

# Herland

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## VOICE

February 2002

Volume 20, Number 2

### Black History Month: A Reading List

February is designated Black History Month. A quick look through our lending library yielded these titles you might want to come in and check out. This is a representative but not inclusive list of our books by and/or about Black Americans.

Audre Lorde: *Sister Outsider*  
*A Burst of Life*

Angela Davis: *Angela Davis, an Autobiography*

Maya Angelou: *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of*  
*Water 'Fore I Diiiie & Other Poems*

Zora Neale Hurston *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Jewelle Gomez *The Gilda Stories*

bell hooks: *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*

Ntosake Shange *For Colored Girls Who have Considered*  
*Suicide when the Rainbow is Enuf*

Assata Shakur: *Assata, An Autobiography*

Alice Walker: *In Search of our Mothers Garden*

*Possessing the Secret of Joy*

*Meridian*

*The Color Purple*

Toni Morrison *Beloved*

Bebe Moore Campbell: *What You Owe Me*

Black Lesbians: An annotated Bibliography

*Compiled by J R Roberts*

And if you haven't read these three books below, run by your public library and check them out. They are classics you will want to read.

James Baldwin - *The Fire Nest Time;*

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X;*

Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man.*

### Homosexuality and Scripture Conference

Seven welcoming congregations will be contributing to a Homosexuality and Scripture conference to be held over the March 1-2 weekend at Open Arms UCC, 3131 N. Penn. Discussion topics range from general issues around interpretation to a more specific focus on certain Biblical passages. Beginning on Friday evening, March 1, at 7:00 p.m., and continuing until mid-afternoon on Saturday March 2, the conference will also blend times of worship and reflection with the offered workshops. For registration information, call Church of the Open Arms at 405-525-9555.

**Gather the Spirit: Weaving Our Lives** - The 2002 Annual Conference of SWWIRL, Southwest Unitarian Universalist women, is slated for February 22-24 in Fort worth, Texas. This is always a marvelous conference, full of great workshops and tremendous growth and fun. For more information and printable forms go to [www.swuuw.org](http://www.swuuw.org).

### Women of Color

Women of Color met Saturday Night, January 19, for a Soul Food Dinner with musical guest Monica Cantrell. Ms. Cantrell performed an evening of Bille Holiday's songs. The food was the bomb and the entertainment was out of this world. Ms. Cantrell transported us back in time with such great hits as "Good Morning Heartache" and "God Bless the Child". Ms. Cantrell was able to make you feel that if you closed your eyes you were listening to Ms. Holiday herself.

Women of Color is a Black Lesbian Support group that meets the 2nd Sunday of every month at Herland at 4 pm. If you are interested in joining Women of Color or just want more information please contact Jacqueline at 405/842-3464 or email at [jscottross42@Hotmail.com](mailto:jscottross42@Hotmail.com).

**Oklahoma's Environmental Education Expo 2002** is set for February 7 at Metro Tech Conference Center in Oklahoma City. Hosted by the Oklahoma Association for Environmental Education (OKAEE), the event will feature nationally-recognized speaker John C. Ryan, who will take participants on a tour of what resources must be used before we sip our coffee, tie our shoes, click our mouse, or step on the gas. Once you follow a day in the life of an average North American and see the secret lives of your food, your clothes, and your "toys," your world will never look the same. For registration information, see [www.okprogressive.org](http://www.okprogressive.org).

### Herland Supper Club

Saturday, February 9, 5:30 pm

Eat at Paco's

2124 NW 39th

Oklahoma City

If your New Year's Resolution was to get out and meet more people - look no further! The last two months we have had between 25 and 35 women attend the supper club.

This month the Supper Club will stay in OKC for a fun dinner at Paco's, just down the street from Herland. We will get a 10% discount off the regular prices. Then we are invited to attend a fundraiser party for Herland and the Legal Defense Fund where we will be entertained by Mary Reynolds and Louise Goldberg.

Call Rhonda and Cindy (if in Enid) at (580)242-4493 or Ginger (if in OKC) at 942-1535 for more details. Next month we will hit the road again to enjoy a potluck dinner hosted by our Enid friends.

## SAINT SYBIL

*Sybil Ludington, Matron Saint of the forgotten woman, is an occasional contributor to the Voice.*

Dear Saint Sybil,

I am just heartsick, and furious. Our local rape-crisis center has hired a new Executive Director. The person they hired was strongly disliked by staff who interviewed him. In his interview, he addressed himself to the men, not the women - regardless of who asked the question! Staff recommendation was to hire *anyone* but him. Nevertheless, the Board of Directors went ahead and hired him, and in a classic case of adding insult to injury they are going to pay him many thousands of dollars more than our previous Executive Director - yes, a woman! - was getting.

The idea of hiring a male to run a rape crisis center, appalling as it is to me and the staff, doesn't seem to bother the rest of our Board at all. One very sweet but clueless woman asked me why it should bother me, a man, that a man was going to be head of the rape crisis center - *she* wouldn't mind if a woman were elected president....Good grief. And for anyone who raises the "reverse discrimination" cry, surely they know that for every women's organization that discriminates against a male applicant, there are 100 other organizations that will give him an edge over women applicants.

When I tried to tell them that the only men remotely qualified to hold a position of E.D. at a rape crisis center wouldn't dream of taking the job if offered, they didn't get it. There seems to be no feminist perspective at all anymore at the Board level. You know, if it were up to men there never would have been, nor would there be now, a movement opposing any forms of sexist violence. Safety and trust are the foundation for services to victims, and right or wrong, some women survivors may not seek help from an agency headed by a man. The opposite would not be true for male survivors

The center's intention is to empower women, yet there isn't a single woman qualified to be director? Male director, female staff?? I just hate it that a man will be the lead spokesperson for the movement in my city. I think that while there is still male dominance in society, women should lead predominantly female organizations.

Well, thanks for listening. I've got to go now. I'm on my way to apply for a Director's position with B'Nai Brith and the NAACP. True, I'm a white Episcopalian, but hey! I'm a great administrator! Isn't that all that counts?

Disgustedly,

Jaymes Yobro

Dear Jay,

In some circles, you bet, that is all that counts - as long as an organization is efficient, it doesn't matter if it loses its soul. You had maybe better start thinking of your Center as a service agency and not as an agency for social change.

Well, you pretty well said it all, and I've got to run too; I've got to write my chaneller a letter of recommendation for a position as Managing Editor at the Daily Oklahoman - I'm sure they'll hire her, she's a great organizer!

Peace and love,

Sybil

## MORATORIUM ON THE DEATH PENALTY?

State Representative Opio Toure has again introduced legislation calling for a Moratorium on the Death Penalty. There will be a Moratorium Now rally in support of that bill on the South steps of the Capitol on Tuesday, January 29, from 4:30 until 6 pm. There will be appearances by some of the released inmates who served for years on death row before being proved innocent.

Oklahoma is slated to execute three prisoners in eight days beginning January 29. Demonstrations from 5 - 6 and Vigils from 8:30 until time of death will take place the afternoon and evening of each execution in front of the governor's mansion.

## THE HERLAND BOOK CLUB

The Herland Book Club had their first meeting on Sunday, January 6. We chose the book "What You Owe Me" by Bebe Moore Campbell. It is the story of the struggles of a black woman who starts a cosmetics company in the 1950's and how she and her children fare. The book is available at the public library, where there are several copies. It is not yet available for purchase in paperback, unfortunately.

We will be meeting again on Saturday, February 16 at 5:00 pm at the Herland bookstore. We decided to move our meeting to the third Saturday of the month so that the book selection would have time to be announced in the newsletter each month so that new members could have time to join us. We will meet from 5:00 to 6:00, which will give folks time to leave for Saturday evening events, or the book club crew might decide to go out afterwards.

Please bring an idea for a book to read to the next meeting. If you can, check to see if the book is available from the public library or if it is available from local bookstores, preferably in paperback. If a book is available in paperback but not currently at the bookstore, we can make it a future book selection and request the store order extra copies. I hope you can join us for our next meeting!

## SOUL FORCE

*By Paul Barby*

I attended both the training Saturday (January 5) afternoon in the Ledo room at the Habana and was part of the vigil at Village Baptist Church that commenced at 7:30 a.m. the next morning and concluded after church services ended about 12:30 p.m. The group of 47 or so, may have been more than 50 total with some coming and going during the morning, conducted a silent vigil in a line on the sidewalk along the parking lot across from the "welcome" entrance to the church. Both sides were very respectful, those in the vigil singing various songs softly as the congregants walked past into the church. There were very few direct contacts with individuals, most trying to ignore our presence as they went in. Several different times, men (presumed to be deacons) came out with hot coffee for us, passing down the line with pleasant greetings.

As the congregants left after services they were more responsive, no discussions with two or three exceptions and then not harsh, but "good morning's" and "hello's" from the majority or a nod or a wave from their cars as they drove out of the parking lot. It was most interesting to observe the children, who seemed fearful of what was happening as they came in, making more eye contact when they left; and quite interesting to me, was watching the children in the cars, obviously asking parents questions about us, as they drove by. I could hear the "why's"

\*\*\* Web Site of the Month: \*\*\*  
[www.ruralwomyn.net](http://www.ruralwomyn.net) Check it out, this is what the internet was made for; Sisters doing it for ourselves!

after each answer they got! It was a good feeling to be part of this.

Now, let me be very direct and blunt about what the Soulforce vigil is about for glbt persons in my opinion. Many of us, myself included have little or no use for "religion." A number of you reading this think that these vigils are about religion and since you Reject "religion," you want no part of it.

Think about this again. This is about what "religion" is doing to us. It is about starting dialogue with the very source of the discrimination and hatred directed at us. We must show these people who we are. They do not know us. This vigil was an opportunity for many to see us as regular people who are just as human as they are. I believe it was effective. These vigils will continue on the first Sunday of each month through June or earlier if that church agrees to enter into dialogue with us to get to know who GLBT people are. This is not about debating scripture or praying over each other . . . it is about getting to know each other.

I urge each one of you to take part in the vigil Sunday, February 2. You do not have to be religious to participate. You do need to recognize that the teachings of certain religious groups are killing us literally. This vigil is in the spirit of Gandhi and King. Join us on February 2. Although many of the 50+ participating in the vigil were from OKC, there were a number from Tulsa and some wonderful people from Texas and Kentucky. I personally thank everyone who was there. It was cold at 7:30 that morning!!!! But there we were, standing quietly, wearing our Soulforce T-shirts over layered thermals and sweaters. That T-Shirt has a big red stop sign and a powerful message on the back:

**"Stop spiritual violence against God's  
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender  
Children. [www.soulforce.org](http://www.soulforce.org)"**

The 20' banner we held in front of the church for the whole morning said, "Southern Baptist teachings are killing our gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender children. Stop spiritual violence." Sure made those driving by crane their necks to read it. Some honked and waved. Interesting morning! To repeat my blunt statement: You need to participate. This is our Rosa Parks event, our march to Birmingham, if you will This is not about religion; it is about bigotry taught by religion to people who do not know us. They must get to know us. Soulforce, like Gandhi and King, is effective in it's use of gentle yet powerful persuasion. Come for the training on Saturday, February 1, & then join us in the vigil February 2.

*Ed. Note: The next Soulforce training in non-violence will take place Saturday, February 2, 2002, from 2 - 6:30 p.m. at the Church of the Open Arms, 3131 N. Hudson, Oklahoma City. A training is required for those wishing to participate in the Vigil Sunday morning, February 3. For more information go to [www.soulforceinoklahoma.org](http://www.soulforceinoklahoma.org);*

**OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE:**

Tuesday Feb. 12 Through the years, thousands of Oklahomans have found that the Day at the Legislature is THE place to learn about the legislative issues they care about from people who are experienced and knowledgeable.. The fee with lunch is \$22 if you make your registrations before Feb 4. Make the checks payable to: Oklahoma Conference of Churches, at 301 NW 36 St, Oklahoma City Ok 73118. For further information call 405-525-2928 .

**RAIN**

As the new executive director of the Regional AIDS Interfaith Network (RAIN), Jean Ann Van Krevelen, MSW is excited about the prospects of serving her community in this capacity. "Oklahomans are so aware of what it means to overcome tough times and support their neighbors," Van Krevelen said. "My goal is to remind community members that there is still a tremendous need to support persons living with HIV/AIDS."

Van Krevelen, a long-term resident of Oklahoma, oversees statewide services, services, with main offices located in Tulsa and Oklahoma City. RAIN Oklahoma is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a compassionate response to HIV/AIDS through education and service. RAIN Volunteers provide non-medical practical assistance and emotional support to people living with HIV/AIDS throughout the state of Oklahoma. RAIN staff provides educational programs about HIV/AIDS, teaching the facts and helping to dispel the stigma of the disease. To date, they have served over 700 people.

RAIN is entirely funded by individuals and businesses, faith organizations and private foundations. "We do not receive money from state or federal government agencies. We have had a particularly difficult time after the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, as many of the dollars that would have come to our agency were sent to help the victims in New York and Washington, D.C. "

RAIN's finances and volunteer base have also been affected by the increasing disinterest in HIV/AIDS issues by the general public. "I strongly feel that we have become complacent in our response to AIDS. Over saturation in the media, coupled with new treatment methods have decreased the sense of urgency that used to be associated with this issue."

One way that RAIN is striving to generate a renewed sense of interest is in the development of advisory boards, both in Oklahoma City and in Tulsa. These boards will meet quarterly and will help RAIN stay in tune with the communities' needs and interests. Additionally, the advisory board will be responsible for the creation of two fundraising activities per year. "I am really excited about the development of these boards. It is a very effective way of strengthening community ties. Those ties are essential in providing relevant, compassionate services."

RAIN is also committed to outreach in the community. In addition to HIV/AIDS education, they also speak to interested parties about the services offered at RAIN. Interested parties should contact the office to schedule a time. "We are truly in need of financial support, as well as volunteerism. Sometimes, it is a matter of making people aware of your need. I am so grateful that everyone I have spoken with has been exceptionally supportive."

If you would like to lend your support, contact RAIN at (405) 947-3434 or at [rainokla@swbell.net](mailto:rainokla@swbell.net). Their address is 1601 N. Drexel Blvd, Oklahoma City, OK 73107, website is [www.rainoklahoma.org](http://www.rainoklahoma.org).

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**Save the Date: May 17 - 19**  
**HERLAND RETREAT**

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*In the Post Patriarchy*