



HERLAND SISTER RESOURCES

VOLUME I, NUMBER 11
NOVEMBER, 1985

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

ANN JONES ON BATTERED WOMEN

Ann Jones, author of Women Who Kill and Everyday Death, spoke at Herland October 11, in conjunction with Domestic Violence Awareness Week, sponsored by the YWCA Crisis Intervention Services. What follows are excerpts from Ann Jones' remarks and conversation:

"Everyday Death was a very difficult book to write. It started out to be the story of a battered woman, Bernadette Powell, who killed in self-defense, who was victimized by the criminal justice system. It turned out to be much more complicated than I had thought.

"She was victimized in ways that I had not anticipated, and was not in ways I thought she would have been. Writing her story has mellowed me out in a lot of ways--made me look again. I have felt the injustices of power all along but I no longer feel that it can easily be set straight. It makes me less easily frustrated because I expect less.

"The criminal justice system is inadequate because it is adversarial--it seldom bears on either side. None of the process through which you get into prison has anything to do with the way women live their lives.

"Those stories like Francine Hughes', the Farah Fawcett tastefully bruised, is the creation of an image. There isn't a simple solution. In the story of Bernadette Powell we have to deal with the worst of cases. She didn't fit the perfect victim stereotype; justice applies to those who aren't nice. Friends who read the manuscript said they didn't like her, and in reviews of Everyday Death, critics complain that she had a bad temper.

"Battered women tend to look alike, like POWs coming out of a prison camp, because of their common experiences, not because they were all alike before the experience. I've been making the analogy for years between battered women and hostages. The immediate behavior of identification with the terrorist is the same.

"I stayed once, for more than a week, in an isolated farmhouse with a woman who had killed her husband. I saw the behavior which was most exasperating--behavior trained in her by this man who had beaten her for 19 years. A person exhibits passivity and learned helplessness to try not to alienate you. There are all kinds of nuances and I can't pin it down, but it makes you angry to be around someone who is trying so hard not to make you angry.

"Even to say some of these things comes dangerously close to blaming the victim. We're not blaming the victim but blaming the behavior which has been learned and can easily be unlearned. Whenever we have hostages, we have all these psychologists telling us what behaviors we can expect to see. No one has done this for battered women. When the police say these women tell them they don't want an arrest made, the cops say, 'Okay,' but that's a symptom.

"I work a lot with women inside the prisons. They meet with women who have shared similar experiences. There are physical improvements in sleeping and eating. They feel better and look better and say it's less stressful than in a violent home. Maximum security life in prison can be less stressful than some women's lives on the outside. The hostage system again--the only way they could find to get out of it was homicide tells you the emotional abuse was incredible.

"Professionals, doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists, ministers, law enforcement officers, etc., see the worst cases and generalize that this is what these battered women are like. Some battered women are very passive and some are not. Passivity is a result of having been beaten, and there's a whole continuum. The flip side of the violence is to become overly passive. What would life be like if we were normally assertive?

"Anger gets discredited as an emotion. It's a powerful motivator when you control and direct it, but a lot of women don't want to feel their anger. In reviews of Women Who Kill, men got

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We encourage the exchange of information, personal opinions on issues of concern to the Oklahoma women's community, and your stories and experiences.

The editor reserves the right to edit and condense letters according to space limitations. Letters should be typed, double-spaced and signed by the author(s). Include your address and phone number. If you wish to be published anonymously, indicate so, but include your name, etc., for our information, in case the editor has questions.

Mail or deliver your letter to HSR, Inc., 1630 N.W. 19, Okla. City, OK 73106. Deadline is the 15th of each month.

Dear Editor:

I would like to thank Mary Reynolds for speaking up about the many silent musicians, including myself, who want to be heard!

I, too, appreciate The Second Fret, because it is a place to go to express yourself no matter who you are.

It's up to the people, though, to keep us going. And Mary's letter expressed it all. I just hope that her letter reached the public--not just the musicians.

Here's to you, Mary! Thanks.

Mary Black
OKC

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The Second Fret, 3009 N. Classen, Okla. City, was a year old last month. The organization/establishment has without doubt "established" itself as a center for alternative music: folk music, traditional, bluegrass, exotic, contemporary blues, Celtic, piano, rock, reggae and much more.

The Fret's very special contribution to the OKC community is its support of local musicians. I agree also that the atmosphere is open to a wide variety of folk and the folk I know have reported to me that the variety of sound/instrumentation, yodeling and story-telling, local, national and international musicians have created a quality opportunity for evening entertainment.)

Dear Editor:

Violence does not exist in a vacuum. The man who slugs a woman or slaps a child is supported by an insidious system of "accepted violence" by the majority of Americans.

He is told it's perfectly all right to bash someone on the football field. He is told it's quite manly to don hunting gear and go looking for an

animal to kill. He's even told it's a pleasant, pastoral scene to take his son fishing.

What's missing is the truth.

The truth is that bashing someone in a "sport" is training someone--and includes all the speculators--that hitting another person can be fun, can be a great outlet for all your "aggression."

The truth is that the person bashed is dehumanized, not unlike what occurs in war when the "enemy" becomes a gook or commie, not unlike what occurs in pornography when the "centerfold" becomes a thing to look at, to use.

You cannot use another person for your entertainment, you cannot use another creature for your entertainment, even your food or clothing, without somehow lessening that other being's value in your eyes. To do that, the other being must become "other," less than you.

It is my firm conviction that a society which continues to sanction the killing of creatures, simply because they happen to be a life form other than human, will continue to encourage the degradation of women and children.

Violence--against women, children, men--begins at the breakfast table.

Violence against animals is still violence. Fishing is not "freshwater population control." Killing deer is not "wildlife management." And pornography is not "erotic material."

If violence is to be stopped or even slowed in this country, each of us must look at all the ways we are violent in our own lives--and are contributing to the legitimatizing of violence.

Football, eating the flesh of other creatures, be they cows, birds or fish, these are the insidious violences undercover, still approved.

We can change that.

Patti Weaver
Cushing, OK



announces

the next meeting of the Collective
Open to the Public

Sunday, November 17, 1985, 6:30 p.m.
1630 N.W. 19

PUBLISHING NEWS

Winston Press reports that Women's Reality by Anne Wilson Schaefer has gone into its eighth printing (this one is 25,000), bringing the total books in print to 125,000. Schaefer's new book, The Disease of Co-Dependency, will be available in January.

Margarita Donnelly of Calyx, Sue Heinemann and Lucy Lippard of Heresies and Susan Sherman of Ikon received Editor's Grants from The Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines. The \$3500 grants are given to recognize excellence and innovation in the editing of literary magazines in the U.S.

Ann Bannon is working on a book about the later life of Beebo Brinker, called Applehood and Mother Pie. Not yet finished, no pub date yet.

"Desert of the Heart", the movie, has been bought by Goldwin for distribution. It will be opening as a major movie in 20 American cities in January. "Leanna" opened in eight cities, was successful and then "reopened" in 28 cities, so "Desert" is projected to be a bigger and more fully mainstreamed film than "Leanna" was.

Naiad has just signed contracts for a western, a ghost story and a Regency-style romance. Just goes to show that there are ever more genres available to lesbian writers.

Methuen bought Routledge Kegan Paul, and what is that going to mean for RKP's feminist books and the Pandora Books?

The Phoenix seeks submissions for an issue on "The Native American Today." The editors wish to see work that is honest and which avoids stereotypic thinking. Indians and non-Indians are invited to submit work for this issue. Poetry, fiction (under 3000 words), essays and literary criticism, previously unpublished only. Deadline: Dec. 31, 1985. Payment in copies, reporting time three months. SASE. \$100 each will be awarded for the best poem and the best prose. Send to Joan Shaddox Isom, Editor, The Phoenix, Division of Arts & Letters, Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, OK 74464.

Tough Dove is a new women's publishing house with an emphasis on producing "planetary healing tools from a feminist perspective." This means provocative visionary writings by women. Their first titles are It's Time: A Nuclear Novel by Jana Bluejay; Stone Clinking by Nancy Tyler Glenn will be available March 10, 1986. They plan to rechannel profits into just causes. Contact: Denise Sheffield, Tough Dove Books, P.O. Box 548, Little River, CA 95456.

from Feminist Bookstore News, Vol. 8, No. 2-3

P.S. In case you have wondered about I Know You Know, managing editor Mary Byrne says they took off a few months to regroup, but the December issue is ready for mailing. If you are a subscriber, just hang on. If not, you will want to see this beautiful magazine.

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Interpreters for the hearing impaired are available, but will only agree to sign if there will be hearing impaired attendees. Please let us know by calling one of the above-listed numbers if you need this service.

Dear Editor:

Please reprint my letter published in your August issue. I have received several calls in reference to starting a cooperative household in Norman, the majority of which were from newspaper reporters wanting to interview me for articles, or real estate agents wanting to sell property.

I appreciate the additional publicity and have kept the agents' numbers who have offered their assistance. I am very interested in hearing from women interested in living in a cooperative household.

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

NOTICE!

HERLAND COFFEEHOUSE

The Coffeehouse, held the last Friday of each month, will resume in January. For your November musical pleasure, come to the Herland-sponsored GAYLE MARIE concert, Nov. 22, 8:00 p.m., First Unitarian Church.

HERLAND COFFEEHOUSE

requests the talent of women's musicians for entertainment, the last Friday of each month, beginning in January.

The Herland Coffeehouse offers a unique opportunity to local entertainers: a warm and receptive audience for all those songs only your living room walls have heard

We would love to meet you.
Call or write.

Continued from page 1

angry with it from a position of superiority, but it also received the best reviews from men. Women said it was a bad book because they believed I was angry. Anger always played a part in their opinions. When you read a book that makes you angry, you blame the writer rather than acknowledging your own anger.

"Lee Grant and Joseph Fury produced a video for Home Box Office, called 'When Women Kill,' based on Women Who Kill. I was glad they made the film and interviewed some of the women in the book, but they didn't have enough experience to ask the hard questions."

According to Dreama Moon, Director of YWCA Crisis Intervention Services, signatures are still needed to call for a grand jury investigation into the case of Donna Bechtel, who killed her husband in September, 1984, after being battered by him. The media has kept this issue alive and this makes it easier for the next person. The best thing we can do, said Moon, is "inform people and get publicity." Petitions are available at the YWCA, 129 N.W. 5, and at Herland. You must be a registered voter in Oklahoma County to sign a petition.



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WE REALLY DID GO TO A MEETING

When friends heard we were going to New Orleans to a conference, they speculated on how much time we would spend in the actual meeting. Would you believe 30 hours? Well, I did.

A blurb in this newsletter alerted me to a fall workshop entitled "Southern Women: Portraits in Diversity," at Tulane University. The thing that drove me to work out all the details of being able to go was the fact that Toni Cade Bambara was one of the keynote speakers. I "met" her through the sophomore literature anthology which contained her story "Blues Ain't No Mockin' Bird," one of the best stories I have ever taught. She was worth the trip down there--all 5'4" of her, dressed in a black knit jump suit and black hightop tennies.

The first keynoter was Florence Howe, founder of The Feminist Press, who set the tone for the conference with her opening remarks about her evolution as a feminist teacher. Howe took her New York Jewish self to Mississippi in the mid-'60s to teach and work in the Civil Rights movement.

There were four sets of workshops Friday, three on Saturday, and the only problem was when I wanted to go to more than one at a given time. In most, people read papers, which were interesting, but that got rather old. Finally, by the very last session, a standing-room crowd bulged the seams of "The Game of Politics," with several people's remarking that they were ready for something other than being read to. The final keynoter, Sarah Weddington, who was a legal adviser to former President Carter and is now practicing law in Texas, attended this session and made some valuable comments about helping women attain more elected positions. The workshop which sounded like it would be so helpful to me--"The Place and Purpose of Women's Studies in the Secondary School Curriculum"--proved to be a disappointment, as all the panelists taught at private, elite schools, with very supportive administrations. Several of us in the audience did share some ideas on how to accomplish more in "the real world" of the public school. The importance of oral histories was stressed again and again, especially in "Creoles of Color" and "Feminist Theory and Methodology."

We had decided to stay at a hotel just on the fringe of the French Quarter, The Frenchman, A Hotel (advertised in Places of Interest to Women), and it proved to be a wonderful choice. The room was decorated in antiques, the service and atmosphere were wonderful, and there was a free beautiful breakfast served each morning on the patio. If you are going to be in New Orleans, consider staying there. We caught the bus across

the street, rode to Canal St. and caught the streetcar out to Tulane--65 cents. Great, sensible transportation. By staying in the Quarter, we also experienced more of the true flavor of being in New Orleans. We overheard some women from Texas, who were staying out towards Tulane, discussing eating all their meals at Denny's and wanting some "real" native food.

I have an extensive bibliography on the subject of integrating women's studies into various curricula, which will be made available to anyone who would like to copy it.

The only real disappointment was that crawfish were not in season--I almost cried. We brought back dark roast coffee, Creole garlic, pictures, pounds, memories and prize-winning blisters on my toes. I also gained a new understanding of the line of crap my mother has dished out all these years about Southern "ladies," and what all was expected/required of us. After hearing it and viewing it all weekend I realized that it wasn't just something my mother had dreamed up to torture me with--she really can't help it for that's all she heard when she was growing up. I could not buy into the frilly-dress-for-the-big-meeting-scene, but then I have worked through all that and now go for comfort. It was amusing to observe some of the women who had, in my estimation, bought their ensembles just for this meeting and would have been much more comfortable in slacks. But, they were certainly entitled to wear dresses if they want to, as are any of you. Just don't make that a requirement for life.

M.H., OKC

Sally R. Cole, Ph.D.

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LOCAL NEWS

****The Women's Resource Center, 226 E. Gray, Norman, has a new director, as of October 1. Patricia Easteal, former professor in the Women's Studies Program at Bowling Green State University, has done research in the areas of minority women, women and health, women and work, and women cross-culturally.**

****Dignity/Oklahoma City offers programming, including Mass, general meetings, rap sessions, movie nights, special events and parties, for Catholic gays and lesbians and their friends. Contact them for more information: 2537 N.W. 31, Okla. City, OK 73112, or call 943-8249.**

****The Oklahoma Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign is organizing a Citizen's Summit, Nov. 19-22. While President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev are meeting in Geneva, Okla. citizens will be meeting here. They plan to have workshops at local churches during the evenings of Nov. 19-21, and a candlelight vigil on Monday, Nov. 18. The themes will be US/Soviet relations, arms control, etc. Call Tom or Karen at 524-5577 for more information.**

****Women's Wednesday Night offers an on-going mutual help group for women who want to recover from addictive relationships. The format of the group is primarily that of discussion of issues raised in various books, on tapes and by group participants. "Beyond Addictive Relationships" meets Wednesday nights, 6:30-7:45 p.m., at 5500 N. Western, Suite 102. The fee is \$25 per month. Suggested reading is Women Who Love Too Much by Robin Norwood. Call Pat Walke, MSW, facilitator, at 848-0050 for more information.**

****The Herland Newsletter will publish items of interest to the Oklahoma women's community. Send us your press releases/info by the 15th of each month.**

****To date, Herland has received THREE change of address notifications from readers. Thank you three, but would the rest of you who are planning moves, please let us know? It's costing us 30 cents for each returned newsletter. Granted, the post office is not being very efficient in its notifying us, but you could help tremendously by sending us that information before the last week of each month.**

**Time Spent Loving Women
Will Not Be Deducted From
Your Life**

WYMIN GATHERING IN EUREKA SPRINGS

Wymin Moving From Oppression to Empowerment will be held December 13-15, at the School House Inn, 15 Kansas St., Eureka Springs, Arkansas. The fee is \$20, \$10 due by Nov. 13, and the balance due upon arrival, payable to Oakleaf, c/o Whypperwillow, Rt. 1, Box 198, Eureka Springs, AR 72633 (send SASE).

Join them in sparking and re-claiming our wymin consciousness; re-creating wymin's culture; transforming patriarchal forms; envisioning a feminist future; empowering ourselves and one another; celebrating our lives together.

Gather around 5:00-6:00 p.m., Friday to Sunday afternoon. Bring food to share. 40 bed capacity (linens provided), additional floor space (bring sleeping bags, etc.)



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NATIONAL NEWS

The cervical cap is one of the best kept secrets around. Though it has been used extensively in Europe for over 60 years and was used in the U.S. from 1920 to the early '50s, U.S. manufacturers like Ortho discontinued cap production after WWII. For 30 years the cap maintained a low profile in the U.S., but in 1980, it hit the news when the FDA decided to classify it as a "significant risk" device. The agency justified the move by stating that the cervical cap "had not been studied sufficiently." The cap is a barrier method of birth control made of rubber and works by covering the opening of the uterus. Unlike the diaphragm, the cap fits by suction, so that only a small amount of spermicide is required. A woman can keep the cap in for up to 72 hours without having to use additional spermicide.

--Plexus

Eleanor Smeal, the newly elected president of the National Organization for Women, has vowed she will take the fight for women's rights "back to the streets." That's a project that pleases not only many of the group's supporters but some of its enemies, too.

Smeal, who also held the president's post in a term that ended in 1982, says under her new term, NOW will campaign for economic rights, including pay equity and unisex insurance rates that will test states' equal rights amendments. Smeal says she will also press for abortion rights, a restoration of bans on sex bias at institutions that get federal money, and, yes, a new drive for a national equal rights amendment.

Some women, who have climbed to success as the feminist movement racked up new rights for them, told The Wall Street Journal that many professional women "don't have much time" for such campaigns--especially since they might not view the endeavors as "career-enhancing."

Meanwhile, Republican political consultant Roger Stone is expressing satisfaction with Smeal's call to action. Stone says NOW's new president will "certainly be more polarizing, which, from a conservative viewpoint, is a good thing. Because she's polarizing, she won't allow the women's movement to cloak their rhetoric in majority terms--they're a radical minority."

Despite such theories, Smeal is sticking to her no-holds-barred tactics, saying it's time for NOW to give up its "polite, quiet" approach of recent years. Says Smeal, "If you're a doormat, people walk over you."

--Her Say

Lesbian and gay movie watchers no longer have to choose only between Hollywood soft-soap or independently done soft-core porn.

Now they can also see more real life images of themselves on the home screen, thanks to a Los Angeles firm that markets non-sexual cassettes focusing specifically on the lesbian and gay market. Humanus Home Video, now a year old, has come out with two cassettes and has several more in the works. One upcoming tape is for parents who have discovered that their daughter or son is gay, another deals with AIDS, and a third, title "The Female Couple," focuses on the nurturing of a lesbian relationship.

Company founder Robert Frisch, the former publisher of the gay publication The Advocate, admits marketing the videos can be a challenge. Says Frisch, "We can always stress that these tapes are purely non-sexual and educational. But many stores still won't carry them. They claim their customers won't be interested."

--Her Say

For the first time, an insurance company has agreed to give gay couples the same 20% discount on auto insurance that it gives to married couples. Known as the "multiple car discount," it is given to couples who own two or more cars. Previously the discount was available only to married couples.

The agreement was reached after extensive negotiation between AAA of Southern California and National Gay Rights Advocates, the San Francisco-based public interest law firm. NGRA represented Leo Laurence and Robert Zelmer, Jr., a gay couple in San Diego who have been in a relationship for seven years.

--press release from NGRA

Beverly K. Evans, M.S.W.

527 N.W. 23rd Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73103
(405) 521-8241

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HERLAND RETREAT REMEMBERED

"You're out of the woods, you're out of the dark, you're out of the night..step into the sun, step into the light."

We did it. All, each and every beautiful woman (and dog) who attended formed the Osage Hills All-Munchkin Chorus with the musical wizardry of Mary Reynolds and Peggy Johnson.

We sang a lot around the campfire. We played hard with passion and I think truly enjoyed the company we made for one another. We rode horses which sprang into occasional gallups. We painted a totem pole and conjured up the woman spirit of a full moon, played drums and spoons, read tarot and rune stones, discussed health and law, survival and children. We learned to juggle, told a continuous stream of bad jokes, acted in plays, wrote and painted, banged on the old up-right piano.

We left our homes and work and cities--we left Kansas to squawk and scream over the volleyball net, go fishing in the river, take long walks on crackling fall leaves. Events like this retreat, I think, are a trip "over the rainbow" where women can relax and share visions, can indulge in a mini-society which we create for a few days, can receive nurturing support we don't always get from the major society.

The individuals in the Herland Collective who worked on the retreat deserve many thanks for a well-organized event. So much interest was expressed in having another that as you read this, we are reserving a group camp at Robbers Cave for a spring retreat. If you missed us at Osage Hills, watch the Newsletter for details about the next one and schedule it in--just write FUN on those dates in your calendar immediately upon notificatoin and say Nope! to anything else that comes up that weekend.

*Holiday Shoppers!
Herland has 1986 calendars and
many new book titles*

First Impressions
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CHRIS WILLIAMSON IN CONCERT IN DALLAS

Little Feather Productions, Inc., is producing Chris Williamson, Tret Fure, Teresa Trull, Barbara Higbee, Cam Davis and Carrie Barton in concert Friday, December 6, at 8:00 p.m., at the Garland Performing Arts Center, 300 N. 5th, Garland, Texas.

Tickets are \$12.50 before December 5; \$12.50 for mail order before November 23; \$15 at the door; and children's tickets are half the adult price. Send check or money order and SASE to Little Feather Productions, P.O. Box 64720, Dallas, TX 75206. The facility is wheel chair accessible. Call 214-941-9303 or 214-526-2868 for more information.

WORKSHOP TO EXPLORE LIFE OF RUSSIANS

"I know of no safe repository of the ultimate power of society but the people. And if we think them not enlightened enough, the remedy is not to take the power from them, but to inform them by education."--Thomas Jefferson, 1820.

The Oklahoma Nuclear Weapons Education Fund and Freeze Campaign is sponsoring a series of workshops on the life and government of the people of the Soviet Union.

Dr. James Marcum, Ph.D. in Russian History and Soviet Studies, will conduct the workshops from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Okla. Blood Institute, 1001 N. Lincoln Blvd., Okla. City.

- Nov. 14 Introduction - "The Trouble with the Russians"
- Nov. 21 Gorbachev: The Politics of Leadership
- Dec. 5 Soviet Militarism: Are the Civilians in Control?
- Dec. 12 The Economy: Living in Russia Today
- Dec. 19 Soviet-American Relations: Who's at Fault

Send your name, telephone number and registration fee of \$15 to the Okla. Nuclear Weapons Education Fund, 2920 N. Robinson, Okla. City, OK 73103. Pre-registration is requested but not mandatory. A limited number of scholarships are available. For more information, contact Tom Faudree, 405-524-5577.

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