

the HERLAND VOICE

january 2004

volume 22, number 1

THE STATE OF OUR COMMUNITY

presented by GayOKC.com

6 pm, Monday, January 26, 2004
Epworth United Methodist Church
1901 N. Douglas Ave, OKC

GayOKC.com proudly presents the second edition of "The State of Our Community."

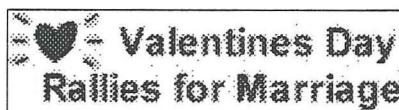
Last year, representatives of a broad range of organizations and businesses were on hand to examine the events of the year before in Oklahoma City's GLBT Community and the issues our community faced at the beginning of 2003.

We live in historic times: this year has been a dramatic and exciting one for our community and next year could be even more so.

Join us as we examine this year's events and issues and what they will mean for our community in 2004.

Valentines Day of Action

DontAmend.com activists have outlined a broad plan to capitalize on the recent Supreme Court victory, stop the anti-gay marriage constitutional amendment, and push for full, equal marriage rights for all consenting adults in the United States.



Working with local and national organizations such as Marriage Equality California and

Marriage Equality USA, DontAmend.com activists have planned a two pronged offensive:

-- Campaigning in all of the states to get people from all walks of life - public officials, religious figures, and other community leaders - to sign public commitments opposing the anti-gay marriage constitutional amendment.

-- Launching a pro-active, pro-equal marriage campaign of local educational events, protests of anti-gay officials and other activities culminating in a nationwide day of rallies and other events for same sex marriage on Valentine's Day, Saturday, February 14, 2004. For more information, visit www.dontamend.com.

State LGBT Groups Organizing to Fight Proposed Marriage Amendment

Since the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court recently ruled that it was unconstitutional to discriminate against same-gender couples in the state of Massachusetts when granting marriage licenses, we are now seeing an attack by the right wing that is unprecedented. There is an incredible amount of pressure on Congress to pass the anti-family "Federal Marriage Amendment" (FMA). And in Oklahoma, state legislators, Rep. Cargill (R, Harrah) and Rep. Balkman (R, Norman) are set to introduce a state resolution to calling on Congress to pass a constitutional amendment defending traditional marriage and for Oklahoma to be the first state to ratify such an amendment. There is also talk of a similar constitutional amendment to our state constitution.

The Oklahoma Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, Soulforce in Oklahoma, and other lgbt and supportive organizations are in the process of building a statewide coalition to defeat the so-called federal marriage amendment, and any related state resolution or amendment. Organizers are planning a summit in at the Best Western Hotel, I-44 at the Stroud exit, Stroud, Oklahoma on January 9-10 2004. The meeting will be from 6-10 pm on Friday and 9 am - 5 pm on Saturday. Herland will have two representatives attending and all members are invited to attend. If ever there was a time for us to come together and be united, it is now! Contact Karen Weldon (Soulforce in Oklahoma) and Rodney Johnson (OGLPC) at 495.76201363 or at politick@red-river.us. for more information.

Herland presents

A Three Poet Night

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 7 PM

Herland is proud to present an evening of poetry with three accomplished poets, Deidre Murray, Judith Rycroft, and Paula Sophia. Judith has delighted Herland audiences with her poetry in the past; Deidre donated a fascinating book of poetry to Herland's Art Auction in November that caught our fancy; and Paula is a favorite of the poetry night regulars at Galileo.

Come at seven for coffee and cookies and conversation; readings will begin around 7:30 and we'll have you home before ten. You were wowed by the Three Tenors, and you'll love the Three Poets!

Praising Tara: Empowering Ourselves

The annual Southwest Women's Universal Unitarian Women's (SWUUW) Conference will be held at the Marriott Hotel (3233 Northwest Expressway) in Oklahoma City, on January 30 - February 1, 2004.

The theme of this year's conference is Praising Tara, Empowering Ourselves. Tara is the Tibetan Goddess of compassion who is said to be the mother of all Buddhas. Tara is said to be the power behind Tantric Yoga. She is the embodiment of compassion and wisdom, the great obstacles, dissolving ignorance, out to her.

Conference speakers, Ana-Dasara, will use the vehicles open the vision of intercompassion.

There will be more than 20 weekend, covering such topics as dance, and midwifery, and includ-

hata and Prema. At 8:30 Saturday night, the rally by Miss Brown to You. MBTY fferences in the past, and both heaven, as hundreds of wild, won-themselves with joy and abandon-wonderful and inspired music of our shoes on!

For more information about the conference and registration forms, please see www.swuuw.com.



tion who is said to be the mother of holder of inner knowledge, and the is the embodiment of compas-mother goddess, overpowering swift to assist any who call

hata Iradah and Prema of sacred song and dance to nectedness and the power of

workshops offered over the emotional healing, meditative ing an all-day workshop by Ana-

ference will be entertained ro-y has played at two SWUUW con-times were little glimpses of derful, loving women threw ment around the floor to the ever own MBTY. Get your dancing

SWUUW

SouthWest Unitarian Universalist Women

A Kinder, Gentler Holiday for Battered Women

The women and children at the Passageway Shelter for Battered Women will have a better holiday due to the kindness and generosity of those of you who donated items through Herland Sister Re-sources.

Several bags of women's shoes, boots, and clothing, children's and toys were donated at the December 21st winter solstice and holiday potluck at Herland.

These items were promptly delivered to the Passageway Shelter Monday afternoon, in time for the holidays.

Herland Sister Resources extends a warm thanks to all who donated to this worthy cause.



Herland Anniversary Pins and Booklets for Sale

If you missed the Herland 20th Anniversary Celebration but would like a commemorative pin and/or booklet, they are available!

The Herland anniversary pin is a 3/4" photo-etched 2-color lapel pin with the design shown above. The booklet is a 40+ page herstory of Herland with a month by month listing of people and events for the last twenty years. Also, in the back is a list of past board members by year. Pins and booklets are available for only \$5 each at the bookstore or by using the order form below.



Please send me _____ Herland 20th Anniversary pin(s) and _____ booklet(s).

Enclosed is _____ (please include \$1 extra per order for mailing).

Mail to:

Name _____

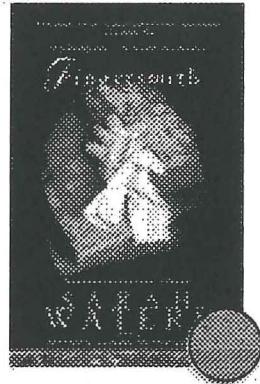
Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Herland Book Club

The Herland Book club will meet at 7 pm on Monday, January 5 to discuss *Sisters of the Earth, an Anthology of Women's Prose and Poetry* edited by Lorraine Anderson. Among the writers in this provocative book are Joy Harjo, Susan Griffin, Marjorie Rawlings, China Galland, Willa Cather, Alice Walker, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Rachel Carson, Marge Piercy, Barbara Deming, Paula Gunn Allen, and Ursula Le Guin.

February's book will be *Fingersmith* by Sarah Waters, the award-winning author of *Tipping the Velvet*. *Fingersmith* is the third slice of engrossing lesbian Victoriana from Sarah Waters. Although lighter and more melodramatic in tone than its predecessor, *Affinity*, this hypnotic suspense novel is awash with all manner of gloomy Dickensian leitmotifs: pickpockets, orphans, grim prisons, lunatic asylums, "laughing villains," and, of course, "stolen fortunes and girls made out to be mad."



Herland Supper Club & Game Night

Herland Supper Club will meet at 6 pm on Saturday, January 10th, at Belle Isle Brewery in 50 Penn Place (NW Expressway and Penn). After supper we will go back to Herland for an evening of fun and games. Bring 'em if ya got 'em! For more info, call Ginger at 942-1535.

Herland Hiking

The Herland Hiking Group will have its regular monthly outing to Martin Nature Park, 5000 W. Memorial, at 10 am on Saturday, January 10th. There is also an optional coffee gathering beforehand at Panera's, corner of Memorial & Meridian, at 9:30 am.

Womyn of Color

Womyn of Color group meets the 2nd Sunday of each month. Please email womynofcolor@gay.com or call (405) 842-3464 or (405) 947-7691 for more information.

Native American Women

OKC Two-Spirit Society is having meetings for lesbian and bi-sexual women of Native American descent. Please call the OKC Two-Spirit Hotline number at (405) 317-7283 for information about the next meeting.

Website of the Month

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network

WWW.SLDN.ORG

HERLAND EVENTS CALENDAR

January

- Monday, January 5: Herland Book Club, 7 pm
- Thursday, January 8: IRIS at Swete Cylance in Bricktown, 8 pm. Call 232-5660 for details.
- Saturday, January 10: Herland Hike at Martin Nature Park, 5000 W. Memorial, 10 am
- Saturday, January 10: Herland Supper Club, Belle Isle Brewery, NW Expressway and Penn, 6:00 pm followed by Game Night at Herland, 7:30 pm
- Sunday, January 11: Womyn of Color Meeting, call 842-3464 for details
- Monday, January 12: OGLPC Monthly Meeting at the Center, 2135 NW 39th, 7 pm
- Thursday, January 15: Three Poet Night at Herland, 7 pm
- Saturday, January 17: Miss Brown to You, Gypsy Night Café at First Unitarian Church, NW 13th and Dewey, 7 pm. Donations accepted; food and drink available.
- Sunday, January 18: Herland Potluck, 3 pm, followed by Herland Board Meeting, 4 pm
- Monday, January 19: Martin Luther King Jr. Parade
- Saturday, January 24: Miss Brown to You at Galileo, 3000 N. Paseo, 9 pm to midnight, \$5
- Monday, January 26: State of Our Community, Epworth United Methodist Church, 1901 N Douglas Avenue, 6 pm
- January 30–Feb 1: Southwest Women's Universal Unitarian Women's (SWUWU) Conference, OKC Marriott

February & Beyond

- Monday, February 2: Herland Book Club, 7 pm
- Saturday, February 14: Herland Supper Club goes to Stillwater for OSU Women's Basketball Game
- March 14–20: Second Annual LGBT Health Awareness Week
- May 19–22: Third National Lesbian Health Conference, Chicago, IL

Don't Forget to Support the Voice!

Your contribution is important! Just \$12 a year will help us pay for the \$300+ it costs every month to print and mail the newsletter.

- Enclosed is a contribution for \$ _____
- Please add me to the mailing list for The Voice.
- Please change my address (new address below).

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

LA School punishes 7-year-old for saying gay

Sharon Huff, a steakhouse waitress in Lafayette, La., was at home getting ready for her evening shift last month when she got a call from the assistant principal at Marcus's elementary school. Her second-grader, Marcus McLaurin, had been scolded for saying a bad word to another second-grader, the assistant said, and was told never to use the word again. She could read the details on a school form coming home with Marcus.

Huff spent the next two hours fretting. Could it be a word he had picked up from television, even though she religiously screens his TV viewing? Could it be something he had heard her say?

As soon as Marcus's size-2 high-tops hit the threshold, she pulled the telling piece of paper out of his backpack. Marcus, teacher Terry Bethea had written, "explained to another child that you are gay." The word "gay" was underlined twice. Huff, 27, and living in a relationship with another woman, sunk into a kitchen chair, speechless. She knew her Cajun neighbors would rather talk about crawfish or football than alternative lifestyles. But were school officials so wary of controversy that they were now forbidding children to talk about their families?

It's one thing to tell kids, as many teachers now do, that they cannot insult others with racial slurs or words like "gay." But in Huff's view, Bethea and Nicholas Thomas, the assistant principal at Ernest Gallet Elementary, were not attempting to stop bullying or even preserve political correctness. They meant to stamp out thought and discussion about a way of life. "All Marcus was doing was talking about his family with a friend at recess," Huff said in a telephone interview. "It's like one kid asking another kid why he doesn't celebrate Christmas and the second kid saying, 'My parents are Jewish.' Would that kid get in trouble?"

Gallet Elementary is a relatively new school in this midsize, southern Louisiana parish, and its 700-plus students surpass the state average on standardized tests. After Huff's story broke in the local newspaper, the Daily Advertiser, yesterday, school administrators remained cloistered into the evening trying to prepare an official response. Gallet principal Virginia Bonvillain told The Washington Post, "I cannot comment on anything regarding a student." She referred questions to the school district's attorney, who did not return phone calls.

Many listeners to Lafayette's top-40 station KSMB-FM sympathized with Marcus, said Bobby Novosad, program manager and morning show host. "Punished for telling the truth," is how one caller put it. "For the big city we're trying to be, we go back a couple of hundred years every now and then," Novosad said.

At first Huff complied with school policy. She signed and returned the student behavior contract that came home that day. She took Marcus to in-school suspension the following week as requested, an hour-long class beginning at 6:45 a.m. where he was forced to write several times, "I will never use the word 'gay' in school again." She didn't contact school officials. "I was afraid I might blow up and say things that were ugly. I wanted to be a good example to Marcus," she said.

On the advice of friends, she eventually contacted the American Civil Liberties Union, which sent a letter to the school demanding that officials apologize to Huff and Marcus and expunge the boy's disciplinary record. "This case is really beyond the pale," said Ken Choe, a staff attorney in the ACLU's Washington office who has handled many student- and gay-rights cases. "You can't censor children talking, as long as it's not creating a major disruption to the school environment. [Marcus] wasn't talking about sexual acts. His remark was about as innocuous as you can get." The school violated Marcus's constitutional right to equal protection under the law, as well as his right to free expression, Choe said, noting that the boy with whom Marcus chatted, who lives with heterosexual parents, was not disciplined.

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The Voice is published by Herland Sister Resources, Inc. 2312 NW 39th, Oklahoma City, OK 73112. The Voice is offered as an open forum for community discourse. Articles reflect the opinions of the author and not necessarily those of Herland Sister Resources. Unsolicited articles and letters to the editor are welcomed and must be signed by the writer with full name and address. Upon request, letters or articles may be printed under a pseudonym or anonymously. Subscriptions to The Voice are free upon request although a donation is requested to meet publication and distribution costs.

Long Live the Queen!

Queen Elizabeth II of England opened Parliament last month by announcing that Members of Parliament will debate the issue of civil partnerships for same-sex couples in the coming session. In her annual speech, in which she outlines the key bills from the government, the queen said the bill would help increase social justice across England and Wales.

"My government will maintain its commitment to increase equality and social just by bringing forward legislation on the registration of civil partnerships between same-sex couples," she told the House of Lords.

from www.womenenews.org

Officers Denounce Military's "Don't Ask Don't Tell" Policy

Two brigadier generals and a rear admiral, all retired, disclosed that they are gay and denounced the U.S. military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy in interviews with The New York Times.

In a story published by the Times, Army Brig. Generals. Keith Kerr and Virgil Richard and Coast Guard Rear Adm. Alan Steinman said the policy effectively excludes gays from military service and forced them to deceive friends and family. The men were the highest-ranking military officials to disclose their sexual orientation, the Times said.

The Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), a gay rights group that monitors military justice, made the officers available to the newspaper as part of the group's plans to mark a decade since the policy was put in place by President Clinton on November 30, 1993. "Because gays and lesbians are required to serve in silence and in celibacy, the policy is almost impossible to follow," Steinman told the Times. "It has been effectively a ban." He said he did not tell his family he was gay until after he retired in 1997. Richard, who retired in 1991, said no one knew he was gay during his 32 years of military service. "I suppressed my desires, and didn't allow myself to be who I am because there was too much at stake," Richard said in his interview with the newspaper.

SLDN said nearly 10,000 men and women have been discharged from the military for being gay under "don't ask, don't tell." C. Dixon Osburn, Executive Director of SLDN, praised Generals Kerr and Richard and Admiral Steinman for their courage. "This is a significant occasion for the military community," Osburn said. "As Col. Margarethe Cammermeyer, USA (Ret.), Ellen DeGeneres and Martina Navratilova tore down barriers in their respective fields, these men provide similar inspiration for lesbian, gay and bisexual Americans serving our country. They provide irrefutable evidence that our community makes important, lasting contributions to our armed forces. Our nation should salute them for their service, their honesty and their courage."

The three officers also joined thirteen other retired senior military leaders in issuing a statement condemning the military's gay ban. "There is one inescapable conclusion - 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' does not work and should be repealed," they said. The statement goes on to say that, "Today, no credible evidence exists to support a continued ban. Indeed, all studies, including those commissioned by the Pentagon, have come to that conclusion."

Those endorsing the statement include former Assistant Secretary of Defense Lawrence Korb; Major General Vance Coleman, USA (Ret.); Captain Mike Rankin, USNR (Ret.); Col. Eugene A. "Andy" Leonard, USA (Ret.); MCPOCG Vincent W. Patton III, USCG (Ret.); Rear Admiral John Hutson, USN (Ret.) and Col. Margarethe Cammermeyer, USA (Ret.), among others.

Women's History Sites

Next time you plan your road trip or any vacation, don't leave home without checking out the National Collaborative for Women's History Sites - www.ncwhs.oah.org. Instead of visiting battlefields and admiring statues of warriors, you can plot your trip to take in The Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, N.Y., a cluster of early suffragists' homes and the Wesleyan Chapel where they met in 1848 to proclaim women's rights in the "Declaration of Sentiments." You can wander in Philadelphia's 1843 Fair Hill Burial Ground, the resting place of many prominent Quaker abolitionists and suffragists, including Lucretia Mott. This cemetery was so overgrown with weeds and littered with car parts and trash that few of its inner city neighbors knew it was a cemetery before NCWHS adopted it.

On your trip, stop by the Alice Paul Institute at Paulsdale, the Mt. Laurel, N.J., home of the suffragist author of the Equal Rights Amendment; the Pearl S. Buck House, Perkasie, Pennsylvania; the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House, Washington, DC; the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, Chicago; and while you're at Arlington Cemetery, you'll know to take in the Women In Military Service For America Memorial.

NCWHS supports and promotes the preservation and interpretation of sites and locales that bear witness to women's participation in American life. The Collaborative makes women's contributions to history visible so that all women's experiences and potential are fully valued. Its goals include to identify and preserve all places associated with women's history in America; support and sustain member sites and organizations by sharing resources and information; promote and interpret history so that present and future generations understand women's integral role in history, and support their full inclusion in American life.

On Sale Now at Herland

In case Santa Claus forgot to bring you Mary Reynolds' or Louise Goldberg's newest CD's, "Ohthree" - often called *Puppy and Here*, stop by Herland any Saturday; we are proud to have them on sale here. We also have *Dustbowl Lullaby*, Peggy Johnson's *Pearls*, Wende Allyn's *Catalina Days*, FreeFall's *Dreaming Deeply*, and CD's by Nancy Scott, Emily Kaitz, and many others.

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