esbian moms learn legal rights

Dy Valerie Dutton

Lesbians are choosing to have fami-lies through artificial insemination and to flight former hutbands in cuttody battles for children, the founder of the Lesbian Rights Project told an Ann Ar-bor audience of 200 recently.

Those were just some of the many changes that have occurred in the past 15 years in the leabtan community, said San Francisco attorney and tesbian nother Donna Hitchens when the spoke at an all-day conference in Ann Abor ponsared by the University of Michigan's Human Sexuality Department.

Laura Sanders, coordinator, said the conference was prompted by the new crop of babies in the lesbian communi-ty through artificial insemination.

"THE TIME WAS right" for such conference, Sanders said. "No one in Ann Arbor knows the legal aspects of lesbian parenting like she does."

She added that it was important for

lesblans to have Hitchen's professional insights.

"Having children is part of our right," Hitchens said. "However, lesbi-ans in many states still find it very dif-ficuit to gain custody or even retain visitation rights to their children."

Some states still consider homosex-ually a felony carrying a barsher pen-alty than wife-beating, child abuse, rape or manulaughter.

rape or manslaughter.

"But more and more women are gaining custody." Hitchess said encouragingly to the 200 women sampled in the University of Michigars Union ballroom. "These women have asserted their right to be both a mother and to be a woman who loves another woman. They have been an important force in changing the climate. . out-side our community. This change has canabled many of us to become mothers after we have come out as iesblans."

SHE ACKNOWLEDGED that the le-gal system in America reflects soci-ety's values and that most in society do

not view an "alternative" family, or growing up with a lesblan mother and co-parent, as beneficial to children. She said lesblans had not put enough energy into profiving an alternative institu-tion

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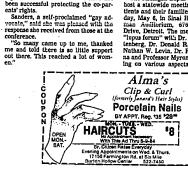
"We must take control of the definition of our families and not give that control over to a society or system that has nover been supportive." Hitchens said the legal system does recognize a child's biological mother and biological father — even it it's a father through strifficial insemination — but not a co-parent. The biological mother can write her lover, the co-parent, into ber will as the child's guardian to compensate for this.

The mother can also give the co-parent durable power of attorney. A co-parent can tegally plet up the child from school, from a police station or even take a child for hospital care without these safeguards.

"Co-mothers, or "other" mothers, can feel a strong emotional bonding to a child for hospital care a child for a realing. They also feel a child fear a realing. They also feel a lot of fear. It is a fear of the state, of the grandparents and it is a fear of

Lupus foundation hosts statewide public forum

The Michigan Lupus Foundation will best a statewide meeting for lupus partients and their familities at i pm. Sunday, May 6, in Sinai Hospital Zuchernian Anuitorium, 6787 West oner in Initiated funds directly into patient Drive, Detroit. The meeting will be a volunteer organization that puts most vilupus forum with Dr. E. Newton Rotcurs and Foressan it also supports tenhers, Dr. Donaid R. Kaufman, Dr. Nathan W. Levin, Dr. Federico Mariona and Professor Myron A. Leon speaking on various aspects of lupus. The Lupus is a chronic inflammatory, auto-immune disease, which means and reference of the sundant state bodys defents system attacks the tissues of its own organs. The Michigan Lupus Foundation will host a statewide meeting for lupus patients and their families at 1 p.m. Sunday, May 6, in Sinai Hospital Zucher,



what will happen if the blological or legal mother should die. We have not been successful protecting the co-par-







Beta Sigma Phi celebrates its founding bers in 12,500 chapters throughout the world. Beta Sigma Phi wás founded in KanBeta Sigma Phi wás founded in Kansain 1931 during the depression years. The group offered social and cultural outlets. Then opportunities for personal growth were offered; and after that opportunities to serve. A typical year now finds the chapters donating about \$3 million in monstress of carbon fields with the chapters of the properties of the properties. Others taking leading roles in the vening's festivities are Ellen Gates of XI Detta Pai, Polasan Carlson and Wilman Brant of XI Detta and Marvel stellers and Marvel Stelger of Alpha Tau.

Five metro chapters of Beta Sigma Phi will join 6:30 p.m Tuesday to cele-brate the 55rd anniversary of its found-ing at a dinner in Leather Bottle, Gar-den City, Similar celebrations will be laking place among the 250,000 mem-

Fun-Run set

A one-to six-mile Fun Run (or walk), tailored for people of all ages and de-grees of fitness, is being sponsored by Wayne State University Professor Ar-thur Weaver and his Better Living

Ithur Weaver and Seminars.

The Fun-Run, which emphasizes personal improvement rather than competition, will start at 10 a.m. Sunday, May (b. the parking lot of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, 4295 Napter Road, Allymouth. To register for this free fevent, call Sylvia Donahue at 882-7848.













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