

# HerlandVoice

volume twenty-four number five

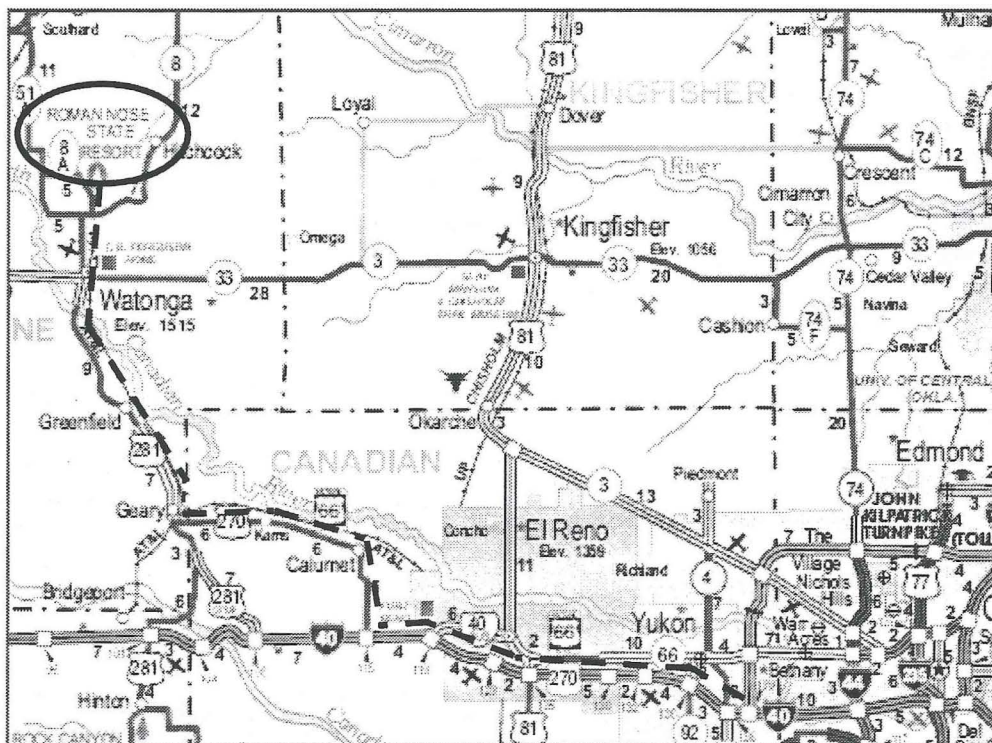
may • 2006

## make plans for fun! herland spring retreat

Plans are really shaping up for Herland's Spring Retreat to be held on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, May 19-21, at Roman Nose State Park. Bring your dog and plan on entering Fido in the doggie contests—like Best Tail Wag, Best Kiss, Best Trick, etc. We'll also be decorating kites and giving a prize for the best-looking and best-flying kites. Other activities planned include little red wagon races, open mic, and game tournaments.

Entertainment on Saturday evening will be provided by Mary Reynolds and her band. A talented songwriter, classically trained vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist, Mary can call upon an eclectic repertoire of traditional material and American popular songs. Mary's first solo CD, "Patience" was released in April 1998 to great enthusiasm from audiences and public radio, appearing on several "Recommended" and "Best of the Year" lists. Mary lives in Oklahoma City, where she continues to play with the jazz band Miss Brown to You and the vocal group The Sisters of Swing, along with other projects in traditional, country, jazz & pop music.

The retreat starts 5 pm Friday evening and continues to Sunday at noon. We provide most meals but bring something for the Saturday evening potluck. See the registration form on page 3 and visit our website for more details.



Map to Retreat at Roman Nose State Park (Group Camp)

## thanks to our work day volunteers!

Herland had probably our best work day ever—at least in recent memory—last month. Maybe it was the cookout and games afterward that enticed so many volunteers. Whatever the reason for the large turnout, we truly appreciate all the help from our volunteers.

Volunteers from UCO's Big Event—Amy, Ashley, and Caitlin proved to be quite adept at raking leaves and cleaning flower beds. Chris mowed the lawn. Joann and Margy hauled off the old refrigerator and broken back step and then put up trim in the kitchen. Hanke scraped and painted the garage door. Jane and Nancy raked leaves and cleaned flower beds. Dominique, Cheryl, and Laura trimmed bushes and raked leaves. Ginger repainted the ramp rails.

Many thanks to all our great volunteers. Herland looks great!

## may 2006 events

PFLAG Tuesday May 2nd at  
Church of the Open Arms 7 pm

Inlaws & Outlaws (Free Special  
Advance Screening of Movie)  
Friday May 5th at Church of the  
Open Arms 7 pm

Herland Supper Club Saturday  
May 13th 5 pm at Olive Gar-  
den followed by OKC Lightning  
Football Game at Taft Stadium 7  
pm

Miss Brown to You Thursday  
May 12th at UCO Jazz Lab 8:00  
pm \$7

OGLPC Monthly Meeting Mon-  
day May 8th at Neighborhood  
Alliance 7 pm

Herland Video Night Saturday  
May 6th 7 pm

Herland Board Meeting Sunday  
May 14th 4 pm

Mary and Louise Friday May  
19th Full Circle Bookstore 7-9  
pm

Art Night Fundraiser for CARE  
Team Church of the Open Arms  
7 pm

Herland Spring Retreat May 19-  
21 Roman Nose State Park

Annual State Conference Okla-  
homa Coalition Against Domes-  
tic Violence and Sexual Assault  
June 7-9 Holiday Inn Norman

## supper club

The OKC Lightning Women's football team has started the new season. We have one of the best teams in the league and they have made it to the playoffs for the past three years. For this month's supper club, we are going to eat at the Olive Garden, 1844 NW Expressway, at 5 pm and then go to the Lightning's game at Taft Stadium. The game starts at 7:05 and Taft is located at NW 23rd & May. Meet at Herland at 4:30 pm if you would like to carpool.

## L word video night

On Saturday, May 6th, 7 pm, we will watch the seventh and eighth episodes of *the L word, Season 3*.

In the last two episodes, Jenny's girlfriend Moira/Max has had an awakening of sorts—she is starting to think about a sex change and has asked Billie (the Planet's manager) to help her get male hormones. Bette has a job offer with the Whitney which would require a move to New York. Tina doesn't know if she wants to go and is in fact questioning her desire to be in a relationship with Bette (or any woman for that matter since she is attracted to a male co-worker right now). Alice dated a lesbian vampire and is now finally getting over Dana. Dana's lump in her breast did turn out to be cancer and she had a mastectomy without telling her friends the true nature of her surgery. Dana's partner, Lara, called them and told them what was going on and they all showed up at the hospital after the surgery. Shane and Carmen had some difficulties and Shane slept with ex-flame Cherie who showed up out of the blue. Carmen freaked but they are working things out now. Join us for another two episodes of America's best lesbian soap opera.

## L word, season 2 dvd raffle

As a fundraiser, Herland is raffling off a brand-new box set of the L word, Season 2 DVDs. Raffle tickets will be sold at the Spring Retreat and at Herland until August 19. Then, at the last showing of the L word for this season on August 19, we will draw a ticket and announce the winner. Tickets are \$1 a piece or 6 for \$5.

## scrabble games

Come out to the Retreat for the day (Saturday, May 20) and join in the Scrabble games to be played there. There will be great competition and you can stay for the potluck at 6 pm and concert at 8 pm. All for a measly \$10 if you stay only through the concert, or \$25 if you stay the night also. Roman Nose is only about an hour and a half drive from OKC (see map on page 1.)

website of the month

[www.equalityride.com](http://www.equalityride.com)

# clip these out!

(Think about it. You probably want to clip out every one of these and mail them in to Herland.)

## Herland Spring Retreat Registration Form Roman Nose State Park, May 19-21, 2006

Deadline for pre-registration is May 15. Please remember that dogs are welcome but must remain on leashes and are not allowed in the dining hall.

Registration fee enclosed (payable to Herland):

\$15  \$25  \$35  \$45  \$60

Saturday only (includes concert & one night stay) - \$25

Concert only - \$10

Sliding Scale Pre-Registration		
Single Person Annual Income	Household Annual Income	Registration per person
under \$6,500	under \$13,300	\$15
\$6,500-\$13,300	\$13,300-\$18,000	\$25
\$13,300-\$19,500	\$18,000-\$26,000	\$35
\$19,500-\$30,000	\$26,000-\$50,000	\$45
over \$30,000	over \$50,000	\$60

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

- I need a scholarship to attend.
- I'm enclosing an additional \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help provide scholarships.
- I'm bringing \_\_\_\_\_ children (girls of all ages and boys under age 10 are welcome).

Please return registration form and check to: Herland Sister Resources, 2312 NW 39th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73112. A retreat packet with all information will be sent to you.

*thank you for your gift!*

Name .....

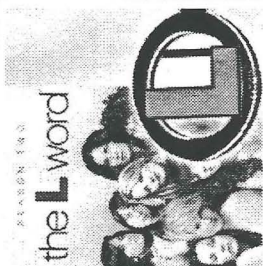
Street .....

City ..... State ..... Zip .....

Your contribution is important! Just \$15 a year will help us pay for the \$350+ that it costs every month to print and mail the newsletter. Herland is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. Your contribution is deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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

Please mail to: Herland, 2312 NW 39th, OKC, OK 73112.



Season 2 DVD set

the L word

Raffle Ticket

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Tickets are \$1 each or five for \$6. Please mail or bring to Herland, 2312 NW 39th, OKC, OK 73112. Drawing to be held August 19.



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# soulforce equality ride: jen's story

By Jen Ham—Soulforce Freedom Rider

*Editor's Note: Church of the Open Arms hosted the Soulforce Freedom Riders on Wednesday, March 22, 2006. Several of the Freedom Riders spoke that evening about their own personal experiences and why they had joined the 7-week ride to confront colleges that ban the enrollment of glbt students. This is the story of one of the Freedom Riders.*

I was six years old. I sat on our brown carpet; my mother sat behind me on the couch. She was watching "Star Trek: The Next Generation." I would rather be watching cartoons. Suddenly, Counselor Troi comes on screen. I think, "Wow, she is pretty. When I grow up, I'm going to marry her." I didn't know I couldn't marry a woman, but I did know that I had just become a "Star Trek" fan for life.

I was eight years old. My friend Shannon and I are playing house—I am the husband and she is the wife. She tells me her parents kiss each other, and she leans over and gives me a little smooch. I think, "Maybe if things don't work out with Counselor Troi, I'll marry my Shannon."

I was ten years old. Up the street lives the most beautiful girl in the world—Selena, my first love. It begins to occur to me that I am somehow different from most of my friends. I am the only person in my circle of friends who doesn't have a "boyfriend." That doesn't bother me, because I don't really want one. I have two good boy friends, but I don't want to date them; I just want to play video games and baseball with them.

I was eleven years old, and a touchy-feely type of kid. I hug everyone until the day my friend Tanea says I must be a lesbian because of that. I'm not sure what a lesbian is, but from the way she said it, I knew it couldn't be good. To make sure no one ever thinks I am a lesbian ever again, I stop hugging people. In fact, I'd rather just not touch anyone in any way, just to be on the safe side.

I was twelve years old. I have just learned in church that God sends homosexuals to Hell. I don't know what a homosexual is, but I am glad that I'm not one. Soon, I get tired of having so many questions about the Bible go unanswered to my satisfaction. I quit attending church and call myself an atheist.

I was fourteen years old, and just moved to the other side of the state. Everyday in high school is a constant stream of insults: "fag," "dyke," "homo." I wonder if "homo" is tied to "homosexuals," which I've been told go to hell. I look up the word. The whole world freezes as the light bulb in my head goes off: "Oh, man, I am homosexual!" The book goes back on the shelf and I make a conscious choice to never acknowledge that I am homosexual. Later that year I start dating a boy, Brandan. Nothing feels more unnatural to me than to kiss him, but I think that I have to play the part lest people figure out my secret.

I was fifteen years old. A boy who went to my school has just transferred—he did not hide his homosexuality, and endured vicious harassment for it. As for me, I hide mine

by being cruel behind the backs of other gay students. I tell my friends when the subject comes up that gay people are evil, that they are not even human. My friend Heather fights with me about it and tells me, "You know, Jen, the people who hate gays the most always turn out to be gay themselves."

I was sixteen years old. Matthew Shepard's murder is in the news. I am visiting my grandmother, in her kitchen watching the news. When Matthew Shepard comes up, Oma says, "I don't know why anyone would ever claim that gay people choose to be gay. Look at that poor boy—he didn't ask to be beaten and tied to a fence. People that say gay people make a choice to be gay make me so angry because they just don't get it."

I was seventeen years old. I hide pictures of Kate Winslet next to my bed underneath pictures of Leonardo DiCaprio. Being so hateful toward gay people—and toward myself—takes a lot of energy. Hiding makes me tired. I am so angry all the time, and my soul feels like it is missing a vital piece. I sometimes look in the mirror and say "I am not gay," over and over again. I know it's not true, so I take razors and cut up my arms and legs so that I can focus on physical pain instead. I try suicide once, but didn't know to slice the wrist vertically. I try it again, but the torn bed sheet noose rips; I figure that death is just not what fate has in mind for me.

I was eighteen years old. I am in college now, and I even have some gay friends. By February, my secret is too much to bear. I realize I have two options: admit my sexuality or kill myself. I remember what Oma said and I remember how much I have hurt myself already. I choose life. I tell my friend Meghan that I am gay and she asks how I feel. I can only think of one word: "Liberated." Later that year, I write a long letter to my parents explaining that I could not keep this secret anymore. They call me to tell me that the house they are building will no longer have a room for me in it because they don't want me to make my brothers gay. They also tell me that since I made such a choice, I would now have to pay for college myself.

I was nineteen years old. I am walking through campus on my way to 7/11—I am running low on cigarettes. I had recently purchased a small pin, a pink triangle, the symbol the Nazis used to identify queers in concentration camps. Oblivious to all else, I am humming a Dave Matthews Band song. I hear someone yell "DYKE!" Instinctively I turn, just in time to see spit flying through the air. It lands on my shoe. Three guys are laughing—it's just me and them in the area. My first hate crime; I am terrified

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and pick up the pace. That incident sends me on a path of activism.

I am twenty-one years old. I have a girlfriend named Joanna. I feel at home in her arms, and nothing feels more natural than kissing her. We move in together, we adopt two kittens, and I no longer feel as if something is missing. Her parents are amazing, but I think they are kind of surprised to learn how utterly normal we are. So normal, in fact, that most of our friends refer to us as "the married couple." I want to marry her, but my state doesn't allow it yet. I hope that someday my country will treat me equally, because it's hard enough to convince Joanna that we don't need to move to England as it is.

The LGBTQ students of Lee University are brave, because their strong Christian faith leads them to remain on their campus and bear the brunt of anti-gay policies. They need those of us on the outside to give them some space to breathe and to be reassured that they are not alone in their struggle. They need a strong alternative to the reparative therapy that is offered to them repeatedly. Until they have such resources to assist their survival, I remain fearful for their well-being. I move forward on the Equality Ride with a greater urgency for more dialogue with students attending schools with antigay policies. I want them to come to know that God created them with an unalterable gift, not a sickness. I feel driven to provide tangible resources that can prevent the further torment of those living with a minority sexual orientation.

*The Voice is published monthly 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. Herland reserves the right to edit or not publish any article. Subscriptions to The Voice are free upon request although a donation is requested to meet publication and distribution costs.*

## **Oklahoma City Lightning 2006 Schedule**

**April 15<sup>th</sup> Shreveport ShockHers - Home**



**April 22<sup>nd</sup> Dallas Rage - Away**



**May 6<sup>th</sup> Austin Outlaws - Away**



**May 13<sup>th</sup> St. Louis Slam - Home**



**May 20<sup>th</sup> Shreveport ShockHers - Away**



**May 27<sup>th</sup> Dallas Rage - Home**



**June 10<sup>th</sup> Austin Outlaws - Home**



**June 17<sup>th</sup> St. Louis Slam - Away**



**Home games are played at Taft Stadium with kickoff at 7:05 p.m.**



# soulforce equality ride: obu update

*The email below is from Lauren Topliffe, an Okla. Baptist University student who was at Church of the Open Arms with the Soulforce Equality Riders. In a Newsweek article about the Equality Riders she came out as a lesbian OBU student. She was asked to write something for the Voice describing what has happened since.*

First, I must apologize for not keeping you all updated like I promised to do. Between the craziness of the time that the Equality Ride was at OBU, trying to handle the backlash from my coming out, and then attempting to stay caught up in my classes this semester, my life has gotten pretty hectic. Thank you to all of you who have written me encouraging emails, called to check on me, and been thinking about and praying for the Equality Riders and the GLBT students at OBU. You are greatly appreciated. I want to let you know that I have been completely overwhelmed with the outpouring of love and support that I have been shown over the past few months.

Here is a very general, brief update. If anyone has further questions or comments, please email me and I will be

happy to talk about any of this in more detail.

The Equality Ride's visit to OBU was very positive. The administration made huge steps forward by allowing the Equality Riders on campus in the lower GC (student center) to have discussions with students, talk about the experiences of GLBT students at OBU, discuss the Bible and what it says (and doesn't say) about homosexuality, and sing worship. It was an incredibly powerful experience. Many students showed up to be a part of that discussion, which was encouraging. OBU did closely monitor which media they allowed on campus, and kept a very strong presence in those discussions and interviews. The Riders had many restrictions placed on them, and did their best to work within those limitations. They changed their plans slightly in order to be gracious guests on the campus and show that they were seeking dialogue rather than conflict. Although I found a few of the Equality Ride's decisions frustrating, I definitely feel that the Equality Ride's presence at OBU had a powerful, positive effect and pushed the students and administration towards change.

There were many GLBT students on campus who were experiencing our community in this way for the first time, and watching them interact with gay people

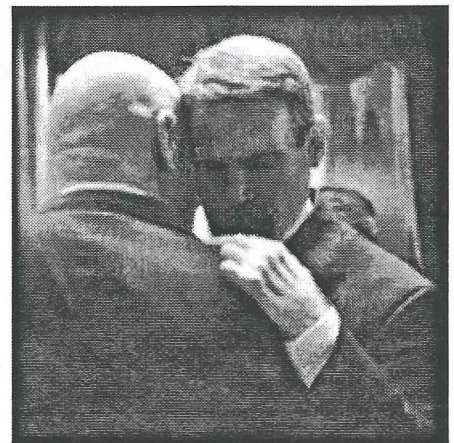
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## Inlaws & OUTLAWS

Special Advance Screening - Free!  
Friday, May 5th, 7 pm COA 3131 N. Penn

Marriage from the inside. And out.

It's here! As the gay marriage debate rages on, this new documentary by Drew Emery goes beyond the rhetoric to explore just what it means to be married. From a time when marriage was expected of virtually everybody, to today when the very definition is in question, this film reveals the extraordinary stories of couples and ex's, friends and lovers, all pursuing the same simple dream. Whether loving inside or outside of marriage, struggling to get in or suing to get out, we follow the lives of ordinary folks as they figure out their own path to happily ever after -- with more than a few surprises along the way.



*(Continued from previous page)*

who told them that they (the GLBT students) are acceptable just as they are was transformational for me. It reinforced in me just how much we need to make ourselves available and out. This has been the main thing that I have taken from the experience and challenge myself with as I go into the day. The way that I am viewed on campus has changed, and I am trying to remember that I am probably being watched. I have used those students who experienced safety in who they are, maybe for the first time, as motivation to spend time on campus when it would be easier to go somewhere safe and hide out, and continue to hold my head up without apology for who I am and what I stand for.

GLBT issues have continued to be a major theme on campus over this past month. Every week since the end of February there has been at least one article in the school newspaper about something related to the Equality Ride or the administration's response to the Newsweek article (which focused on the Equality Ride's time at OBU).

Scott Jones, pastor of Cathedral of Hope in OKC, is coming to Shawnee once a week and leading a discussion/Bible study with whoever wants to attend. Our first meeting was held on campus and attended by mostly straight students wanting to discuss the scriptures often used to condemn homosexuality. Scott handled himself and that discussion quite impressively. The second meeting was attended by mostly gay students who were needing encouragement and time to safely relax and be themselves, and so that is exactly what we did.

Now, about the policy. OBU went into the Equality Ride defending their policy and stating that it was based on scriptural truths. They were not willing to compromise. However, their actions have spoken otherwise. It has been decided that my coming out in Newsweek is NOT in violation of the Human Sexuality policy and, therefore, no action will be taken against me. Coming out is no longer unacceptable at OBU. "Practicing or promoting" does not include coming out. Yesterday I received some really encouraging news. There is an OBU student who has spent the last 5 semesters in "reparative therapy" because she refuses to say that she is straight to be released from the mandatory counseling. She approached the woman who has provided her counseling during their last session and told her that she was not going to go to the counseling anymore. If I have not violated the policy, neither has she. There was a discussion among the administration about that, and they decided that she no longer has to attend the reparative therapy.

OBU's harassment and discriminatory harassment policies are going to be my next big focus. I made an official complaint and requested that they change these policies to include sexual orientation. It would be a huge step towards making OBU safer for GLBT students. As the policy is now written, GLBT students have no defense against this type of harassment. If they are harassed, they are not guaranteed protection if they are to report it. It is very possible that the focus would be on their sexual orientation rather than on the harassment. President Brister has made several comments about student safety being his top priority (in regards to the Equality Ride's presence at OBU) and I suggest that we hold him accountable to that statement. The safety of GLBT students is not ensured at OBU right now, and that needs to change. Regardless of the administration's stance on homosexuality, all students have a right to feel safe and go through their college experience without harassment due to their sexual orientation. If you are interested in helping push for this particular change, please let me know and I will contact you when the time comes about what you can do to help.

## **on film: lesbian grandmothers from mars**

From San Francisco to New York City, Elisia and Carrie Ross-Stone – two lesbian grandmothers (from Mars, Pennsylvania) rode 3,800 miles across mountain ranges, through deserts and across prairies, as they struggled through the mud-slinging of election year politics, hateful protests, and even death threats to raise awareness about Equal Civil Marriage rights and to rally support for same-sex marriage.

Tired of all the regressive hate-mongering and motivated by the threat of a federal anti-marriage amendment, Carrie & Elisia set out to prove that they are not alien life forms who wreak havoc on society and destroy "traditional families." Using their own family as an example, they met face-to-face with politicians and regular folks living in the heartland to show that their life is not so different from the lives of other American families.

Some of the highlights (and lowlights) included: a warm greeting from the mayor of Salt Lake City, Utah; an emotional protest outside the office of Colorado Representative Marilyn Musgrave (author of the Federal Marriage Amendment); a visit to the site of Matthew Shephard's death in Laramie, Wyoming; a counter-protest by Fred Phelps in Topeka, Kansas; a bike ride through Manhattan to end the ride before five TV news crews.

Award winning filmmaker, Keith Wilson's documentary is a beautiful film that truly captures the Grannies warmth, humor and insight.

**Herland Sister Resources**

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