

Herland

VOICE

March 2002

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WOMEN'S HERSTORY MONTH

* World Neighbors, 4127 NW 122nd, Oklahoma City, is hosting a Celebration of Women in honor of International Women's Day, on Friday, March 8, from 11 am to 1 pm (come and go). **Music** by Edgar Cruz - **Shop** at Market Day! **Sample** international food - **See** the WOW! (Work of Women) video - **Hear** personal stories - **Learn** how women live in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. "WOW! Is a Partnership Investing in the Power & Potential of Women Around the World."

* Herland has a large lending library of books primarily by and/or about women; many of which cannot be found at the public library, e.g. *Lesbian Nuns: Breaking Silence* - a seminal work from 1985; we have 2 copies, the Public library? None.

Herland is open Saturday afternoons and during board meetings (3rd Sunday of each month at 4:30) and occasionally at other times..

* The Public Library does have many books we don't have, of course, and their hours are better - Make March 2002 *your* Women's Herstory Month too.

Herland Board Goals Retreat

The Herland Board will hold a planning retreat from 10 am to 4 pm on Sunday, March 24. We intend to look at where we are, where we've been, and where we want to go. These are challenging times for Herland. We have a rash of new volunteers and Board members bringing new ideas and energy; at the same time, our financial resources are decreasing.

All past, present, and future board members and volunteers are invited and encouraged to attend this goal setting meeting, and help us set our direction for the next twenty years. We will send out for pizza during the day. We hope to see you then.

The Herland Book Club met on Saturday, Feb. 16 to talk about our first book selection, *What You Owe Me*, by Bebe Moore Campbell. There were seven of us and we had a lively discussion about what we liked and disliked about the book.

The Book Club will meet on the third Saturday of each month at 5:00 at the Herland center. Our book to read for March is *Crocodile Soup* by Julia Darling. There are five copies available through the public library. If you can't find a copy, call Herland and one of the book club members will get back to you.

Chainsaw Heaven - Herland is having a Spring Cleaning work day on Saturday, March 30, starting at 10 am and continuing until???. Bring your tools and your initiative and your strong willing arms and join the fun.

Herland Women of Color

Women of Color met on Feb. 10th at Herland. Shirley Darrell came to speak to our group, and we had a great turn out. Our next meeting will be a potluck on March 10th at 4 pm. Please contact Jacqueline at 842-3464 or email her at jscottross_42@hotmail.com for directions.

Women of Color is a Black Lesbian Support group that meets the 2nd Sunday of every month. If you are interested in being more involved in the community, please join us!

Thank You, Volunteers!

Herland would like to thank the women who have so generously donated their time on a Saturday afternoon to staff the Herland Bookstore. Your assistance is "priceless." We could not keep going without you. If any of you would like to be a part of keeping the only woman-centered library and bookstore/resource center in Oklahoma City going, please call Louise at the Herland phone number and we will gladly show you the simple procedures to become a volunteer for our store.

Fundraiser Report

Mary Reynolds and Louise Goldberg lent their sensational talents to a house party on February 9, and helped raise over \$1,200 toward Herland and Herland Legal Defense Fund expenses. Our sincere thanks to Mary and Louise, to Pam and Chris of Leaf It To Us who supplied the gorgeous flowers, to Sandy and Nina for the great wine, to our host, and to all those who contributed their time and generous checks. What a fun way to raise some money!

Homosexuality and Scripture Conference

March 1-2 weekend at Open Arms UCC, 3131 N. Penn. Beginning on Friday evening, March 1, at 7:00 p.m., and continuing until mid-afternoon on Saturday March 2. For more information, call COA at 405-525-9555.

Herland Supper Club and Road Trip

Saturday, March 16th, 6:30 pm
Potluck Dinner at Marty's in Enid

This month the Herland Supper Club gets back on the road with a trip to the great city of Enid. The Enid folks will host a potluck dinner at Marty's restored Victorian house and then we will enjoy a little nightlife at a new gay bar opening in town.

OKC folks will meet at Herland at 5:00 pm to carpool to Enid. Call Laura (if in OKC) at 943-4070 or Marty (if in Enid) at (580) 234-6997 for more details.

SAINT SYBIL

Dear Saint Sybil,

A darling child at the school where I teach gave me an Eskimo Joe shirt to thank me for helping her mother with something to benefit our school. I smiled and hugged the girl and thanked her very much. What should I do with this shirt?

- a) Cut the shirt into rags so that its shocking racist images will not be seen again?
- b) Give the shirt to the United Cerebral Palsy collectors when they come on MLK day picking up household goods?
- c) Wear the shirt to school once so she knows I appreciate the gift before I do a) or b) above?

I have discussed this with a friend and we think a) is the only right answer but agreed to consult with you. P.S. The shirt is not just an Eskimo Joe shirt. It is a shirt for the Lake Hefner Streak benefiting OKC Beautiful featuring Eskimo Joe and his dog riding a bike/trotting around the lake.

Sincerely, Ima Notsher

Dear Ima,

What a dilemma. It is particularly hard because such a large number of lovely, essentially non-racist people in Oklahoma wear the shirt all the time. They just put it on and think fondly of brewskis and panty raids and the good old college days. A lot of our readers right now are sitting scratching their heads with chagrined expressions of shock on their faces ... "Eskimo Joe??? Racist???" Heck, Ima, even a lot of full-blown racists don't get a charge out of the Eskimo Joe logo. It is not like the "stars and bars", which no one would ever wear or fly who was not quite comfortable with a certain degree of racism.

And yet you are so right. It is a shocking racist image. Eskimo Joe is a perfect example of ingrained, thoughtless, self-perpetuating racism. Surprisingly, the logo of a cartoon Eskimo with buck teeth so large they take up more than half his face was created as recently as 1975. It is quite likely that if "Joes" had opened twenty years earlier that its cartoon logo would be of an Al Jolsen type minstrel. All for fun, of course; no harm meant, no offense intended. Right. For today's corresponding image, look to Hooters.

Still, Ima, I was thinking about just suggesting that you give up on this issue, that maybe the racism was unintended and therefore, though not harmless, and certainly not innocuous, at least maybe bearable? Then I surfed the website - Joe's has a photo gallery with maybe a hundred pictures of people wearing Eskimo Joe clothing. I looked at every goofy picture, and there is *not one* racial minority wearing the Eskimo Joe logo. Not one. Now, there have been tons of minorities drinking many kegs of beer at OSU, home of Eskimo Joe, over the years....and not one sent in a proud picture wearing the shirt? This I call pretty good empirical evidence that even if white people can't tell it's racist, everyone negatively affected by racism certainly can. And of course what this means is, it's time for people to wake up and demand better of themselves. Well-intentioned folk who strive to be non-racist need to take a good hard look at Eskimo Joe and put that t-shirt down for good.

As for the sweet little girl - I'm sure you have written her a nice thank-you card, and that will have to do. As for what to do with the shirt - I have an inflammatory suggestion - bring that ugly thing to Roman Nose on May 17 and burn it on the Herland bonfire. It'll be fun, and do the world good.
Hugs & Kisses, Sybil

MUSIC REVIEW: Kris Delmhorst - Five Stories

by Jill Garner

A couple of years ago I wrote about a new CD I had recently ordered by Kris Delmhorst called *Appetite* that I was very impressed with. About a week ago, I got the latest CD by Delmhorst and I'm just as happy with it as her first.

Delmhorst has been known around the Boston area for awhile playing bluegrass and old-timey music with the Vinal Avenue String Band. However, her solo releases have earned her a new respect as a singer and songwriter in her own right. She has sold 8,000 copies of *Appetite* from the stage, and has been selling out acoustic venues across the Northeast. She also plays the guitar, piano, fiddle and cello and on both releases shares her talent on all of these.

Her beautiful voice combined with a knack for writing songs makes a combination I can't stop listening to. Most of her songs are in her lower voice range but she's able to switch easily to her higher range when needed ("Gave it Away", "Lullaby 101"). Both are equally good and the quality of her voice gives me goosebumps.

I also love the depth of her songs. She does a mixture of the slow, more sparsely backed ballads like "Damn Love Song" and "Words Fail You" with a combination of more jaunty songs like "Cluck Old Hen" with a full band to a blues-tinged "Honeyed Out" and a full-blown bluegrass song called "Mean Old Wind".

"Damn Love Song" describes the fear of fully committing to a relationship. The first lines are, "How can I carve your name in the trunk of a tree that'll be here long after we're gone? I can't even write it in the steam on the mirror."

Still feeling the pain of a relationship four years ended she sings in "Broken White Line", "It's been 4 years and now I find I been living all this time, built myself a little world of rhythm & of rhyme, but sometimes I take your picture and I turn it to the wall, cause you are still a cliff and baby I still know how to fall. It was almost fine, you were almost mine." I think it's the best song on the CD by far, I think because of the emotion the song portrays, and the strength of her voice on it.

"Yellow Brick Road" explores the longing to see someone as they really are. "Don't say that it's not lonely up above the crowd. Don't tell me you don't find yourself longing for the ground. When I asked him one more time won't you tear the curtain down, he said don't you know there's nothing here but me" And I said baby who'd you think I came to see?"

Maybe because of my love of gardening, or maybe just because it's a good song, I love the metaphor of a rose wanting to be a wildflower to the longing for freedom and the fear of it at the same time in "Garden Rose". "Then tell me one good reason a rose should not become a weed by & by. Cause don't the sunshine lay the brightest on the shoulders of the wild? And don't the breeze blow the sweetest on the face of its own child?"

The song that really showcases the musicians on the CD is the bluegrass of "Mean Old Wind" featuring the Resophonics, (a band from the Boston area) complete with banjo, mandolin and dobro, and I love the sparse, percussion-laden blues of "Honeyed Out". She has a number of good musicians on the CD, and also gets help on a number of songs with backup vocals by Catie Curtis and Jennifer Kimball.

This CD moves me emotionally, as good music can. And those who like that combined with the beauty of good writing will love this CD. You can order it from

www.folkweb.com or www.krisdelmhorst.com. I highly recommend you do, and I hope you love her music as much as I do.

Also, on March 22nd, I hope you go see Kate Campbell at the Blue Door. I saw her there a few months ago and I tell you, it doesn't get much better than that. I love her music, but to get to hear her stories (and in that wonderful southern drawl!) too was great. She's very personable, and highly talented! Please treat yourself to this show and don't let someone this good pass through Oklahoma City again without stopping by to listen.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

The Herland Spring Retreat will be at Roman Nose State Park in Watonga, OK on May 17th - 19th. Our friend Nancy Scott from Austin, TX will be performing the Saturday evening concert, after the pot-luck dinner. We have several interesting and fun workshops planned. If you would like to lead a workshop (you can use your imagination here!) please contact a board member or phone 843-7993. We'll have more details in the next Voice.

SOUL FORCE OKC

By Karen Weldin - February 5, 2002

Dear Friends,

It has been 24 hours since we were vigiling outside Village Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. I am still filled with many thoughts and feelings as I reflect on our second vigil. I keep seeing your faces and hearing your voices as we stood reverently singing songs of the heart. I am so awe stricken at your commitment and dedication to do what we can do to stop the violence against our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender sisters and brothers. You stood so willingly, so compliantly, so earnestly in the cold. It was obvious to me that you stood with a message in your heart that you were trying to communicate to all of those who walked passed us and who drove by that we are God's children too. We are worthy of acceptance, love and inclusion. You all are so beautiful to me. I am so grateful to each and everyone of you - your stand for justice does not go unnoticed. The press conference was so moving. We focused this month on sharing stories. Mike, I am so sorry for your pain of having lost a sister to suicide because she could not reconcile her sexuality with her spirituality and could not stand the pressure of the condemnation and rejection of her Southern Baptist childhood religion. Nancy, your tears streaming down your face were almost too much for me to handle as you shared in public the pain of losing custody of your three children because you chose to be honest about your sexuality. Moira, I listened to you talk about living with fear about your son being gay. You worried about his safety. I was saddened at this reality for all parents of GLBT. Eric, you shared about your friend who is gay who was determined to stand outside his church relentlessly if they would not allow him in. I ache for all people who are shunned by their churches for who they are. At the same time, I am so proud of allies like you who are willing to stand with us simply because it is the right thing to do. Suzy and Mary, I share your pain as we all cry each time I read the letter that my niece wrote to President Bush about what it was like to be taken away from her Mother because her Mother is gay. Debbie, my heart aches for what you have had to go through. It still hurts to remember the pain and suffering caused by fear and ignorance. I am sad for the Mother who came up to Mary who was standing with us holding a sign that said, "I love my gay daughter," and said, "I have a gay son. I pray for him daily." She was obviously hurting and angry. She came

out of VBC. She is taught that her son is an abomination. I ache for this Mother and all parents who are taught to reject their children. I am sad for the VBC member who dialogued with Paul who kept insisting we are wrong and that we have a gay agenda. I hope and pray that she could hear some of what Paul was trying to share with her. Most of all, I am sad for the seventeen-year-old teenager who was with us Sunday whose Mother, while a member of Village Baptist Church, kicked him out of his home because he came out to her. All of these are true stories that we experienced during our vigil this past Sunday. All of these stories and experiences are reasons we do what we do to confront this kind of violence.

While we were on break a van circled the church several times. It finally stopped and a man got out and handed Paul, and the VBC member he was talking to at the time, a piece of literature. It was a very derogatory piece of literature against GLBT. It saddens me that people continually use God and scripture to condemn and reject us. I learned this morning that the Church of the American Knights had called Rev. Kersh last month and offered their assistance. I am grateful Rev. Kersh asked them not to come. Some day, some day as Kathy said to us in our spiritual preparation Sunday morning, we are going to look back and be amazed that sexual minorities were treated differently than other people. Someday people will be amazed that we were oppressed and treated violently because of who we love. We must persevere in order for someday to become a reality.

There were thirty-eight of us who stood in the cold outside Village Baptist Church Sunday morning. To each of you, I say again, thank you for your dedication and commitment, thank you for your willingness to experience some voluntary redemptive suffering for justice. For those of you who were not able to be with us, thank you for your thoughts and your prayers. Being an activist, confronting the bigotry of the church, is not popular or glamorous. It is hard work and only for the courageous. I keep hoping that more of you will join us. To my friends who are reading this, please search your heart and consider standing with us March 3rd. We need you. If we could all move past our fear and stand for justice we could end this oppression so much quicker. It's tiring to do what we do. All thirty-eight of us went home tired, exhausted and hungry. But, we also went home with our hearts a little fuller, our minds a little more determined to continue our own soul force journey. We can't adequately describe or explain our experience. It is something each person must experience for themselves. It is also a different experience for each person. I know for me, each time I participate in a soul force event, I understand my purpose a little more clearly.

May the Spirit of Truth and Justice reign in all of our hearts, direct all of our thoughts and actions, and lead us on our journey. In love and peace, Karen

Ed. Note: The training for new participants will be Saturday March 2, from 4-8:15 pm at Church of the Open Arms. The vigil will reconvene on Sunday morning, March 3, outside Village Baptist Church. Vigilers will carry large posters of Gays and Lesbians who have died because of hate violence perpetuated by religious policies and teachings

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Singer's Wanted! Even if you have little or no formal training or experience, if you like to sing and you're a woman, we want you!

Rehearsals are at Epworth United Methodist Church

(1901 N. Douglas - between NW 17th and NW 18th) every Thursday evening, from 7:30pm to 9:30pm. Contact us at Singalot3@aol.com for more info.

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Website of the Month

www.okprogressive.org

A thoughtful compendium of local, progressive, activist, opinion.