

Women recognized as political force

United Press International
TULSA, Okla.— National women's rights leader Judy Goldsmith says women voters have forced lawmakers to view them as a political force "to be reckoned with" and that is the edge needed for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.

"We are getting more women involved in all phases, not just on the sidelines," Goldsmith, president of the National Organization for Women, said Friday.

"What's happening is that women now are clearly a political force that has to be reckoned with," she said. "The message

has gotten through." Women, "angry and outraged" at failure on national and state levels to ratify the ERA, have become more active in the battle for its passage, said Goldsmith, who was in Tulsa for the Oklahoma NOW group's weekend state conference.

"We have changed the composition of the legislatures that defeated the Equal Rights Amendment," she said.

The national women's rights leader said that failure to ratify the ERA before last year's deadline was not a defeat of the issue. "It was not a loss. It was not a

defeat," she said. "It was a failure of the political processes of this country."

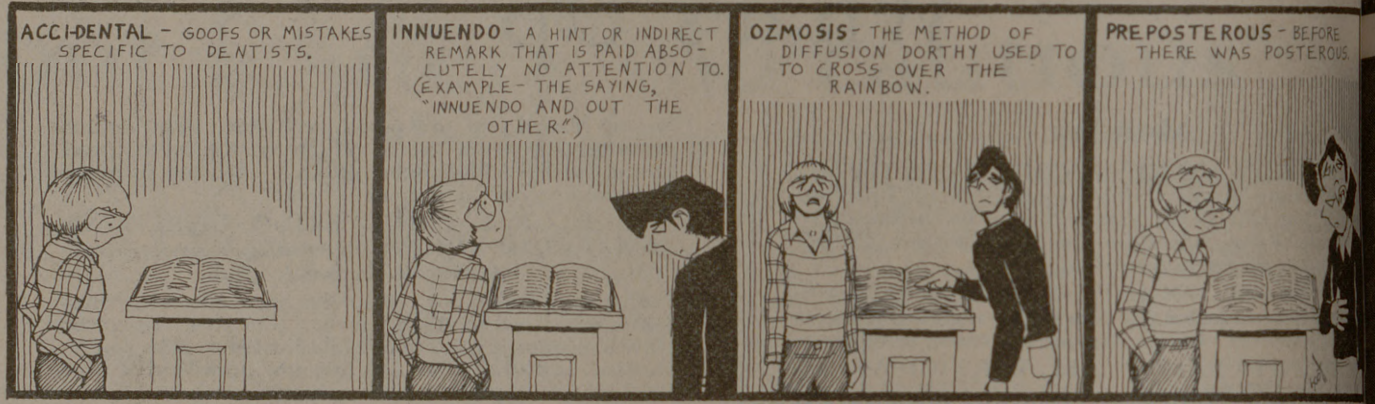
If lawmakers had voted in line with majority opinion, she contended, the amendment would have been ratified.

"Political support in Congress for the Equal Rights Amendment is extremely strong (this session)," she said. "Primarily coming from the Democrats who have taken custody of the issue. "But there is also some Republican support."

Goldsmith took over as head of the national women's rights organization last October.

Warped

by Scott McCullar



Nebraska tragedy recalled

Murders still affect many

United Press International
LINCOLN — The memory of Charles Starkweather, a gangly red-haired teenager who killed 11 people in a notorious rampage 25 years ago, dies hard in Nebraska.

Locksmiths and gun dealers reported record trade at the time Starkweather spread terror through the countryside.

Children in at least one eastern Nebraska community play-

ed "Charles Starkweather," staging neighborhood manhunts in their own version of cops and robbers.

The rampage was the subject of the 1970s movie "Badlands." It all started Dec. 1, 1957, in Lincoln when Starkweather shot and killed service station attendant Robert Colvert, 21, during a robbery.

Then, in an eight-day period beginning Jan. 21, 1958, Starkweather, accompanied by his girlfriend, 14, Caril Ann Fugate of Lincoln, left a bloody trail of nine victims in Nebraska and one in Wyoming. They included Fugate's mother, stepfather and stepsister.

Starkweather and Fugate each were convicted of first-degree murder in the death of Bobby Jensen, 17, of Bennet. Starkweather died in Nebraska's electric chair in June 1959, the last execution in the state.

Fugate was sentenced to life in prison. In 1973, her sentence was commuted to 30 to 50 years and three years later she was paroled to start a new life in a small Michigan town.

In Bennet, 16 miles southeast of Lincoln, memories linger of Bobby Jensen and two others who were among Starkweather's victims. The others were August Meyer, 70, a farmer who was a friend of Starkweather's father, and Jensen's sweetheart Carol King, 16.

Mayor Ab Jensen has lived in or near Bennet all his life. He and his wife Ruth were reluctant to talk publicly about Starkweather for fear it would renew unwanted publicity.

August Meyer was first cousin of the mayor's mother. Bobby Jensen was related to the mayor's wife.

"Whenever you needed help, August was there," Jensen said. He said Meyer kept his farm up better than many state parks at that time and took pride in his work, which included bringing neatly stacked firewood to Bennet by a horse-drawn cart.

"They were two kids you couldn't help but like," Jensen said of Carol King and Bobby Jensen, whom neighbors described as All-American teenagers.

During the Starkweather spree, Bennet's 500 residents lived in fear.

"It wouldn't have been for anybody to be around," Jensen said. "We advised everyone to keep their houses locked, find out who's there before opening the door."

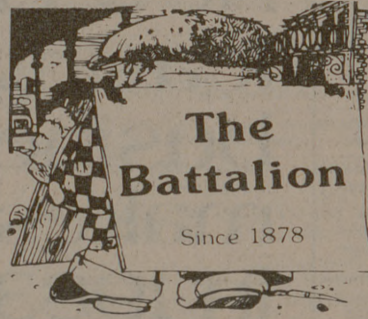
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"This town at that time very, very close," Jensen said. "But times have changed, just like every other little town."

It's falling apart and we're our best to get it back together."

The Starkweather story wound its way around Nebraska Secretary of State Allen Berman's life. He was attending college in a town about 50 miles from Lincoln during the 1950s. Fourteen years later he was on the majority of the state's Board of Community Corrections, which commuted the Starkweather sentence at the state prison in York.

"She had spent half of her life in the institution," Berman said. "Her progress, her rehabilitation, all of those things were very much to her credit."



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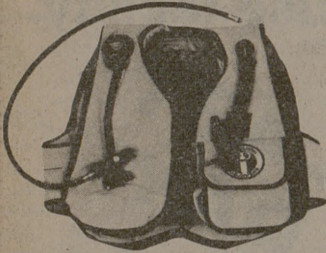
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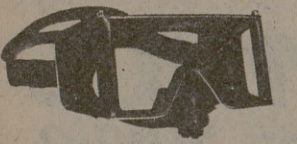
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