



HERLAND SISTER RESOURCES

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 8
AUGUST, 1985

HERLAND SISTER RESOURCES, INC.
1630 N.W. 19, Oklahoma City, OK 73106

GLITTER BOX

Many containers of glitter and much thanks to our guardian angel of the month, Daphne McClellan, who has made another generous loan to the Collective, allowing us to order new books and records. This Catholic lesbian article is for you, Daphne!

THE CATHOLIC LESBIAN EXPERIENCE

by Mary E. Hunt

I testify as a lesbian feminist who is a Catholic theologian, a woman who prepared fully with the Jesuits for priesthood, and a person with significant ministerial, theological and political experience on this and related issues. I am a member of the Board of New Ways ministry and an active member of the Conference of Catholic Lesbians.

Washington, D.C.'s excellent women's singing group Sweet Honey in the Rock expresses the sentiments that I bring to the Roman Catholic Church tonight, in a song entitled "Every Woman."

Every woman who ever loved a woman
You ought to stand up and call her name
Mama-sister-daughter-lover
Every woman who ever loved a woman
You ought to stand up and call her name

by Bernice Johnson Reagon, 1978

The song goes on to describe how our mothers help us out, how our sisters take good care of us, how our daughters inherit a world of our making, and how our women friends and lovers make us feel fine. It is in this integrated context of care and love for all women that I place my own Catholic lesbian feminist experience.

To be a lesbian feminist is to love all women, to take all women radically seriously in a world that teaches us not to look to one another for support, wisdom and sustenance. It is a world that would have us think that we can only love and be loved by men - a view baptized and confirmed by the Roman Catholic Church. Yet, for me, the essence lies in the fact that I have a "preferential option for the poor," the poorest of whom will always be women. It is this commitment to the whole fabric of liberation which prompts me to single out the lesbian dimension of my own life for discussion.

MARILYN FRYE TO SPEAK AT HERLAND

Marilyn Frye, feminist philosopher and author of The Politics of Reality, will read and hold a discussion on Monday, September 9, 1985, 8:00 p.m., at Herland, 1630 N.W. 19.

"From early August through early September, I am going to be traveling through the southwest and heading home to Michigan after spending this academic year in Eugene, Oregon," said Frye. "I'm very much looking forward to visiting your city and your community and meeting all of you," she added.

"What I have done in such settings, which both the audiences and I have enjoyed, is a mixture of talk and readings from my book and other not-yet-published writing."

Herland is pleased to be able to sponsor Marilyn Frye. Mark your calendar for this important event. A \$2 donation is requested to cover her honoraria. Don't miss this reading and conversation.

Quotes from reviews of The Politics of Reality

"She writes of sexism, racism, patriarchal oppression, but she also provides a gut response to how these issues work in our lives." (New Directions for Women)

"Frye's wit and vision help the reader perceive another reality, one with many layers of patriarchal assumptions peeled away." (Bookpaper)

"...the rich insights ... the elegance of its prose style, its many invitations to spinning out one's own philosophical daydreams." (The Feminist Review)

"The Politics of Reality is the summer storm readers of feminist theory have been thirstily awaiting." (The Women's Review of Books)

"Frye's clear imagery reveals complexities and new angles, resists simplification and stays in the reader's mind ... The Politics of Reality challenges without being obscure or pedantic."

Frye, Marilyn. The Politics of Reality. Crossing Press, \$8.95. In stock at Herland

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

Okay, people, come on now! The ball has started rolling and we need some more people to play. The response was not overwhelming to the first call for participation; however, it has started the wheels in motion. The newsletter reaches over 500 of you wonderful people and I know there are many of you who need to be coaxed into participating. Let the coaxing begin!

The responses I did receive were encouraging, revealing that sports events are of mutual interest. What we need now are people willing to get together and play. We have a possible location and a few softball players. I can already hear some of you saying things like, "I don't play softball--this is not for me." Or, "I have a load of laundry to do so I can't go." "It's too hot; let's stay home." Well, don't waste your breath. The day and time and place still have to be arranged before any excuses will be heard.

It's time for your participation. I challenge every one of you to do your part. We can put together a day of fun and relaxation if we all work together. We will need team members and spectators, plus ice chests, hot dogs, hamburgers, potato chips, sodas, mustard, relish, mayo, bats, balls and crying towels. We could use frisbees, guitars and clowns. No matter what you have to offer, we can work it into this day. The most important thing you can offer is yourself, for without your warm spirits, the rest is cold material.

Write to me c/o Herland Sister Resources, Inc., 1630 N.W. 19, Oklahoma City, OK 73106.

Sisterly,
Dona Williamson

Dear Editor:

I recently participated in the Celebration On Aging at DOE Farm, a small womyn's community in Wisconsin. Much discussion, brainstorming and dreaming centered around issues of housing in the later years, being allowed to do useful work as long as one is able and the desire for nurturing caretaking when unable to care for oneself. As a result, I have been rethinking and expanding my options for housing when I settle in the Norman area this fall. Currently I am researching sale properties that would be suitable for about six people.

I would like to share ideas, concerns, information, etc., especially with midlife or older lesbians and/or feminists who might consider living in a cooperative household. I will be here off and on for the next few months and can be contacted c/o Herland, or messages left at 946-5395.

Phoenix Wheeler

NEW LOGO MAKES ITS DEBUT

Ever since January, when the Collective was formed to bring you Herland Sister Resources, we have been working on a logo to use as our newsletter banner, on our Friends cards, on a new sign for the Resource Center, on T-Shirts. Thanks to Sister G., we now have our logo, and we are so proud of it. Look for this logo on future products and services brought to you by Herland Sister Resources, Inc.

Dear Herland Sister Resources, Inc.:

I'm sending my annual donation. I'm sorry it's been more than a year since I've given anything--thanks for keeping me on the list. I'm a student at OSU--I'll have to take advantage of the minimum rate, but I wish I could send more.

Dona Williamson asks for suggestions. I would check "Exhibition for Women Artists" if I were sending the list.

Also, for those of us who don't live in OKC, it would be nice to receive (perhaps twice a year) a list, by title and author, of the complete current offering of books and records. We can refer to newsletters for descriptions. I just think it'd be nice to have a complete picture of what's offered. If you have the use of a computer, maybe you could keep the list on file and send it on request.

Thank you.

J.S.
Stillwater, Oklahoma



PRINTING COSTS JEOPARDIZE NEWSLETTER

At its July meeting, the Herland Sister Resources, Inc. Collective discussed the status of the newsletter. When the Collective was formed in January, it was able to get the newsletter printed for the cost of the paper for several months. That option is no longer available and the cost for printing now runs around \$100, with mailing costs around \$65. It is the goal of the Collective to make the newsletter self-supporting with advertising, and is launching a campaign to accomplish that. Another possibility is to charge a minimal amount for receipt of the newsletter. The mailing list has grown from just over 100 to 525 persons in the last year, the number of pages has been increased most months and the Herland Newsletter is still the only source of its type in the State of Oklahoma.

This isn't just another plea for donations, readers, but an opportunity for those who enjoy receiving it to help us keep it alive. Send your business card advertisement or your donation to Newsletter, Herland Sister Resources, Inc., 1630 N.W. 19, Oklahoma City, OK 73106.

The Collective is planning some exciting events for Fall, so make sure you are informed about what's going on by supporting your newsletter.

(Continued from page 1)

Although I testify for myself, I do so, confident that thousands of Catholic lesbians could tell similar stories. But I do so with a measure of sadness, aware that few could testify openly without fear of returning to their homes or workplaces, threatened with the loss of their jobs and the respect of parents, husbands, religious superiors or friends. And so I testify with pride, for myself and for other Catholic lesbians who have moved beyond the threats to integrated lives of feminist clarity and celebration.

My experience of coming out ten years ago was very exciting and positive for me, although the institutional church never congratulated me on my insight. My Catholic family received no help in coping with my sexual preference, although I am sure that some members must have sought priestly advice. My friends, many of whom went to Catholic colleges, had really never heard the word "lesbian" until I spoke it to them. We had never been told about this foolproof means of natural birth control! We knew what it meant to be lesbian only by innuendo and silence, and we intuited that it was sinful, although women's experience was never considered important enough even to be condemned as male homosexuality was. But frankly, having learned by the early '70s that much of what the institutional, hierarchial church teaches about women is morally bankrupt, I cannot say that I ever gave the church's position much credence. To the contrary, because the church's position on birth control, abortion and sterilization, not to mention sexual relations outside of marriage, and masturbation, were so far off the mark, my discovery of the church's prohibition of lesbian sexuality only enhanced my sense that it was probably important for women to affirm the lesbian in all of us.

Catholic lesbians are different from other Catholic women only in the extra degree to which we are oppressed, and not different because we are oppressed. All Catholic women are oppressed by the church's fundamental rejection of women's right to choose on every front. The norm for all of us is that of a heterosexual married woman who is open to bearing as many children "as the Lord sends." Any deviation from this norm is considered suspect. For lesbian women, who have had no role models except an occasional slur about a particularly masculine saint like Joan of Arc, deviation from the impossible norm condemns us and consigns us to the far reaches of the so-called church family. Let me go on record as saying that the church family has as its *modus operandi* domestic violence, in our regard. As Woman Church we say no to the anti-woman teachings; we say that they are anti-Gospel. We do not receive the institutional church's teachings on homosexuality which would have us feel sinful, become guilty and reject our best intuitions.

Those of us who have brought sexual preference to the fore, said who we are and rejected the institutional church's horror at what we know to be healthy, good and natural for us in 1985, are glad to be a part of a larger movement of Woman Church. We can see that where women love one another well, with compassion and empowerment, with mutuality, respect and passion, then we can say that our lives as lesbian feminists make ultimate and exquisite sense.

The stories of lesbian feminists in the church are not all filled with happy endings. First, few are told, so that we are robbed of our history. Some of those stories have

gone to the graves with our foresisters. Now we celebrate lesbian women on their own terms, in life and in death. Second, many women have been told in the confessionals and in spiritual direction that their particular friendships, their crushes, their feelings and actions with other women were sinful, dirty, immature, demonic. Now we can say "Love one another as I have loved you" with no qualifications. Third, too many married women have been robbed of their birthright, too many women in religious congregations denied their freedom, too many women told they are not entitled to be full human beings because they are too young or too old. But what they all have in common is that no one ever taught them a responsible reverence for sexuality. No one told them that men are not the only option, that religious life need not involve an absolute ban on sexual activity, that little girls can like little girls, that older women need not be alone and loveless.

Too often women have been told by priests to stay in bad marriages when their best friends were really women. Too many sisters have found their sexual preference obscured from them by the veil of celibacy, finding out who they might be only later in life. Too many women of color in our church, especially Black and Hispanic women, say that it is hard enough to be a member of a racial minority and that coming out as lesbians would be more than they and their communities could bear. In short, every Catholic lesbian feminist does not look like me, a white, middle-class, well-educated Holly Near-type lesbian who can sing "Ode to a Gym Teacher" if pressed. Many women in our church are lesbian. If telling you of my limited experience will help pave the way for the sharing and claiming of other women's experiences, so be it.

The work of groups like the Conference of Catholic Lesbians and New Ways Ministry make this possible. The banishment of Sister Jeannine Gramick and Father Robert Nugent of New Ways from this Archdiocese shows how fearful the institutional church is of our increasing empowerment.

I cannot say how many women in our church are lesbian, and I ought not to say whom. The point is that we need to unlock this dimension of our womanselves, if we are to love ourselves fully as women. Anything less will perpetuate the blasphemy to which we have become accustomed. Risking an open love of one another will help us to call the holy by her name. As Virginia Ramey Mollenkott has noted, "Grace is a lesbian." Then we can add her name to the names of those we love and, "Every woman who ever loved a woman; You ought to stand up and call her name."

(Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D., is a coordinator of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER), as well as a member of the Board of Directors of Catholics for a Free Choice)

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NEW LEADERS CALL FOR UNITY

New Orleans - The National Organization for Women, torn by a tense leadership struggle, cheered a call for unity July 20 in the name of the "millions of women...who need our help."

With voting only hours away in a hardfought contest between NOW President Judy Goldsmith and challenger Eleanor Smeal, Tennessee State Representative Lois DeBerry won the loudest demonstration of the conference with her plea for post-election healing.

"After this election war is over, let us not divide," said DeBerry, president of the National Caucus of Black Women. "Unite together. Let us not unite for Judy's sake. Let us not unite for Ellie's sake. But let us unite for the millions of women out in the world who need our help."

from The Daily Oklahoman wire services

Ellie Smeal won, according to Margaret Cox, co-coordinator of the OKC NOW Chapter, and one of ten Oklahomans attending the convention.

The high point of the activities for Cox was participating in the Take Back the Night march. "I marched with Andrea Dworkin down Bourbon Street," said Cox. The march against rape was "a wonderful, empowering experience," according to Cox.

RETIREMENT HOUSING FOR GAYS & LESBIANS

Previous research in the gay/lesbian community has indicated a preference for retirement housing and long-term care facilities which are homosexually oriented. To elicit more detailed and accurate information concerning interest in such facilities for older lesbians and gay men, a nationwide survey is being conducted by Dr. A.J. Lucco, Fellow in Geriatric Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Gay men and lesbians who will be at least 55 years old by the end of the current calendar year are needed to complete an anonymous, self-administered questionnaire which asks for demographic data as well as opinions in regard to retirement housing options and preferences. If you qualify and are willing to participate, please contact: A.J. Lucco, M.D., The Beacham Center, 5200 Eastern Ave., Baltimore, Maryland 21224.

Organizations willing to distribute questionnaires are also asked to reply.

The study is being funded privately by the principal investigator. Results will be compiled and made available to gay/lesbian organizations around the country which are interested in developing retirement facilities for older lesbians and gay men.

WOMEN'S SELF-DISCOVERY GROUP STARTS

Women's Wednesday Night is sponsoring an 8-week group beginning August 7, 1985. Women who want to see themselves in new ways are encouraged to attend this mutual-help group.

Each meeting will consist of a simple activity designed to help the participant discover and recover new or forgotten aspects of herself. In addition, Pat Walke, MSW, will lead participants in a discussion of their experiences during each meeting.

Aug. 7	Self-Concept Collage
Aug. 14	Body Map
Aug. 21	Inside/Outside Box
Aug. 28	Whole Self
Sept. 4	Island
Sept. 11	Dark Self
Sept. 25	Inner Woman
Oct. 2	Celebration

The group meets Wednesdays, from 7:00-8:15 p.m., 5500 N. Western, Suite 102, Oklahoma City, Ok 73118. The cost is \$50 for 8 weeks (option: \$25 on Aug. 7 and Sept. 4). For more information, call Pat Walke, 848-0050.

GAY & LESBIAN ALCOHOLISM PROFESSIONALS TO HOLD FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The first national conference of the National Association of Lesbian and Gay Alcoholism Professionals (NALGAP) will be held September 26-29 in Chicago. The program includes general sessions and workshops designed to assist those professionals who help our community fight this problem. Anyone interested in the organization or its upcoming conference should write to: NALGAP, 1208 East State Blvd., Fort Wayne, IN 46805.

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RELIGIOUS GROUPS SUPPORT CIVIL RIGHTS BILL

In a step described by Gay Rights National Lobby as a "major breakthrough," 11 major religious denominations have recently joined in a letter to Members of Congress, urging support and cosponsorship of the national gay and lesbian civil rights bill, H.R. 230.

Among the groups signing the joint letter, Church of the Brethren, United Methodist Church, Lutheran Council, Presbyterian Church, United Church of Christ, Episcopal Church, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Unitarian-Universalist Assoc., American Ethical Union and the National Council of Churches.

The letter states: "Our religious traditions teach the importance of providing equal justice for all persons ... As representatives of religious traditions we recognize a special responsibility to provide moral leadership in improving public understanding of this issue. While some of our traditions oppose the practice of homosexuality, our traditions maintain strong support for the protection of basic civil and human rights of all persons."

For more information, contact Nancy Roth, Executive Director, Gay Rights National Lobby, P.O. Box 1892, Washington, D.C. 20013, 202-546-1801.

MUJER A MUJER - WOMAN TO WOMAN

Ten-day trips for women involved in women's organizing in the U.S. -- to meet with Latin American activist women -- to reflect upon the international context of our local work.

Mexico, Nov. 22-Dec. 2. Will include meetings with Central American women; lesbian activists; women involved in anti-rape organizing, human rights work, workplace organizing in the U.S.-based assembly plants; women from Urban People's Movement; women doing technical support for grassroots women's organizing.

Nicaragua, Dec. 2-11. Will include visits with the Nicaraguan Women's Association (AMNLAE), a women's work collective, a child care center, Miskito Indians, the border area, a Christian base community, a neighborhood defense committee, the opposition press, government officials.

The cost, Mexico-\$350, Nicaragua-\$675, includes all expenses, lodging, food, translation, honoraria to speakers and groups visited, entrance fees, entertainment, tips, and all transportation except travel between U.S. and Mexico City. (Nicaragua trip leaves from Mexico City.) Both groups will be met in Mexico City airport.

Write or call Mujer a Mujer/Woman to Woman, 1524 Summit, Little Rock, AR 72202, 501-378-7851.

Cassia A. Meador, M.S.

Counselor

Herland Sister Resources
1630 N.W. 19
Oklahoma City, OK 73106

(405) 524-3017

CHAUTAUQUA CENTER SETS FALL PROGRAMS

The Chautauqua Center in Norman is offering a series of work-scholar programs which provide a forum where people interested in personal transformation can come together to work, learn and play within the context of a small community. Each month-long program offers a different area of study, such as Gestalt, Tadix, massage, meditation and guided imagery, medicinal herbs and much more.

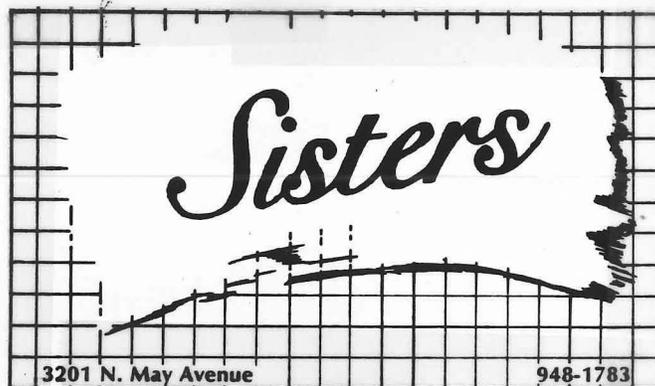
In addition to the workshops, work-scholars will be involved in community projects 32 hours a week. These projects will involve work in the kitchen, office, on grounds, in maintenance and in construction. The program is both emotionally and physically rigorous and work assignments are based on community needs.

Space is limited to 15 work-scholar participants for each month-long program. The total cost is \$400-\$600, depending on whether indoor or outdoor living space is requested. The first three months focus on Community Building, as well as the balance between individual and community process.

Sept. 1-27: Community Building: Structures and Rituals. This program will focus on exploring the intentional community, and will include lodge building (constructing tipis), community rituals and play, medicinal herbs and Aikido.

Oct. 4-31: Community Building: Body Awareness. This program will focus on how we express and perceive ourselves through our bodies within the context of community, and includes massage, movement, yoga and meditation and guided imagery.

Nov. 2-29: Community Building: Process. This program will focus on the delicate balance between individual and community process, and includes Gestalt, encounter, group dynamics and psychodrama.



A & A Antiques

- Estate Liquidations -
- Appraisals -

1008 N. May
942-0124

After 6 P.M.
524-3073

Have you wondered what this work at Herland is all about? We're inviting you to attend a Volunteer Training Session to find out.



Herland is a great place to meet women and network. Being there and knowing you're a part of it creates an essential sense of community for everyone.

Herland volunteers make connections for your reading needs, as a bookstore, but we also are in the business of making a wide range of contacts through referrals, publications, public programs, etc.

If you've ever considered getting more involved, this Volunteer Training Session is an excellent opportunity to express your interests and learn more about the work of Herland. And bring your optimism for a bright future for what Herland can contribute to you, our community.

Volunteer Training Session
conducted by Regina Bennett
Saturday, August 17, 12:00 Noon
at Herland 1630 N.W. 19
Refreshments will be served

THIS SPACE FOR RENT

\$10

write: **HERLAND SISTER RESOURCES, INC.**
1630 N.W. 19th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73106

NEW TITLES FROM SPINSTERS INK

Hand Me Downs, Liz Brown, \$7.95 paper.

A novel set in a small Southern town during the Depression in which seven-year-old Cass frees herself from her brother's sexual abuse.

We Say We Love Each Other, Minnie Bruce Pratt, \$6.95 Paper.

A collection of love poems, Pratt writes some of the most exquisite love poems I've seen or heard. Lines that will be whispered from one woman's ear to another and long remembered.

Considering Parenthood: A Workbook for Lesbians, Cheri Pies, \$8.95 Paper.

Pies considers work, money, dealing with parents, sustaining intimacy, special concerns of disabled women, various forms of conception and adoption and care for the child after arrival.

Prisons That Could Not Hold, a collection of writings from prison by Barbara Deming, \$7.95 Paper.

Includes a photo essay edited by JEB/Joan E. Biren and introduction by Grace Paley.

Support the small women's presses

CHAUTAUQUA CONNECTION

WORK-SCHOLAR

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