

Serving the womyn's  
community  
since 1983

# Herland Voice

volume twenty-seven number twelve

[www.herlandsisters.org](http://www.herlandsisters.org)

december 2009

## Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2009 (ENDA)

Source: [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org)

Over the years, Congress has responded when it found that people were not being hired or promoted for unfair or arbitrary reasons, such as race, gender, national origin, or disability. When Congress has found such discrimination, it passed laws to restore civil rights by ensuring arbitrary considerations do not determine access to employment. We believe such legislation continues to be an essential part of equal protection under the law.

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) offers Congress the opportunity to ensure workplace equality by protecting LGBT workers from employment discrimination. ENDA is pending federal legislation that would ban employment discrimination based on an individual's sexual orientation. The bill protects workers from discriminatory hiring, firing, promotion or compensation practices, as well as retaliation for reporting such practices.

There are no federal laws outlawing employment discrimination against LGBT Americans. In fact, it still remains legal to discriminate against someone based on sexual orientation in 30 states and based on gender identity in 38 states. In these states, LGBT people are still at risk of being harassed, fired, and denied employment or promotion in the workplace.

The House and Senate have both introduced the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2009 (ENDA) that would extend federal employment discrimination

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### Herland Events

#### December

**Saturday Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>:** Herland Supper Club - Potluck and Holiday Party at 5:30 at Herland. Bring a potluck dish and a white elephant gift and join us for an evening of fun and friends.

**Sunday Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> 4 pm:** Herland Board Meeting, all are welcome. Dinner at Gushers afterwards.

**Monday Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>:** deadline for submission of newsletter articles, poems, cartoons to the "Voice". Email submissions to [herland@herlandsisters.org](mailto:herland@herlandsisters.org)

#### January

**Friday Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>:** Herland New Year's Day Potluck from 1-4 pm at Herland.

**Saturday Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>:** Herland Supper Club at 5:30 Cattleman's Steakhouse, 1309 S Agnew, followed by games at Herland.

## Training Rules—A Women Vision Film

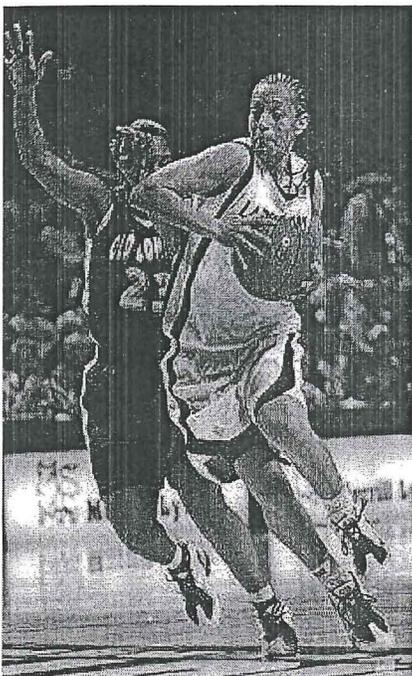


Photo Credit: Centre Daily Times

At age three Jen Harris was running track against eight year olds -and winning. Towards the end of 5th grade she received her first recruitment letter from a college basketball program. By 9th grade she had received well over 250 recruitment letters from universities nation wide. In 2003, Jen graduated from Central Dauphin high school with academic honors. She is still the most decorated basketball player in the high school's history. Out of all the universities she could have chosen, she accepted an athletic scholarship from Pennsylvania State University and began playing basketball for the Lady Lions. A year and a half later, in March 2005, she was summarily dismissed from the team. Had she been allowed to move into her junior year, she would have been the team's leading scorer.

When Jennifer entered Penn State Rene Portland, the Lady Lions basketball coach, had already been coaching for 23 years. During that same 23 years she made no secret of her training rules - no drugs, no drinking and no lesbians. Her intention, as stated to the Chicago Sun Times in 1986 and the Philadelphia Inquirer in 1991, was to take the stigma of lesbianism out of women's sports.

Portland used tactics that were deemed "intimidating, hostile and offensive" against Jennifer when she was a Lady Lion. The indignities and ostracism that followed her dismissal resulted in depression and thoughts of suicide. Jennifer was resolute that this treatment would befall no other student athlete. In 2006 she decided to take legal action. The advocacy organization, The National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), determined that this case was emblematic of a pervasive and stifling homophobic climate in women's collegiate sports and pro-

ceeded to file charges against Portland, athletic director Tim Curley, and Penn State University. The suit alleged discrimination based on perceived sexual orientation, racism and gender stereotyping. At the time, Jennifer had no idea how many others would break their painful silence of decades to share similar stories of abuse and discrimination.

"Training Rules" takes the disturbing facts of the Harris vs. Portland case and personalizes their impact by telling Jennifer's story as well as those of six other women who were victimized through the years. Together they unveil a litany of betrayal, abuse, humiliation and bigotry. Softball coach Sue Rankin, whose activism contributed to passing the 1992 inclusion of sexual orientation into Penn State's non-discrimination policy, was pressured by the athletic department to disengage from her activities. Her outspokenness precipitated a decline in her coaching evaluations. Each of these young athletes was at the top of her game when she was dismissed. Sue Rankin's coaching evaluations had been excellent.

Although Jen's story of harassment and dismissal repeats itself with remarkable consistency among other basketball players at her school, this is a tale told not just at Penn State, but also at universities and colleges across the country. Rene Portland may be a blatant example of homophobia in women's sports, but she is NOT the only coach who discriminates based on sexual orientation. Penn State is NOT the only university that disregards it's own code of ethics in order to preserve its cash flow.

*Rene Portland  
made no secret  
of her training  
rules - no drugs,  
no drinking and  
no lesbians*



Photo Credit: Nathan A. Smith

How was this allowed to happen? It is well known that Coach Portland, as well as certain other college coaches, discriminate. It is public information. Where were the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) and the university, when coach Portland's unfettered statements of bias were made to the press? If these statements were being made in reference to race, i.e., no drugs, no drinking, no Blacks, Jews, Asians..., how silent would they have been? How has this culture of silence diminished women's sports? What are the consequences to Coach Portland's basketball program at Penn State? Although Rene Portland's career demonstrates an impressive win loss record, she has never won a national title. Can a team living in fear really win it all?

When the last image of Training Rules fades from the screen, some of these questions are answered, others are raised and a tangled web of discrimination is exposed.

## Herland Potluck & Holiday Party

Come to Herland on Saturday December 12 at 5:30 pm for a potluck dinner then stay to celebrate the holiday spirit by exchanging white elephant—or “dirty Santa” - gifts. This is a game where everyone brings a wrapped gift and draws a number. Then the fun really starts. The first person chooses a gift from the gift pile, opens the gift for all to see, and keeps it for the time being. The next person can either choose to take an unopened gift from the gift pile or steal a gift from any previous gift opener. If at any time a person's gift is stolen, that person can immediately unwrap a new gift or steal another person's gift. The game keeps going till you get to the end. You can choose to bring something fun from around the house and wrap it or buy a gift to bring, but please spend no more than \$5-\$10 tops. This game is tons of fun as people steal, trade, and barter for what they want.

## Herland New Year's Day Potluck

Start the new year off right with a potluck dinner and games at Herland on Friday, January 1, from 1 to 4 pm. We will provide a pot of chili and the traditional dishes of cabbage and black-eyed peas. Bring a dessert or another side and help us ring in the new year.

## ENDA

*Continued from page 1*

protections currently provided based on race, religion, sex, national origin, age and disability to sexual orientation and gender identity.

For far too long, qualified, hard-working people in the American workforce have been denied employment, fired, or otherwise discriminated against because of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

Visit [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org) for more information.

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The Herland 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.



## Community Events

### December

Thursday Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> 7 pm: PFLAG  
Norman at St. Stephen's United  
Methodist Church 1801 W. Brooks  
(McGee & Brooks) Norman, OK

Saturday Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> 2 and 7 pm:  
Sisters of Swing Christmas Show  
at Saint John's 5201 N Brookline \$5

Thursday Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> 12:30 pm:  
Stringents Downtown OKC Library  
(Christmas and rock music)

Sunday Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> 2 pm:  
Stringents at Belle Isle Library  
(Christmas music)

Friday Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> 7 pm:  
Stringents at Full Circle Bookstore  
(Rock music)

Sunday Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> 2 pm:  
Stringents at Full Circle Bookstore  
(Classical music)

Monday Dec. 21<sup>st</sup> 7 pm:  
Stringents Christmas Show  
at the Blue Door \$5  
(Christmas and rock music)

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