

The

# HERLAND VOICE

September, 1995

## A PAT ON THE BACK

by Margaret Cox

I am no longer on the Herland Board, but I am nevertheless filled with pride for Herland, and want to congratulate them (her? us?) for their (her/our) part in a most phenomenal success - the Supreme Court decision in July which sets the precedent that lesbianism/homosexuality is not grounds for denying a parent custody.

It all began, for Herland, in March of 1992, when, to excerpt from the Board minutes, "The Board next heard from two women who are involved in a custody fight with one's exhusband. The mother currently has custody, and the exhusband has filed for primary custody, citing her lesbianism and the proposed move from Oklahoma. An appeal to the Oklahoma Supreme Court is expected no matter who the winner is at the lower court level, and that appeal will probably be in the \$15,000 range. The women's immediate need is for \$1000 - \$2000. After considerable discussion as to the best ways for Herland to help them raise this initial amount, Jean moved that \$500 be made available to them immediately; this amount to be guaranteed them; that any amount over that raised for them also be forwarded to them."

GULP. It was clear during the "considerable discussion" that no one had a clue how to raise that kind of money; we had never done it before; but, when fiscally conservative Jean moved that we actually commit to giving \$500 immediately, we girded our loins and the motion passed unanimously. Thus was born the Herland Legal Defense Fund.

Fund-raising efforts by Herland included: Articles in the Voice, every few months; countless open mikes at Herland and at the various bars in town, with special thanks to Shatzy and then Kathy at the Porthole; countless mailings; countless strategy meetings; bringing in the poet Chrystos from Bainbridge Island, Washington for a series of readings and workshops; a fabulously successful concert with Cris Williamson and Tret Fure; garage sales, clever mailings to a nationwide group from a list donated by the National Women's Mailing List; production and sale of a cookbook, "Family Cookin'" ( a few copies are still available); everything, that is, but a dog and pony show.

Over three years, the Herland Legal Defense Fund, (thanks to all of the wonderful women and men who donated to the Fund), was instrumental in raising over \$13,000 for this struggle. A portion of this went to other custody cases; but this first case met all the criteria established by the HLDF, primarily being that it was clearly winnable and thereby capable of setting a precedent to benefit lesbian and gay parents state and nationwide.

I want to note here that this precedent also helps all women, gay or straight, in that all women (continued next page)

## Upcoming Events:

**TRASH TO TREASURE** - Turn your trash to treasure by donating it for the Herland Fall Garage Sale. Then come to the Garage Sale to find treasures for yourself. The sale will be at Herland on Saturday, September 16 from 8 AM to 3 PM. Donate items by dropping them by Herland during our regular hours.

**FABULOUS BOOK SALE** - Herland will have a huge book sale on September 23 from 10 AM to 5 PM. With 10% off all new books and a special selection of used books, there's sure to be something for everyone.

Have you read all of Katherine Forrest's books and still have them lying around the house? Tired of your Robbie Summers books? Donate them to Herland for the used books sale! Donate any books for the sale and receive an additional 5% off any new book purchase.

**HOMECOMING RETREAT** - You don't want to miss this years retreat! Herland will be celebrating their 10th Annual Fall Retreat October 27, 28, and 29 at Fountainhead, Lake Eufaula. Lots of events unknown to past retreats will be offered for your enjoyment along with the more traditional activities. See the enclosed flyer for all the details and registration information.

**4TH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN** - September 4 - 15, Beijing, China. See related article on page 5 of this issue of *The Voice*.

**Thanks to all of you who have already remitted your subscription dues. The response has been tremendous!**

# St. Sybil

...goes Subliminal:

"The Human Rights of Women and of the Girl Child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights".

The quotation above is proposed for the Mission Statement of the Platform of the Fourth World Conference on Women, and it might just surprise you to learn that it is quite controversial. Yes, it really is, it is in dispute. Eminently reasonable as it might sound to thee and me, there are some Pope John Paul who are against it, who think that it is too radical Khomeini, Saddam Hussein; who don't want women, Goddess, Mother, to enjoy the same Human Rights, Respect, Freedom, that men do. These same people James Dobson, Jerry Falwell who object to this language also have a hard time with the thought of a woman having reproductive freedom women in control, or with girls our daughters, our selves having access to the same schooling opportunity, freedom as their brothers.

You may not be surprised to know that some people blasted bigots don't want any positive references to sexual orientation sweet inoffensive queers in the mission statement either.

So, dear delightful reader, some of us here where I am wanted to share with you our Top Five moderation in all things list of why people might be against universal human rights for women blessed mothers:

- 5) They are absolutely dependent on women's free labor husbands & bosses
- 4) Their economic system is totally dependent on the exploitation of women Everyman, Everynation, Phyllis Schafly, & other Honorary White Males
- 3) Their power base would crumble without unpaid and underpaid women You again, John Paul
- 2) Subordinate women and girls needed to absorb men's rage and anger rapists, batterers, harassers
- 1) Womb and Creation envy and that includes, you know it: John Paul. ☆

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## A PAT ON THE BACK (continued from previous page)

are vulnerable to the playing of the Lesbian card in custody cases. Just the threat of it has gained great advantage and concessions by the unscrupulous.

Finally, I want to acknowledge that it was the courage and gallantry of the mother and her partner which gave Herland the strength and impetus to keep on with their efforts, and certainly not the other way around. Words cannot express the deep admiration and affection we all have come to feel for these two strong, strong-hearted, courageous women. We're proud to know them, and proud to have helped. ☆

## HERLAND RETREAT DOG SHOW

Start planning now to enter your woman's best friend in the Dog Show at this years 10th Annual Herland Fall Retreat at Fountainhead State Park, Lake Eufaula.

Competitions will include largest and smallest, butchest and femmist, best trick, most friendly tail wag and most loving eyes. Dogs can be entered in as many competitions as you and your dog wish at \$2 per entry. See you there!

... AND IF YOUR DOG IS SEEKING OUT EVEN MORE ADVENTURE AND FUN WE HAVE THE...

## DOG COSTUME CONTEST!

Susan B. Afgan!  
Frankenspaniel!  
Beagle Ballettrina!

What will your dog wear to the Costume Contest at the Herland Fall Retreat? Bring your originality, \$3 entry fee, and the costume, then let your dog shine like the star she really is! ☆

### THE WORLD'S WOMEN 1995

Women are nearly 70% of the world's 1.2 billion poor.

2/3's of the world's 1 billion illiterate adults are women.

In 1993, 81 million girls had no access to primary school.

Half a million women die each year from pregnancy complications and 70,000 women die due to unsafe abortions.

Women and their dependents are 75% of the world's refugees.

At the corporate level, US companies have eight women for every 100 men. In the 1,000 largest corporations outside the US, only one of 100 executives is a woman.

Women account for half of the food production in developing countries. In some African countries, they have to walk 10 kilometers or more to fetch water and fuel.

-- UN Department of Public Information

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# MUSIC REVIEW

by Jill Garner

**This month I just have a hodgepodge of different things I want to share.**

I went down to Dallas in August to hear Cheryl Wheeler play. She played at a place called Uncle Calvin's Coffeehouse. It's housed in a large Presbyterian church and is a really nice place to hear music. It has a bunch of chairs and tables, a stage in front, and they have various coffee, teas, sodas and desserts for sale. The thing I love the most about places like that is that people are there to hear the music, and you actually can. The week before Cheryl Wheeler played, Mary Reynolds and Emily Kaitz had performed there. Next month one of my favorite new singers, Dar Williams is scheduled. Another place in Dallas that attracts some very good performers is Poor David's Pub. They're often hosting some of my favorite performers, or people I would love to go see if I lived there. I was fortunate to get the chance to see Alison Krauss and Union Station there last year (before her popularity grew exponentially). Deep Ellum is a happening place for live music too, with clubs like the Bomb Factory bringing in great bands on a regular basis. Dallas is a great city to go hear live music in, and unlike Austin, can be done in one night or a weekend.

I bought a CD recently by Tish Hinojosa called **Homeland**. I heard about Tish a while back on National Public Radio and loved her. She's moved toward doing more of her songs in Spanish although her earlier work has a lot of country/folk influences and more songs in English. And wow, what a voice. One nice surprise on the album that I bought is a song of hers called *Til You Love Me Again*, which has been covered wonderfully by Crystal, of the local group Full Circle.

Lesbian comedienne Suzanne Westenhoefer is once again coming to The Comedy Corner in Bricktown, October 2. If you missed her last year, don't let it happen again. Suzanne's one of the funniest women I've seen in a long time, and if you want to continue to have the chance to see the best in openly gay entertainers, show The Comedy Corner that it's worth their while to bring them. Who knows, maybe Lea Delaria will be there next!

One other thing that I'd like to share is something new from Ladyslipper Catalogue - a new 24-hour-a-day Listen Line. You can preview any of their new releases, plus those on their top 40 list. You call a number, punch in a 4 digit number indicating the one you want to hear, and you can hear up to three songs per album. Unfortunately it's not a toll free number but it's a great idea and makes buying new music from Ladyslipper a little less risky. Write Ladyslipper, PO Box 3124, Durham, NC 27715 for a catalogue.

*Herland would like to take this opportunity to thank Jill for her regular contribution to The Voice. We appreciate your insight immensely.*

## DID YOU FORGET SOMETHING?

Due to the rise in postage and other costs, it has become necessary for us to update our newsletter mailing list. If you wish to continue receiving the newsletter, please mail the following form to the Herland Voice in the enclosed envelope.

1. **Yes!** I wish to continue receiving the Herland Voice. My check of \$12 for an annual subscription is enclosed. \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Yes!** I wish to continue receiving the Herland Voice. I cannot pay \$12 at this time, but I have enclosed the following amount  
\_\_\_\_\_.

3. **Yes!** I wish to continue receiving the Herland Voice. I cannot contribute at this time, but may do so at a later date \_\_\_\_\_.

4. **Yes!** I wish to continue receiving the Herland Voice. My check for \$25 to pay for my subscription and that of another sister who wants one is enclosed \_\_\_\_\_.

My current address is as follows:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Payments are due October 1995 and your subscription will run from October 1, 1995 to October 31, 1996. Make checks payable to Herland Sister Resources and indicate that it is for your subscription.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!**

# BULLETIN BOARD

**LESBIAN-ONLY COUNSELING** - group or individual counseling. For more information contact Jo L. Soske M.E.D./M.H.R./I.C.A.D./L.P.C. at 321-0134.

**SOUTHEAST HIGH GRADUATES!** I'm looking for any lesbian/gay alumni, particularly from the Class of 1987. With a 10 year reunion coming up I think it would be great to connect with some of my "sisters and brothers". Write or call: Tracey Hughes, 2727 N. Amidon, #704, Wichita, KS 67204, (316) 832-1069.

**CHATTERBOX** - National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association Annual Convention: Four days of insider views of political power, comprehensive learning, training, and idea-generating. The conference will be held at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, DC, October 19-22. For information contact NLGJA Convention, 8528 Bradford Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901.

**GRANTS FOR WRITERS WITH HIV/AIDS:** Grants of \$1000 are available to writers residing in the western US. Applicants must be HIV positive and have been actively involved in creating literary work within the last three years. For further information contact PEN Center USA West, 672 S. Lafayette Park Place, #41, Los Angeles, CA 90057, phone 213-365-8500. Deadline is September 29, 1995.

**MAY SARTON, RIP** - Poet, novelist, and journal writer May Sarton has died at age 83. Sarton died of breast cancer Sunday, July 16, 1995. She was born in Belgium in 1912, and emigrated to the US during World War I. Sarton revealed her own homosexuality in her novel about a lesbian love affair, "Mrs. Stevens Hears the Mermaids Singing." "Joy, anger, all those things that society wants us to avoid, a poet must keep alive," Sarton said in a 1993 interview. The news item said "she left no survivors"...they are wrong. May Sarton is survived by her feminist writings, her novels, and her poems. Sarton, by the way, was a long-time subscriber to the Herland Voice.

## CONTRIBUTORS

to THE VOICE



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# SHANNON

by MOC

We can only speculate on just which straw broke Shannon Faulkner's back and caused her to leave the Citadel after a valiant two and a half year battle to gain admittance. Besides the killing isolation (the first group of women at West Point, for instance, numbered 119, about 9% of the student body), another cause surely was the realization that even after joining the Corps of Cadets she would not be allowed to be part of it. As for the health and weight non-issues, the week that Shannon and six other cadets were admitted to the infirmary with heat prostration saw widespread heat-related distress throughout South Carolina; a large number of police officers, for instance, succumbed to the heat as they stood at attention at a police funeral in Charleston.

One question which Shannon and the Citadel have brought to the forefront of people's minds and the radio talk shows is the one concerning different standards for women and men: Shannon was going to be required to do fewer pushups and situps and to run shorter distances in longer times than the men...

Well, the Army recruiting motto these days is "Be all that you can be". It is not "Be all that Arnold Schwarzenegger can be", or "run faster than you used to could", or "do more pushups than civilians". It is, simply, Be the best you can. One's success in battle, even in the unlikely event of infantry style personal combat, is not going to be dependent on doing seven more pushups in sixty seconds than the enemy. It will be dependent on having a highly trained mind and the stamina of body and mind that comes with stretching and testing and trying oneself.

There is nothing magical or divinely inspired about standards for admittance to colleges and employment; they are arbitrary, and are set neither by God nor in concrete, but by fallible human beings; altering these standards is a continuous ongoing practice of good management and good public policy. Fine military minds, for instance, have been denied access to service at West Point or Annapolis on account of arbitrary and unreasonably stringent vision requirements; height and weight standards for years kept Hispanics and Asians and women of all races out of police departments, and kept men, for another example, out of the ranks of flight attendants. Of course those standards reinforced prejudices of the day which held it was good to deny access to those jobs to non-whites, or to women, or to men; when those prejudices were overcome and the standards altered, performance was in no way negatively affected.

In all the talk about Shannon and her experiences at the Citadel, we need to bear in mind two very important points:

1) She accomplished a very great deal by forcing a court decision that requires the Citadel to admit women. Now just because most women cannot imagine wanting to go to a military academy, we shouldn't knock it; there are bound to be hundreds or thousands of young Southern girls dying to savor the esprit de corps and to prove their mettle at the Citadel; and we should be thrilled that their chances of doing so are much greater since Shannon's struggles, and

2) If there ever was a question of whether women could hack the regimen at a military academy, it was settled long ago: The United States Military Academy at West Point, which is to the Citadel as the Cathedral de Notre Dame in Paris is to the Crossroads Cathedral, has been graduating women, including a woman Captain of Cadets, for twenty years. ☆

## Fourth World Conference on Women

Thousands of women and men from around the world will gather in Beijing, China September 4 - 15 for the Fourth World Conference on Women. The official U.N. Conference and the parallel NGO conference will evaluate world-wide progress toward ending discrimination against women and debate action to be taken. Participants in the official UN Conference will seek to develop consensus on a platform for action that establishes a basic group of priorities to be carried out over the next five years.

The draft platform for action identifies 12 "critical areas of concern" as barriers to the advancement to women. The areas of concern include the impact on women of poverty; education; health; violence; armed conflict; economic structures; power sharing and decision making; mechanisms to promote the advancement of women; human rights; the media; the environment; and the situation of girls.

There is still much disagreement about the language of the Draft Platform. A portion of the mission statement that says "the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights" is still in dispute. Bracketed text -- indicating text that is still pending agreement -- is throughout the draft. References to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights that were agreed to at the 1994 UN International Conference on Population and Development are disputed in the current draft. Also controversial are references that qualify human rights as "universal"; references to foreign occupation and alien domination; the term "equity" as opposed to "equality"; references to "sexual orientation"; and references to "religious ethical values, cultural background and philosophical convictions."

Use of the word "gender" in the Draft Platform has been challenged by the Vatican because it could include homosexuals and transsexuals. A definition of gender for use in the Draft Platform has yet to be agreed upon.

James Dobson, President of the right-wing organization Focus on the Family, has denounced the conference as "the most radical, atheistic, and anti-family crusade in the history of the world." Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls has publicly criticized the Beijing draft document for its "ideological unbalance" -- complaining that it gives short shrift to family and motherhood.

Preparation for the Fourth World Conference have included national preparations and regional international preparations. The Oklahoma Women's Network hosted one of a series of regional U.S. conferences held to provide input into the development of U.S. positions. Five international regional preparatory conferences were held to identify issues to be addressed in the draft platform.

The draft platform was finalized by the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women in a meeting held in March, 1995. Language of the platform still in dispute will be further debated and refined by the official participants in the Fourth World Conference on Women.

The official U.S. delegation is chaired by Madeline Albright, U.S. Ambassador to the UN and Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton is a Honorary Co-Chair of the U.S. delegation. ☆

# Come Home to Herland!

## Fall Retreat

October 27-29

Fountainhead State Park

### Performances By

Mary Reynolds

Peggy Johnson

### Workshops

Preserving Our Traditions

Guitar Techniques with Mary Reynolds

"The Beat Goes On" - Let's Drum!

... and more...

### Scheduled Activities

**Open Mic ▲ Dog Show ▲ Campfires▲Pot Luck Dinner**

The Fountainhead Group Camp is one of the nicest locations ever for a Herland Retreat. The cabins are modern and the campground is isolated from the rest of the park with a small lake on the grounds and a limited number of RV hookups.

*Bring your memories of the past, enthusiasm for the present, and vision for the future!*

## HSR FALL RETREAT REGISTRATION

October 27- 29, Fountainhead State Park

Single Person's Annual Income	Retreat Pre-registration per person	Household Annual Income
under \$6,500	\$15	under \$13,300
\$6,500 - \$13,250	\$25	\$13,300 - \$18,000
\$13,250 - \$19,500	\$35	\$18,000 - \$26,000
\$19,500 - \$30,000	\$45	\$26,000 - \$50,000
over \$30,000	\$60	over \$50,000

Please chose the registration fee most appropriate for you based on the guidelines. On-site registrations will be \$60 with no exception. Deadline for pre-registration is October 25. Registration is non-refundable after October 26.

Registration Fee Enclosed (payable to Herland):  \$15  \$25  \$35  \$45  \$60

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

I need a scholarship to attend.  I'm enclosing an additional \$\_\_\_\_\_ to provide retreat scholarships.

I'm bringing \_\_\_\_\_ children (girls of all ages and boys under 10 are welcome at the retreat).

I'm bringing \_\_\_\_\_ pets (leashed and well-behaved).

I would like to ride with someone.  I can provide a ride for someone else.

**Return to Herland Sister Resources, 2312 N.W. 39, Oklahoma City, OK 73112**