate a 're-shaping' of many of the attitudes held by members of the school and community."

A handbill disseminated by the STOP organization summarizes just what HB 1017 does and does not do. For instance, it does raise taxes, create more bureaucracy, remove children from their homes sooner, and increase the difficulty of dismissing incompetent teachers. On the other hand, HB 1017 does not provide accountability, improve discipline, or encourage the teaching of traditional values.

"Let's repeal HB 1017," the handbill concludes, "so that citizens . . . can have some real input, deal with the real problems, and recommend real reform!" ■



Parents Win 1/3 of Book Flaps

Norman Lear's People for the American Way (PAW) held a news conference on August 28 in Washington, D.C. to sound an alarm about the problem of "censorship" in the United States. PAW's president Arthur Kropp issued the organization's 9th annual report called *Attacks on the Freedom to Learn*. The cover shows nine books padlocked under a heavy chain.

The report did not include any examples of a U.S. governmental authority preventing or forbidding the publication or distribution of a book or newspaper or article. PAW's 125-page report is just a listing of incidents in which parents (who are called "attackers") tried to protect their children in public schools from being required to participate in classroom activities which parents believe violate their parental rights.

According to the PAW report, "attackers' success rate remains high. Fully one-third of all requests for removal were 'successful' in some measure."

This is good news for parents concerned about what their children are taught in public schools because more than two-thirds of the 229 "attacks" listed in the PAW report involved classroom materials which public schools were requiring children to read (i.e., they were not just library books). Parents were often not even allowed to opt out their children and secure alternate reading assignments.

The target of the most number of challenges from parents last year, according to PAW, was the controversial series of readers called *Impressions*. Parents object to these readers used in grades 1-6 because they are trashy stories filled with monsters, witches, and acts that give little children nightmares; they have pseudo-religious imagery and innuendoes, particularly New Age and the occult; and they use word-guessing instead of phonics to teach reading.

The second largest number of challenges from parents, according to PAW, targets the controversial drug education course called *Quest*. *Quest* is typical of a large number of psychological curricula to which parents object because they are "non-directive" (i.e., they tell the child that he alone can decide for himself whether participating in drugs and sex is OK) and they are anti-parent (i.e., they reject parental authority for children's behavior).

The PAW news release asserts that the "classics" are under attack by narrow-minded parents who don't want their children to learn. However, the only acknowledged classic in the list was *Huckleberry Finn*—to which so-called "fundamentalist" parents do not object.

As an example of the "classics" that some people are trying to "censor," PAW lists Little



Michael Brown, Caroline Brown and Hopper Smith

signatures on the petition. Next, George Singer, chairman of the task force ostensibly responsible for most of the proposals contained in HB 1017, challenged the petition's legal sufficiency, arguing that an initiative petition cannot be used to repeal law.

In a unanimous decision on June 11th, the Oklahoma Supreme Court dismissed both challenges, clearing the way for the referendum. In a final delay tactic, the pro-OEA governor set the vote for October 15th. When questioned as to why the date was set after school would already be in session, an employee in the governor's office acknowledged that it was part of their strategy. The reasons for this strategy are becoming more apparent with reports of school functions being used to pressure teachers and persuade parents.

Michael Brown of Tulsa, a speaker for the Pro-Repeal Coalition, charges that the OEA wanted to delay the vote as long as possible for two reasons — first, this would give the education bureaucracy the opportunity to claim that it would cause "chaos" to repeal the law after its provisions are in place; and, second, so that the resources of the STOP organization would be exhausted during the challenges, leaving the group financially unable to mount a full scale repeal campaign.

Mr. Brown scoffs at claims that the bill's supporters were motivated by concern for the welfare of schoolchildren and a desire to foster economic growth in the state. "What they want is more control for the educational establishment," he asserts, "and unless this law is

Red Riding Hood. Actually, the objection to this tale was to an offbeat version in which Little Red Riding Hood brought a bottle of wine to a red-nosed grandmother, and the school decided that this was out of harmony with the school's anti-drug program.

At the news conference, PAW staff blocked the door so that observers from Concerned Women for America could not hear what Arthur Kropp said. ■