

# herland newsletter

July 1984

a publication of Herland Bookstore, 1630 N.W. 19th Oklahoma City 73106

## AN INTERVIEW WITH GAYLE MARIE

Influences from the women's movement to folk music, jazz and even the blues go into Gayle Marie's songs, but it's "a positive kind of blues," the San Francisco Bay area singer said prior to an Oklahoma City performance.

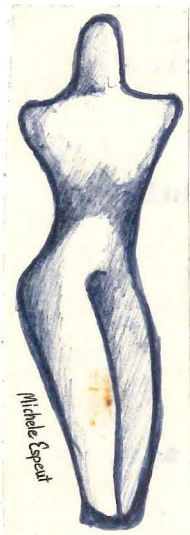
"I don't consider myself a blues singer, although my song "Stormy Nights" is a blues," explained Gayle Marie, who wrote all but one of the songs on her "Night Rainbow" album and operates her own Gayleo Music Co.

"My words are positive, whereas a lot of the blues is "Oh, my man done and left me, and I'm never going to get up again," or "I'm on the floor and someone should step on me." "I don't agree with any of that stuff. That's not how I live my life, although maybe a lot of people do. I can still sing a blues song - I feel down, sometimes, I feel blue, but I don't like that negative image.

"I'm a feminist who feels strongly women need to come together to find out what their weaknesses and strengths are, and through music, you can do that," said the singer, noting that she likes the versatility of the jazz style. "You can express what's going on in your life, and get rid of some of the bad things. You don't have to sit on them the rest of your life. Music is a vehicle for me to give other people a little bit of what I am."

Attributing some of her determination to her Midwestern origins, Gayle Marie said she attended Kent State University and began her career on the folk music circuit in Boston before becoming associated with west coast women's music. "I was married for quite a while, when I finally realized that I couldn't keep music on the back burner anymore. The divorce happened, and I decided I would whole heartedly go ahead with music. That's the best decision I ever made."

Publisher: Herland Bookstore  
Editor: Elaine Barton



Considered a part of the women's music movement, Gayle Marie said the fact that her work is non-commercial frees her to write what she really wants to say in her songs, whether they're directed toward women, men or children.

"Since I know that they're not trying to sell me for sex appeal - toothpaste or whatever - I have a freedom to write the things I really want to say - like one of the songs on my new album is really directed to children.

"I just have a love affair with people, generally," the singer said. "We can't relax as Americans and let things go by us. We in the women's movement need to unite behind goals so we can get things done instead of going backward. "I'm not a spokeswoman for the women's movement, just one woman who believes that women have a place in this world, and it's not in the shadow of somebody else."

by John Brandenburg (reprinted from the Daily Oklahoman)

## A NOTE ON MUSIC IN OUR NON-COASTAL STATE

To everyone who attended the Gayle Marie concert May 18, we hope you enjoyed it! With your support women's music will visit upon us again and again. Your ideas and energy is welcomed by Herland's concert productions for future programs.

Gayle Marie was a financial success, breaking even. Thank you all for donations.

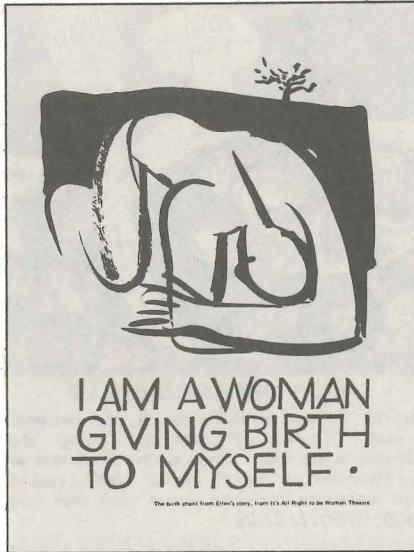
Folks ask occasionally, 'why not bring in big names like Holly Near to Oklahoma City.' We'd love to but it means 'big bucks.' Actually several thousand dollars different from a production like the last one... Large communities elsewhere produce such musicians within a ticket price of less than what concerts run here. They do it with a larger attendance.

continued on page 2

Cont. from p. 1

The Oklahoma City metro area does comprise a large women's community and has a great store of marvelous musicians - you know who you are - women! Since there's no plans for an outdoor fest this summer that I know of, I'll be the first to start a rumor. If enough people want a community concert it will happen.

-Editor



## TEACHER'S RIGHTS

In a major assertion of First Amendment rights, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth District has struck down an Oklahoma law intended to eliminate not only gay teachers, but any teachers with the nerve to talk about Lesbians and gay men in public.

The "Helm Bill" was designed to prevent Oklahoma teachers from engaging in any discussion of homosexuality which could "come to the attention of school children or school employees." It was enacted in 1978.

National Gay Rights Advocates, a San Francisco-based law firm, decided to challenge the statute. According to Your Paper, the firm almost immediately hit a snag; thanks to the chilling effect of the bill NCRA could find no Oklahoma plaintiff. Instead, the National Gay Task Force agreed to become the plaintiff on behalf of its Oklahoma membership.

NGRA, which filed suit in 1979, was defeated in a U.S. District Court of Appeals in Denver. In a press release, Jean O'Leary, Executive Director of NGRA, said, "The court vindicated our employment rights and the right of all people to discuss homosexuality." She called the decision "a total victory."

## WOMEN AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY AWARD & ZAP

Women Against Pornography recently held its 3rd Annual Advertising Awards Ceremony in New York City. The purpose is to honor advertising which promotes realistic and positive images of women and to criticize ads which stereotype, dehumanize and degrade women.

Four companies received Ms. Liberty awards. Only one company qualified for its television ad: Crest, for showing a little girl who doesn't like coming in second place. The ad also counters sexual stereotypes about grown-up men, by showing a supportive and nurturing father who is proud of his achieving daughter.

For print ad winners: Fortune Magazine, for portraying a girl baseball player who is determined to be a winner; Bell System, for its ad profiling Elma Lewis, founder of the National Center of Afro-American Arts. Ms. Lewis defies the advertising stereotypes by being neither white, thin, nor young - and by defining herself, by herself. "My concept of me is who I am," she says in the ad; Quartz Perfume by Molyneux, for its portrayal of a woman airline pilot who is "always in command."

Zaps for video commercials: Poochie Glamour Nails, for its commercial depicting little girls as cute, coy, simple-minded, and obsessed with their looks; Hanes, for its ad about a woman breaking into a formerly all-male club. The ad celebrates the fact that instead of being treated by the men as their equal, the woman is ogled and objectified; Orelia, for its blatantly pornographic ad that reduces a woman's sexual parts to commodities to be sold and consumed like soda; Berlei, for its cable TV commercial showing a Teering, voyeuristic vision of a nude woman putting on her underwear; Jordache, for the ultimate in advertising misogyny, an ad which exploits all the tricks of the pornographer's trade. The ad reduces women to their sexual parts, portrays women as whore and eroticizes women being menaced and threatened.

Zaps for print ads: Harper's Bazaar and Andrea Carrano, for ads featuring heavily made-up little girls, baring their bodies and striking provocative poses. These ads encourage the objectification and molestation of children; Gilette, for its Daisy razor ad, showing a policewoman dancing out of her precinct headquarters dressed in hot pants; Scots Grey, for its "Go with Grey" ad, which portrays "experience and maturity" - in men only. The older man depicted as having distinguished taste, etc. His female companion is young enough to be his daughter.

WOMEN'S WEDNESDAY NIGHT

"Women's Wednesday Night" is a public program presenting images of women in various media, with discussions following. All women are invited to the informal and supportive sessions to share ideas and encouragement.

Pat Walke, M.S.W., L.C.S.W., sponsors the series. She is a psychotherapist in private practice and an adjunct professor at Oklahoma City University.

The cost is \$10 per session at One Western Plaza, 5500 N. Western, Suite 102, Oklahoma City.

"We Wanted More Than a Father Image, We Wanted a Father," is Wednesday, July 11, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Heroes and Stangers will be the featured new film. The film makers, one male and one female, reflect on what it was like growing up with fathers who fit the traditionally distant father role. The film shows them going back for a visit with their fathers and their thoughts afterward. Also included in the session will be a song by Judy Collins, "My Father," and a painting by Mary Cassatt.

"Dreams/Images," is Wednesday, July 18, from 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. A poem by Ann Sexton about her dreams outlasting her relationships; a children's picture book, Joan of Arc; and a song by Barbra Streisand, "My Heart Belongs to Me," will be included in the program.

"Societal Images of Healthy Women/Sick Women" is Wednesday, July 25, from 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. The Yellow Wallpaper film will be shown. It is based on Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper" and is about a woman who is defined as sick by society's standards as she seeks her own true self. Also shown will be a segment of a review of the television show, Cagney and Lacey.

"Women's Wednesday Night" is a summer series which began in June. It's a time out from work...from family...from the usual routine. Cost of the sessions include fresh fruit and sparkling water.

STUDENT'S RIGHTS

Oklahoma State University's student senate voted in March to refuse its recommendation to a gay campus group seeking university registration. University Students for Gay Understanding and Awareness, a support group, lost in a 26 - 20 vote. The group had met all the requirements and are consulting the ACLU.

WOMYN'S BRAILLE PRESS IS AVAILABLE

Over 75 feminist and Lesbian books are on tape for women who are blind or physically disabled. WBP also circulates several feminist periodicals on tape. For more information, or to make contributions, contact: Womyn's Braille Press, Inc., P.O. Box 8475, Minneapolis, MN 55408. They are also in need of qualified braille transcribers around the country. Womyn who would like to volunteer time please contact them.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST KINSHIP SUPPORTS GAYS

Seventh-Day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. is an organization of gay Adventists working to educate church members about homosexuality. They have mailed thousands of information packets to Adventist colleges and high schools, and pastors in the denomination. Some favorable responses have been received and more mailings are planned. Persons wishing to contact SDA Kinship may write to P.O. Box 1233-H, Los Angeles, CA 90078; or call 213-876-2076.

THE CITIZEN'S PARTY ON THE THIRD PARTY

Third parties play an important role in launching new ideas into mainstream American politics. Legislation abolishing slavery, setting a minimum wage, funding Social Security, establishing an eight-hour work day, and instituting child labor laws were all originally introduced through third party initiatives. Without alternative parties, the two major parties become increasingly conservative and indistinguishable from each other. Their platforms cease to be meaningful contracts between candidate and voter, and national elections become popularity contests. Third parties force the Democratic and Republican parties to be more inclusive and are essential in preserving democracy.

MIDWEST PEOPLE'S MUSIC NETWORK GATHERING

Learn new songs, new skills, share your own songs and skills, share resources with other musicians - at the Foolkiller, Etc. July 13-15, 1984, 2 West 39th St. (39th & Main), Kansas City, MO.

The Gathering Schedule: Friday night concert, 8:00 p.m. with Rosy's Bar & Grill, a Kansas City feminist string band performing since 1977; Elton Gumbel and Keith Leathers Quartet, playing original tunes from a jazz base. A music jam will follow the concert, interpreted for the hearing impaired.

Daytime workshops Saturday and Sunday include song areas of: peace-anti-war and intervention, labor, women's music, children's songs (non-sexist, non-racist), farm protest, anti-nuclear, Nueva Cancion (New Song Movement of Latin America), topical/satire, and your ideas. Skill Sharing topics include: concert production of progressive music, audience participation skills, harmony singing, voice production, sound systems, and your ideas.

Registration begins at 6:00 p.m. Friday, \$7.50 mailed in advance and \$12.50 at the door. If you can pay more to help a tight budget, appreciated; if you can afford less, let us know. Please pre-register for in-home housing arrangements. Plan to bring sleeping gear, musical instruments, and records, tapes, sheet music, etc. to sell, swap or share. Don't bring pets or illegal substances. The fee covers granola and fruit breakfast for Sat. and Sun. and tea during both days. A pot luck dinner is Sat. night. Numerous and varied restaurants within walking distance. Childcare will be arranged for pre-registrants. Mail registration to: Echo, 7426 Melrose, Shawnee, KS 66203. (Under 12 free)

SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS CONFERENCE

"Searching for Solutions" is a conference designed to promote networking and exchange of ideas among individuals and organizations providing services to survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence.

The Oklahoma Coalition on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault and the OU Women's Studies Program are sponsoring the OCDVSA's first annual conference, to be held November 1-3, 1984, at the Oklahoma Center for Continuing Education, Norman, Oklahoma. For information: OCDVSA, c/o DVIS, 1331 E. 15th, Tulsa, OK 74120

A call for workshop proposals has been circulated with potential areas for workshops: Community Education: legislation, networking among service providers, marital rape, organizing in the religious community, networking in rural areas, Protective Order legislation, the role of public schools in prevention education; Organizational Development: grassroots fundraising strategies, board/staff relations, alternative organizational structures, volunteer recruitment and training, grantswomanship, dealing with differences - racism, classism, homophobia; Programming: needs of women and children of color, adult survivors of incest, empowerment of women and children, self defense, violence in Lesbian and gay relationships, rape avoidance education, non-shelter programs for battered women, abuser treatment, sexual assault prevention for children, couples counseling, legal advocacy, working in traditional agencies, child victims of violence in the classroom, programming for child witnesses of violence.

SISTERS: VOICES OF DIFFERENT COLOR CONFERENCE

This conference about women of color in Oklahoma, is being presented to increase public awareness of the contributions and issues concerning minority women. "Sisters: Voices of Different Color" is in the planning stages as a conventional grant application is in preparation for the Oklahoma Foundation for the Humanities.

It is sponsored by the OU Women's Studies Program, the Langston University Urban Center and the OFH, which has already funded a planning grant. The Multicultural Women's Summer Institute, Chicago, has funded preliminary distribution of materials developed there.

The conference will represent four ethnic groups: American Indian, Asian American, Black American and Hispanic American and cover topics of women's history in their country of origin and their experiences in America; literature and poetry by or about women of the cultural groups participating in the conference; and contemporary issues such as social roles, leadership, health and future directions.

The tentative dates are November 16 and 17, 1984. A gala will be planned for Friday evening. For information contact Elsa Tolnay or Judy Flores, Women's Studies Program, 601 Elm St., Room 530, Norman, Oklahoma 73019.

CALL FOR MATERIALS

Who's Who in Prison: Class War Prisoners in the U.S.A. Defense committees, civil liberties organizations, and prisoners are invited to submit short sketches of those imprisoned for labor, feminist, environmentalist, anti-racist, peace and other political activities. Victims of racist, sexist, and anti-gay prosecutions will also be included. Send to Charles H. Kerr Co., 1740 Greenleaf Ave., Suite 7, Chicago, IL 60626

Work to examine historical, cross-cultural, legal and feminist perspectives on the institutions, customs and attitudes surrounding adoption: from women who have children up for adoption - either legal or covert - through word or tape for anthology. Inquiries welcome, contact K. Kaufman, c/o Plexis 545 Athol Ave., Oakland, CA 94606

And The Thick Ones Are Comforters: A Lesbian Mother's Anthology. A multi-cultural group of Lesbian mothers seeks prose (3000 word limit) or poetry (5 page limit) to share, teach, empower those women who are Lesbian mothers. Copy types, DBL sp. 1" margins. Send SASE to LOCK, Box 8, 5831 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, CA 94609



The Feminist Press

Women and Peace. Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies is soliciting articles for an upcoming issue focusing on women's relationship to issues of peace and war and nuclear disarmament, in particular, the conflict between loyalties to the women's movement and the world wide disarmament push. August 1, 1984 deadline. Two copies of typed double-spaced manuscripts to: Frontiers, Women's Studies, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309

Articles, essays, art, commentary and subscriptions to Lesbian ethics. (3 issues/yr.: \$12). Inquiries, SASE to Le Publications, P.O. Box 943, Venice, CA 90294

Seditious Delicious, a new anti-authoritarian poetry rag. Anti-semitism, racism, militarism, patriarchy, classism, homophobia, ageism, etc., poetry welcome. Send up to 5 poems, plus SASE to P.O. Box 6981, New York City, NY 10150. Submissions in Spanish welcome.

Prose, poetry, etc. for an anthology about the lives of women on the road. Inquiries plus SASE to Leslie Hershberg, P.O. Box 465, Felton, CA 95018



The Feminist Press

Anthology of Erotic Writings by Women: stories, poems, journal entries, letters, essays. We are looking for writings celebrating the sensual-body & spirit, nature, humor & joy. Edited by Louis Thornton, Jan Sturtevant, and Amber Coverdale Sumrall. Send to: P.O. Box 971, Felton, CA 95018, SASE

The National Lesbian Playwriting Contest  
The contest offers a first prize of \$1000 and production, a second prize of \$500, and the opportunity for playwrights to make connections with and have their work read by directors and theatre artists.

New scripts are continually accepted and reviewed by Theatre Rhinoceros, one of the nation's most prominent gay and Lesbian theatres, but only a small percentage of these are by and/or about women. The National Lesbian Playwriting Contest is an effort to recruit the largest possible number of Lesbian scripts and to encourage the continued writing of these scripts. Originally a gay theatre, two years ago Theatre Rhinoceros made a commitment to reach out to and try to serve the Lesbian community in the Bay Area, in the belief that Lesbians and Gays have much to share and learn from each other.

All scripts submitted as a contest entry must be unpublished and unproduced. Deadline for submission is September 1, 1984. Send script and SASE and/or inquiries to: Patricia Keaney, Playwriting Contest, Theatre Rhinoceros, 2926 16th St., #9, San Francisco, CA 94103, or call, 415-552-4100.

HERLAND SUMMER NEWS UPDATE

Herland Bookstore will be closed Saturday, July 28 and Sunday July 29, 1984 while repairs are taking place.

Herland will reopen August 4 with our Pre-Anniversary Sale, which will continue through August 19, 1984.

The Herland Anniversary Party will be Friday, August 17, at 7:00 p.m. We have not confirmed a location - if you wish to host the celebration, please call Barbara Cleveland at 672-6459 (late eve.)

SPRUCING UP THE BUILDING

The bookstore building is in much need of repair work so July 23 - July 29 is set aside for the completion of various chores.

Volunteers from the community who appreciate and benefit from the services provided by having a women's bookstore in Oklahoma City are asked to donate their skills and services. The kinds of work to be taking place include completing the painting on the outside of the building; taking down and replacing the ceiling of the main bookstore room; and light hauling (volunteers with trucks will be especially helpful!). Also, we have the opportunity to expand the bookstore to another medium sized room in the middle of the building, at no extra rental charge. The room is now used as a storage catch-all and has a papered ceiling which is peeling and in need of some plaster work as a result of a roof leak (which has been repaired). The middle room will house the Herland office and the resource aspects of Herland's service expansions.

If you're interested in volunteering your time, please fill out the form below as to your schedule and preference, and thanks for sprucing up!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Day	(CIRCLE)
3:00-6:00 p.m.	M T W Th F Sat Sun	
4:00-7:00 p.m.	M T W Th F Sat Sun	
5:00-8:00 p.m.	M T W Th F Sat Sun	
6:00-9:00 p.m.	M T W Th F Sat Sun	

RECENT DONATIONS

\$2.00 anonymous donation toward acquiring a file cabinet (for resources and records)  
 1 box of 100 new file folders for subject library from Angela Butler  
 16 books and 7 periodicals to lending library from Alice Woods  
 6 years of Ms. magazine, misc. books and stacks of subject information from an anonymous donor  
 an autographed copy of Gloria Steinem's new book for lending library from a supporter  
 art for Newsletter from Michele Espeut

VOLUNTEER POSITION OPEN

A Volunteer Coordinator is needed to oversee, contact, schedule and develop a strong and efficient base of volunteers for the Herland Bookstore and its many resource, service, and public programming activities. If you believe you are qualified to fill this position, please contact Herland by mail, or call Barbara Cleveland, 672-6459.

BOOKS BY MAIL

Herland Bookstore welcomes mail orders for your reading needs. Since Herland serves a large geographic area in Oklahoma, our mail order service is particularly convenient for customers not in easy driving distance to Oklahoma City.

Last month you received a catalog which is a partial listing of books available. If the book is out of stock we will order it; if it is out of print we will refund your money. In any case, you will be notified as to the progress of your order. Please note that all orders must be prepaid.

Herland Bookstore, 1630 N.W. 19th Street, at Blackwelder, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106

Regular hours: Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
 Sunday, 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Chores (CHECK)

1. Sanding or scraping \_\_\_\_\_
2. Painting \_\_\_\_\_
3. Light hauling \_\_\_\_\_
4. Ceiling crew \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. tear out old... \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. put up new... \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. dry wall & patch \_\_\_\_\_
5. General cleaning, repair \_\_\_\_\_

BESTIALIZING THE HUMAN FEMALE, by Margot Sims  
South End Press, 1982

Book Review by Teresa D. Long

The scientific method is in for one rough ride in this jewel of a sleeper book. Margot Sims applies a brilliant brand of myth-breaking Feminist/Lesbian logic to the subject of the evolution of the human race and comes up with some hilarious and thought-provoking results.

At her Institute For the Study of Human Types she has collected data which "proves" that women and men are really two different species, essentially unrelated to each other. In an uproariously irreverent play on the "objectivity" of science, she proves this point and many others. She also deals with the terrible fact that heterosexuality as a disease afflicts 9 out of every 10 Americans. Can this menace be stamped out in your lifetime? Read Margot Sim's Bestializing the Human Female to find the answer to this and many other burning scientific questions of our day.

(available in the humor section at Herland)

#### SOME NEW BOOKS

Bloch, Alice. The Law of Return. Boston MA:  
Alyson Publications. 249 p \$7.95

About making peace with the Israel of the character's dreams and the Israel which exists; embracing Orthodoxy and coming out.

Gardner, Virginia. Friend and Lover: The Life of Louise Bryant. Horizon Press.

The first biography devoted entirely to Louise Bryant, usually written about in conjunction with the more famous John Reed. Examines her political activities and journalistic contributions, giving Bryant proper recognition.

Rose, Wendy. What Happened When the Hopi Hit New York. NY: Contact II Publications.  
41 p \$3.50

Includes a striking poem about the Indian takeover of Alcatraz during 1970; pieces that deal with home, Hotevilla, in Hopi country, its people. Deals with Indian's confronting the culture of American cities.

Pogrébin, Letty Cottin. Family Politics: Love and Power on an Intimate Frontier. NY:  
McGraw-Hill. \$14.95

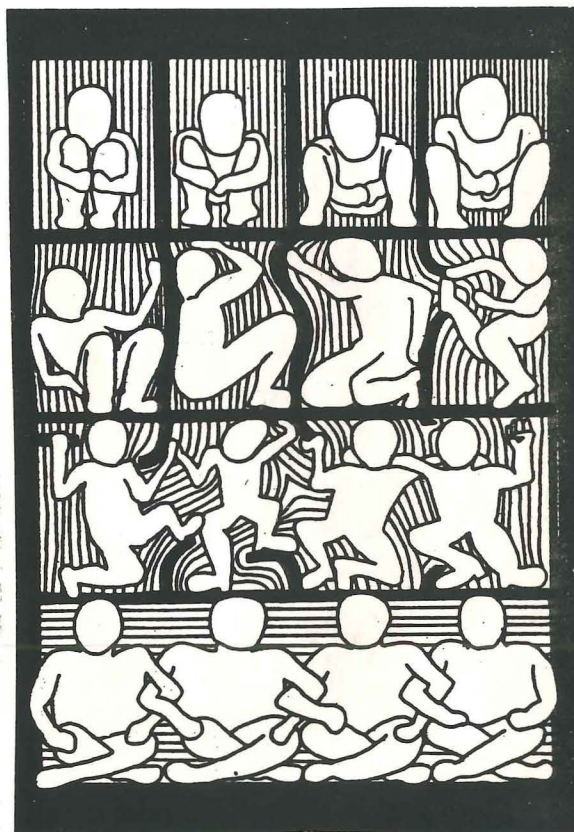
Brings together in a single volume many of the issues feminism has addressed, housework, parenting, physical and sexual abuse, etc.

#### LINE ITEMS: WHAT WENT INTO THE PRODUCTION

Gayle Marie	\$ 425.00
Hall Rental	\$ 150.00
Sound System, piano rental, tune	\$ 130.00
Mary Black and Susan Morgan	\$ 100.00
Refreshments	\$ 80.00
Printing, Publicity	\$ 15.00
Misc., telephone	\$ 40.00
	<hr/>
	\$ 940.00

Approximately 115 folks attended; approx. 100 paying; some folks purchased donation tickets; approx. \$75 other monies were donated.

Herland realized a profit to cover the May rent.



NOTICE: Nuclear War is Permanent. I have done a fair amount of research concerning nuclear war and unless we can stop it there may be another way. The Mother has shown me loop holes enough to bring a few industrious and forethoughtful women through the holocaust. I would never say it would be easy but any women who wish company with me in my plans or just in need of information contact: Angela, 228 N. Flood, Norman, OK 73069, after 5:00 p 360-2713


Take  
the  
toys

Away  
from  
the boys



# July

POST IT  
CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
COMPLIMENTS OF  
HERLAND BOOKSTORE

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 NOW National Conference - June 30, Miami Florida	2	3 Support Group meeting for sisters, daughters, mothers, wives of Vietnam Vets -all ages. 7:00 - 9:00 Women's Resource Ctr. 226 E. Gray	4 Independence Day <hr/> Gay/Lesbian Support Group OU Counseling Center 325-2911 every Wed./July	5	6 Films & Videos Avant Garde and local artists 8:00 p.m. Individual Artists of OK 12 E. California 232-5514	7
8	9 Frosty Troy speaks to the Norman Women's Political Caucus 7:30 Public Library: open to the public/refreshments	10 Vietnam Vet support group meets every Tuesday, call 364-9424 for information	11 Women's Wednesday Night 7:00 p.m. 5500 N. Western	12	13 Films & Videos 8:00 p.m. IAO <hr/> Music Gathering - 15th Kansas City	14 Marketing Your Poetry 2:00 p.m. IAO
15	16	17	18 Women's Wednesday Night 7:00 p.m. 5500 N. Western	19 Natural Family Planning workshop 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. free Women's Resource Ctr. 226 E. Gray Norman. 364-9424	20 Films & Videos 8:00 p.m. IAO	21 Marketing Your Poetry 2:00 p.m. IAO
22 Women in Business Ownership - 24th Kansas City 816-374-3416	23 Herland Bookstore repairs 3:00 - 9:00 p.m.	24 Herland Bookstore repairs 3:00 - 9:00 p.m.	25 Women's Wednesday Night 7:00 p.m. 5500 N. Western <hr/> Herland Bookstore repairs 3:00 - 9:00 p.m.	26 Herland Bookstore repairs 3:00 - 9:00 p.m.	27 Films & Videos 8:00 p.m. IAO <hr/> Herland Bookstore repairs 3:00 - 9:00 p.m.	28 Marketing Your Poetry 2:00 p.m. IAO <hr/> Herland is closed for repairs 3:00 - 9:00 p.m.
29 Herland is closed for repairs 3:00 - 9:00 p.m.	30	31				



# 10 Quick Ways To Analyze Children's Books For Racism And Sexism

Both in school and out, young children are exposed to racist and sexist attitudes. These attitudes—expressed over and over in books and in other media—gradually distort their perceptions until stereotypes and myths about minorities and women are accepted as reality. It is difficult for a librarian or teacher to convince children to question society's attitudes. But if a child can be shown how to detect racism and sexism in a book, the child can proceed to transfer the perception to wider areas. The following ten guidelines are offered as a starting point in evaluating children's books from this perspective.

The Council on Interracial Books for Children  
1841 Broadway, New York, New York 10023

## 1. CHECK THE ILLUSTRATIONS

**Look for Stereotypes.** A stereotype is an oversimplified generalization about a particular group, race or sex, which usually carries derogatory implications. Some infamous (overt) stereotypes of Blacks are the happy-go-lucky, watermelon-eating Sambo and the fat, eye-rolling "mammy"; of Chicanos, the sombrero-wearing peon or fiesta-loving, macho bandito; of Asian Americans, the inscrutable, slant-eyed "Oriental"; of Native Americans, the naked savage or "primitive brave" and his "squaw"; of Puerto Ricans, the switchblade-toting teenage gang member; of women, the completely domesticated mother, the demure, doll-loving little girl or the wicked stepmother. While you may not always find stereotypes in the blatant forms described, look for variations which in any way demean or ridicule characters because of their race or sex.

**Look for Tokenism.** If there are racial minority characters in the illustrations, do they look just like whites except for being tinted or colored in? Do all minority faces look stereotypically alike, or are they depicted as genuine individuals with distinctive features?

**Who's Doing What?** Do the illustrations depict minorities in subservient and passive roles or in leadership and action roles? Are males the active "doers" and females the inactive observers?

## 2. CHECK THE STORY LINE

Liberation movements have led publishers to weed out many insulting passages, particularly from stories with Black themes and from books depicting female

## 3. LOOK AT THE LIFESTYLES

Are minority persons and their setting depicted in such a way that they contrast unfavorably with the unstated norm of white middle-class suburbia? If the minority group in question is depicted as "different," are negative value judgments implied? Are minorities depicted exclusively in ghettos, barrios or migrant camps? If the illustrations and text attempt to depict another culture, do they go beyond oversimplifications and offer genuine insights into another lifestyle? Look for inaccuracy and inappropriateness in the depiction of other cultures. Watch for instances of the "quaint-natives-in-costume" syndrome (most noticeable in areas like clothing and custom, but extending to behavior and personality traits as well).

## 4. WEIGH THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE

\*Do the whites in the story possess the power, take the leadership, and make the important decisions? Do racial minorities and females of all races function in essentially supporting roles?

\*How are family relationships depicted? In Black families, is the mother always dominant? In Hispanic families, are there always lots of children? If the family is separated, are societal conditions—unemployment, poverty, for example—cited among the reasons for the separation?

## 5. NOTE THE HEROES

For many years, books showed only "safe" minority heroes—those who avoided serious conflict with the white establishment of their time. Minority groups today are insisting on the right to define their own heroes (of both sexes) based on their own concepts and struggles for justice.

When minority heroes do appear, are they admired for the same qualities that have made white heroes famous or because what they have done has benefited white people? Ask this question: "Whose interest is a particular hero really serving?"

## 6. CONSIDER THE EFFECTS ON A CHILD'S SELF-IMAGE

\*Are norms established which limit any child's aspirations and self-concept? What effect can it have on Black children to be continuously bombarded with images of the color white as the ultimate in beauty, cleanliness, virtue, etc., and the color black as evil, dirty, menacing, etc.? Does the book counteract or reinforce this positive association with the color white and negative association with black?

\*What happens to a girl's self-image when she reads that boys perform all of the brave and important deeds? What about a girl's self-esteem if she is not "fair" of skin and slim of body?

\*In a particular story, is there one or more persons with whom a minority child can readily identify to a positive and constructive end?

## 7. CONSIDER THE AUTHOR'S OR ILLUSTRATOR'S BACKGROUND

Analyze the biographical material on the jacket flap or the back of the book. If a story deals with a minority theme, what qualifies the author or illustrator to deal with the subject? If the author and illustrator are not members of the minority being written about, is there anything in their background that would specifically recommend them as the creators of this book?

## 8. CHECK OUT THE AUTHOR'S PERSPECTIVE

No author can be wholly objective. All authors write out of a cultural as well as a personal context. Children's books in the past have traditionally come from authors who were white and who were members of the middle class, with one result being that a single ethnocentric perspective has dominated children's literature in the United States. With any book in question, read carefully to determine whether the direction of the author's perspective substantially weakens or strengthens the value of his/her written work. Is the perspective patriarchal or feminist? Is it solely Eurocentric, or do minority cultural perspectives also receive respect? characters; however, racist and sexist attitudes still find expression in less obvious ways. The following checklist suggests some of the subtle (covert) forms of bias to watch for.

**Standard for Success.** Does it take "white" behavior standards for a minority person to "get ahead"? Is "making it" in the dominant white society projected as the only ideal? To gain acceptance and approval, do persons of color have to exhibit extraordinary qualities—excel in sports, get A's, etc? In friendships between white and non-white children, is it the child of color who does most of the understanding and forgiving?

**Resolution of Problems.** How are problems presented, conceived and resolved in the story? Are minority people considered to be "the problem"? Are the oppressions faced by minorities and women represented as related to social injustice? Are the reasons for poverty and oppression explained, or are they accepted as inevitable? Does the story line encourage passive acceptance or active resistance? Is a particular problem that is faced by a racial minority person or a female resolved through the benevolent intervention of a white person or a male?

**Role of Women.** Are the achievements of girls and women based on their own initiative and intelligence, or are they due to their good looks or to their relationship with boys? Are sex roles incidental or critical to characterization and plot? Could the same story be told if the sex roles were reversed?

## 9. WATCH FOR LOADED WORDS

A word is loaded when it has insulting overtones. Examples of loaded adjectives (usually racist) are "savage," "primitive," "conniving," "lazy," "superstitious," "treacherous," "wily," "crafty," "inscrutable," "docile," and "backward."

\*Look for sexist language and adjectives that exclude or ridicule women. Look for use of the male pronoun to refer to both males and females. While the generic use of the word "man" was accepted in the past, its use today is outmoded. The following examples show how sexist language can be avoided: ancestors instead of forefathers; chairperson instead of chairman; community instead of brotherhood; fire-fighters instead of firemen; manufactured instead of manmade; the human family instead of the family of man.

## 10. LOOK AT THE COPYRIGHT DATE

Books on minority themes—usually hastily conceived—suddenly began appearing in the mid-1960's. There followed a growing number of "minority experience" books to meet the new market demand, but most of these were still written by white authors, edited by white editors and published by white publishers. They therefore reflected a white point of view. Not until the early 1970's has the children's book world begun to even remotely reflect the realities of a multiracial society. The new direction resulted from the emergence of minority authors writing about their own experiences. Unfortunately, this trend has been reversing, as publishers have cut back on such books. Non-sexist books, with rare exceptions, were not published before 1973.

The copyright dates, therefore, can be a clue as to how likely the book is to be overtly racist or sexist, although a recent copyright date, of course, is no guarantee of a book's relevance or sensitivity. The copyright date only means the year the book was published. It usually takes about two years from the time a manuscript is submitted to the publisher to the time it is actually printed and put on the market. This time lag meant very little in the past, but in a time of rapid change and changing consciousness, when children's book publishing is attempting to be "relevant," it is becoming increasingly significant.

For fully detailed criteria, a book titled *Guidelines for Selecting Bias-Free Textbooks and Storybooks*, \$6.95, is available at the address below.

Additional copies of this pamphlet are available: 10 for \$1.50 or 100 for \$10; plus 10% postage.

It is reprinted from the CIBC's *Bulletin* which is published eight times a year and analyzes the content of new children's books and educational materials for racism, sexism, ageism, handicapism and other anti-human values. Yearly subscriptions (8 issues) are \$10 for individuals, \$15 for institutions, libraries and contributing individuals. For subscriptions and a free catalog listing other teaching and training materials available please write the CIBC, 1841 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023.