

HerlandVoice

volume **twenty-six** number **one**

january 2008

inside

**January Calender of
Events**

**Batchelder Receives
Award**

Retreat Help Needed

Space for Rent

Our Sponsors

Time for True Hate Crimes Legislation in Oklahoma

Steven Domer, a 62-year-old OKC gay man, disappeared from the NW 39th and Penn area on Oct. 26, 2007 and was later found murdered. The Oklahoma County District Attorney, Larry Prater, has charged an alleged white supremacist with the murder. Prater has called it a hate crime because there was no other motivation (e.g., robbery or revenge) for the crime than simply that the murderer wanted to kill a gay person. Allegedly, this murder was committed to earn a badge or patch in the white supremacist group to which the accused belonged. The DA has said that he cannot prosecute this as a hate crime because of the weak hate crimes laws in Oklahoma. Under the current law, a hate crime is a misdemeanor in Oklahoma and sexual orientation is not covered.

The first week of December, community activists and faith leaders gathered in a press conference, a candlelight vigil, and an interfaith worship service to remember Steven Domer and draw attention to the issue of violence against lgbt people. Harry Knox, Director of Religion and Faith for the Human Rights Campaign, Washington DC, was the key-note speaker at the interfaith service. It was felt by many that we must continue the cause, and that we should work together in a concentrated effort to bring meaningful hate crimes legislation to Oklahoma.

(continued on page 3)

Reschedule of SuZ Ogden for January Herland Winter Coffeehouse

Due to the inclement weather, the December Herland Winter Coffeehouse had to be cancelled. We have rescheduled the evening of musical inspiration with SuZ Ogden for 7 pm on **Saturday, January 19, 2007**. And we promise to have heat!

In her celebration of Life, SuZ travels the world sharing her gift as a vivacious speaker/singer/songwriter whose spirit weaves through her message and her music. Her experience with blues, folk, country, gospel, and honky-tonk music has evolved to create a sound she calls "Angeltonk". Come experience it for yourself! This event is free, but all donations are greatly appreciated.



January Events

•Tuesday January 1 Herland New Year's Day Open House & Potluck 1 pm

•Saturday January 5 Herland Scrabble Day 2 pm

•Tuesday Jan 8 PFLAG OKC Church of the Open Arms 7 pm

•Thursday Jan 10 PFLAG Norman St Stephen's Church 7 pm

•Saturday January 12 Herland Supper Club at Adobe Grill, 5120 N Shartel, 5:30 pm, followed by Bowling at 66 Bowl, 3810 NW 39, 7:30 pm

•Monday Jan 14 OGLPC Meeting Neighborhood Alliance 7:30 pm

•Saturday January 19 Herland Winter Coffeehouse 7 pm

•Sunday January 20 Herland Board Meeting 4 pm everyone welcome (eat at Gushers afterward)

•Saturday January 26 Herland Book Sale & Swap 1 to 5 pm

Herland New Year's Potluck

Ring in the new year and eat some good food, too, on **Saturday, January 1**, at 1 pm. We'll have black-eyed peas, cornbread, cabbage, and lots of other goodies. Come by for a visit and start a brand new year with good old friends.

Herland Scrabble Day

Herland Scrabble Day starts off the new year on **Saturday, January 5**, at 2 pm. Put your brain cells through a good workout and enjoy some good company at the same time. Players of all levels welcome. And, to practice your vocabulary ahead of time, visit www.freerice.com.

Herland Supper Club

Join us on **Saturday, January 12**, at 5:30 pm for the Herland Supper Club at Adobe Grill, 5120 N. Shartel, where you will elevate yourself to a new level of taste for Mexican food. Explore your senses while experiencing the finest in Mexican gourmet. Simplicity combined with attention to detail turns the most basic ingredients into flavors not forgotten. After Supper Club, at 7:30 pm, we will head to 66 Bowl, 3810 NW 39th for a few games of bowling. Bring your funky bowling shoes or rent them there and show us your best bowling technique!

Herland Book Sale & Swap

As we told you last month, we'd really like to move some of these used books off our shelves and into your hands. Don't miss our huge sale and swap of used books on **Saturday, January 26**, starting at 1 pm. Bring in a few that you have already read and swap each of them for two of ours. Or, buy ours at 50 cents a piece. This is a deal like no other and it only lasts for one day.

Retreat Help Needed!

We've been looking at our retreat schedule for next year and realized we need some help. We are debating whether to hold one or two retreats and either way we need volunteers to help run them this year. If you can volunteer to be an assistant camp director, the cook for one or two mornings, or anything else, please email us at herland@herlandsisters.org and let us know.

Space Available for Rent

The Herland Bookstore is available to rent for small meetings or events. Inquire by email at herland@herlandsisters.org or call Ginger at 550-0040.

The Voice is published monthly by Herland Sister Resources, Inc. 2312 NW 39th, OKC, 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 dona-

Enhanced Hate Crimes Legislation Efforts *(continued from page 1)*

Representative Al McAffrey is now working with the district attorney's office to write an amendment to Oklahoma's hate crimes law that would strengthen it by making a hate crime a felony and including gender and sexual orientation in the law. Attorney General Drew Edmondson has also voiced support for such a move in the past. Strengthening our hate crimes law would allow a DA to file charges for a hate crime in addition to other crimes such as assault and battery or murder. That way if the jury did not convict on one charge, there would still be a chance to convict them on the hate crime.

Leaders of LGBT and other human rights organizations from around the state gathered for a meeting on Sunday, December 16, to discuss the new hate crimes legislation and how to support that initiative. The meeting was a time for community leaders to hear from Rep. McAffrey on the legislative effort and then to strategize on how to proceed. A larger, open community forum will be held in January or February to recruit a broad base of support and involvement.

Noting that Oklahoma has a "tolerance for intolerance" participants at the Dec. 16th meeting feel it is important to bring in other groups that would be allied with this anti-violence effort. Community education will be an important part of the effort. (The Daily Oklahoman has already denounced the efforts to enhance Oklahoma's hate crimes law, saying it would value some victims more than others.) Some of the key points for education include:

- The motive of a hate crime is to instill fear in a group or class of people and for this reason, a higher or additional penalty is warranted.
- Hate crime laws do not apply to freedom of speech or expression which is guaranteed by the Constitution and also specifically protected by the Matthew Sheppard Act.
- Hate crimes based on sexual orientation are the third most reported category to the FBI, after race and religion.

Batchelder Receives Okla. Human Rights Award

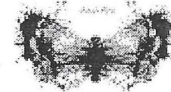
The annual Oklahoma Human Rights Commission Awards were presented on Friday, December 7th, 2007 at a public ceremony in the State House of Representatives Chambers at the State Capitol. The awards were presented to Peace House Director Nathaniel Batchelder, University of Oklahoma law school Dean Andrew Coats, and former US Ambassador Edward Perkins.

The award recognizes individuals' human rights contributions to Oklahoma citizens or their national or international human rights accomplishments.

Batchelder is credited with being the founder of the Central Oklahoma Human Rights Alliance as well as the editor of the Oklahoma Peace Strategy newspaper. An Oklahoma City resident, Batchelder has worked on bringing attention to a variety of human rights concerns in Oklahoma.

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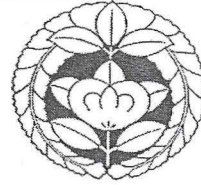


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Rissho Kosei Kai
Dharma Center
of
Oklahoma

"In the home and at the workplace,
when our opinion differs from another person's
and we insist upon our own way of thinking
and want to make the other person accept it,
we can end up in a contest of wills...

We must put our minds together
on the broader perspective
and not lose sight of our goal."

-Nichiko Niwano

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