

Serving the womyn's
community
since 1983

Herland Voice

volume thirty number two

www.herlandsisters.org

April 2012

Herland Spring Retreat at Roman Nose State Park

May 18-20, 2012

Do you have a case of SPRING FEVER? Has it been a while since you spent an entire weekend RELAXING and HAVING FUN with FRIENDS? Are you ready for some AMAZING MUSIC, YUMMY FOOD, and the freedom to DO WHATEVER YOU WANT for the weekend? Well, we have just the event for you! The Herland Spring Retreat will be at Roman Nose State Park (near Watonga), Friday, May 18 to Sunday, May 20!

For those of you that have never been to a Herland retreat, or those that can't remember the last retreat they attended... come on and have some fun! Whether you come solo or with a group of friends, the weekend is a perfect, affordable opportunity to meet new friends, catch up with old friends, explore nature, learn something new at a workshop, or simply take it easy in an incredibly supportive, women-only environment.



As usual, your registration includes lodging for both nights, supper when you arrive Friday evening, Saturday and Sunday scrumptious breakfasts, and our famous potluck Saturday evening, the Saturday night concert, campfires, and all activities planned throughout the weekend! Our Saturday evening concert will feature the amazing... **ALI HARTER!** Ali

has been a singer/songwriter for almost half of her young life. She is a veteran in the national music scene, having shared the stage with such acts as Dierks Bentley and Miranda Lambert, and having shared festival billing with the likes of The Flaming Lips, Leon Russell, Ben Harper, Tori Amos, PJ Harvey, and The Black Crowes. You can check her out for yourself at www.aliharter.com.

Many of you know Sharlene as a mean (in an awesome way!) harp (harmonica) player. But... bet you didn't know she'll be leading a workshop entitled "How to Understand and Appreciate your Partner." She'll show us how exploration of temperaments and emotional needs will lead to a healthier, happier relationship. Singles and couples are welcome alike. Everyone can benefit from this session. Also - Christa will be leading us in making our very own Goddess Masks! There will also be a group going fly fishing, dancing, campfires, and just about everything else you'd expect from a Herland Retreat.



The Herland Retreat is whatever we make it. Let's make it great!

Since we're only publishing The Voice quarterly, **this is the only notification & registration form you'll receive.** The Registration Form is on Page 3. The deadline for pre-registration (which *really* helps us to know how much food to buy and how many awesome women to expect) is Saturday, May 12th. After you send us your registration form and check, we'll mail you a packet which will include a map, more information about the planned activities, and a list of what you'll want to bring with you. Do yourself a favor, and register now while you're thinking about it! Even if you don't pre-register, we hope you'll still come and join in the fun!

EVENTS AT A GLANCE

Thursdays: Oklahoma City Youth United, 6 pm, Unitarian Church

April

Wednesday, Apr 4: Oklahoma's 3rd Annual LGBT Equality Day at the Capitol, State Capitol, 9 am-2 pm

Thursday, Apr 12: Louise and Mary at UCO Jazz Lab

Saturday, Apr 14: Poetry and Potluck at Herland, 5:30 pm

Saturday, Apr 14: Louise and Mary open for Emma's Revolution at the Blue Door

Friday, Apr 20: Louise and Mary at Cookies n Cards in Norman

Saturday, Apr 21: Oklahoma City's Worldwide LGBT Civil Rights March, start near Bricktown Brewery, 11 am-1 pm

Wednesday, Apr 25: Louise and Mary at Arts Festival 1 pm

Saturday, Apr 28: Herland Clean Up Day, 9:30 am-1 pm

Saturday, Apr 28: Circle of Friends, Partners, 5 pm

May

Saturday, May 12: Herland Supper Club (and Scentsy Party) at Hideaway Pizza, 6616 N. Western, 5:30 pm

May 18-20: Herland Spring Retreat at Roman Nose

May 18-27: OKC Pride Week Activities—see okcpride.org

Sunday, May 20: OKC Pride Parade. Stepoff, 6 pm

May 25-27: Great Plains Rodeo at the State Fairgrounds

June

Saturday, June 9: Herland Stonewall Cookout and Concert with Live Music, 5:30 pm at Herland

Coming This Fall

September: Herland Celebration of Title IX 40th Anniversary

November 9-11: Herland Fall Retreat at Lake Eufaula

supper clubs

April 14—Potluck and Poetry at Herland. We have a lot of talented poets in the area so come out and listen to some at our April Supper Club. Potluck will start at 5:30 p.m. followed by poetry about 7 pm.

May 12—Supper Club and Scentsy Party at Hideaway Pizza, 6616 N Western. Come find out what Scentsy is and why so many people love it. Plus, a portion of any sales will go to benefit Herland. (No obligation to buy any products.) We'll be in the sunroom starting at 5:30 pm.

June 9—Stonewall Cookout and Concert at Herland. We'll be at the Herland Retreat on Pride Weekend so will not have our usual Pride Picnic. To make up for it, we are going to commemorate Stonewall (the beginning of the modern gay rights movement) with a backyard cookout and concert. Food starts at 5:30 pm and music at 6:30 pm. Come hear your favorites!

If you have a restaurant you would like to suggest for a future Herland Supper Club, please email us at herland@herlandsisters.org. We would love to hear your ideas.

herland clean up day

Put on your work gloves and join us on Saturday, April 28, for a morning of cleanup around Herland. If it's raining, we'll be indoors painting and fixing walls. If it's dry, we'll also be outdoors weeding gardens and trimming trees. We'll start about 9:30 a.m. and go till about 1 pm. And, we'll fire up the grill about noon. Please come and help for any part of the morning!



pride week



Pride Week 2012: May 18-27

Proud. Strong. United.

Pride has been moved to our Herland Retreat weekend this year but IF you are staying in town (and we hope you don't!), the festival is on Saturday, May 18 on Sheridan Avenue (downtown). The parade will be Sunday, May 19, with step-off at 6 pm. You can even go to the Herland Retreat and still make it back in plenty of time for the parade!

aids mastery workshops

Northern Lights Alternatives is offering AIDS mastery workshops in June and October 2012. The AIDS Mastery Workshop offers the opportunity to find ways of living well, of opening up new possibilities or rediscovering them. Exploring experiences, hopes and dreams offers a way to live differently empowering you to make positive choices about how to live life with HIV rather than being controlled by it. The result will be the opportunity to live a more powerful life, make better choices and decisions and become part of a support group like no other. The workshop has been life changing for some people.

There is no cost to participants for the three-day workshops held on Friday evening, all day Saturday, and all day Sunday. Dinner is provided Friday and Saturday evening and breakfast and lunch on Saturday and Sunday. Bilingual (Spanish) workshops are available. For more information, visit www.aidsmasteryokc.org.



Herland Spring Retreat 2012 Registration Roman Nose State Park, Watonga, OK May 18-20, 2012

Deadline for pre-registration is May 15th. 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 mailed to you.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Total Registration Fee \$ _____ enclosed.

I'm enclosing an additional \$ _____ to help provide scholarships.

I'm bringing _____ children (girls of all ages and boys under age 10 are welcome).

I'm bringing _____ dogs that will be kept on leashes at all times and I and will sign a waiver stating I am completely responsible for any injury or damage caused by my dog(s).

I have a disability and need the following if possible:

Sliding Scale Registration Fee (for entire weekend)

Annual Income PER PERSON

under \$13,300 - \$30

All Day Saturday - \$25 (includes Concert)

\$13,300-\$30,000 - \$45

Saturday Night Concert Only - \$10

over \$30,000 - \$60

update on break-ins

Dear Herland Friends,

Thanks to all of you, we are recovering from our rash of break-ins. We have completed our steps to beef up security—including installing bars on the back and side windows and door and installing new motion detector lights. If you haven't seen our new bars, we think you'll like them. Our friend, heating and air guy, and security consultant—Scott Jones—painted them pink for us. Thanks, Scott!



A special thanks goes out to all of you who have come forward with extra donations to help us pay for these much needed security measures. We appreciate all of you!

And if some of you would still like to contribute to this effort, we would be grateful for any donation, large or small.

Herland is a nonprofit and your donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law. Our board/staff is entirely volunteer and our annual operating budget is approximately \$11,000. This goes to pay for our newsletter, insurance, utilities, and to put on our monthly and special events.

Please consider a donation, large or small, to Herland this year.

Sincerely,

The Herland Board

coming this fall—40th anniversary celebration of title IX

According to the *Report Card on Gender Equity* put out by the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education, **before** Title IX:

- Female students were not allowed to take certain courses, such as auto mechanics or criminal justice, and male students couldn't take home ec.
- Women faculty members were excluded from faculty clubs and encouraged to join faculty wives' clubs instead.
- After winning two gold medals in the 1964 Olympics, swimmer Donna de Varona could not get a college swimming scholarship because for women they did not exist.
- Most medical and law schools limited the number of women that could be admitted.

Title IX was the first comprehensive federal law to prohibit sex discrimination against students and employees of educational institutions. It was passed by Congress and signed into law by Richard Nixon on July 1, 1972.

Herland will join with other organizations around the country to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Title IX. Watch for more news in upcoming newsletters about our plans.

Thank you for your support!

Name(s)

Street.....

City State Zip

Email Address

Herland is supported primarily by contributions from individuals. If all of our 800 readers would contribute just \$15 a year, that would help us tremendously toward meeting our newsletter costs, monthly utilities, insurance, and building upkeep. Herland is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and exists solely through contributions and the efforts of our volunteers (we have no paid staff). Your contribution is deductible to the extent allowed by law. **Please Contribute Now!!**

Enclosed is a contribution for \$

Please save on postage and send only electronic version to my email address above.

Please add me to the hardcopy mailing list for The Voice.

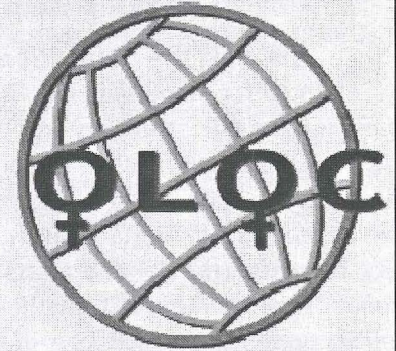
Please change my address (new address above).

Older Lesbians Organizing for Change national gathering

July 19-22 in Boston

The 2012 National Gathering promises to deliver a grand old time for great Old Lesbians (you!) with a varied program conducted in elegant and comfortable quarters. Our theme, "Bridges to Justice: 21st Century Activism," is a part of our response to an impromptu meeting at the end of our 2010 Gathering. It was called to discuss how OLOC could more effectively recognize and challenge racism, classism, and other oppressions within OLOC as well as without. Since that meeting, the Steering Committee has undertaken a number of steps in this direction.

OLOC is a national network of Old Lesbians over age 60 working to make life better for Old Lesbians through support networks and by confronting ageism in our communities and our country using education and public discourse as primary tools. Visit www.oloc.org for more details.



3rd Annual LGBT Equality Day at the Capitol



Wednesday, April 4 | 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Oklahoma State Capitol | 2300 N Lincoln | OKC

Please join The Equality Network, Oklahoma GLBT PAC, HRC members and fair-minded people from across Oklahoma for the 3rd Annual LGBT Equality Day at the Capitol.

Nothing shapes legislators' attitudes more than face-to-face contact with their constituents. We will schedule your meetings with legislators and provide training on how to best interact with lawmakers and discuss LGBT issues in Oklahoma.

Our day will begin with a brief lobbying training session at 9:00 a.m. in Room 108. For more information, contact Laura Belmonte at lbelmonte@theequalitynetwork.org or (918) 906-2134.

EQUALITY ON EARTH

Let's Reach One Million People LGBTQIA Equality Campaign

Oklahoma City's Worldwide LGBT Civil Rights March

Saturday, April 21

Bricktown Brewery, 11 am-1 pm

Equality for ALL peaceful march. We will all meet at 11:00 a.m. and the march will commence at 12:00. The route is going to be that we head East on E Sheridan Ave. to Joe Carter Ave. We will then head south to Johnny Bench Dr. and when we reach Oklahoma Ave. we will head back north to our original destination. The March will last as long as momentum is there and depending on the number of people. Bring all your Peaceful Equality signs. Plan on wearing black or purple shirts. Please visit www.letsreachonemillionpeople.com and <http://thegaylyblogger.blogspot.com>.

The Culture of a Nonprofit: Herland Sister Resources

By Elizabeth G. Brown

Analyzing the culture of an organization provides a useful method for understanding its management practices and learning about its strengths and weaknesses. For this exercise, I've chosen Herland Sister Resources, a small nonprofit organization that has operated in Oklahoma City for almost 30 years. I've taken part in Herland events since I moved to Oklahoma City 10 years ago. Herland exists to "provide resources for the women's community to strengthen, enrich, and support women, and to promote a world free of prejudice, oppression and exploitation". Herland has always had a strong lesbian focus, but all women are welcome. While Herland remains important to its participants and board members, there's been a sense throughout the organization that it is no longer growing and thriving. I decided to examine Herland's organizational culture for clues to both its longevity and its apparent recent decline.

The group has no paid staff and is operated entirely by volunteers. Strictly speaking, the group does not have members, either, but its quarterly newsletter has a subscription list of about 700 individuals and organizations (McGovern 2012). Herland also operates a lending library that is open every Saturday afternoon and sponsors a variety of events.

Herland does not have particular slogans, but its stakeholders often use special **language** to convey their world view. In addition to using nonsexist, non-oppressive language in spoken and written communication, Herlanders use words like "herstory" (instead of "history"), and "she-roes" (instead of "heroes") to create a worldview that honors and celebrates women. The name of the organization itself was taken from the title of an old utopian feminist novel that was rediscovered in the 1970s (Gilman 1979).

A **symbol** is something that stands for something else. Herland's symbols tie the group to larger feminist, lesbian, and gay rights movements. These symbols include the **women's symbol**, (♀), the **labrys**, which is a double-headed axe that symbolizes the moon and is often used to represent lesbian feminist community, and the **rainbow flag**, which is often used as a symbol of the gay community. A rainbow flag is typically displayed outside the building when it is open for business. These symbols are not unique to Herland, but that is precisely their importance. They show that Herland is part of social movements larger than itself.

Besides symbols, there are other **objects** that have great importance to Herland. While symbols are abstract representations of a general concept, objects are specific, concrete items that belong to the organization. Examples of these are the feminist and lesbian books in the Herland library, old event

posters and photo albums that document Herland "herstory," and posters that celebrate some of the group's "she-roes." These objects demonstrate and document the mission of the organization, and give Herlanders a sense of common purpose and belonging.

A **she-ro** is a woman who exemplifies Herland's mission and values of creating a world that honors women and other living things. These include prominent national and Oklahoma figures such as Gloria Steinem, Alice Walker, Ellen DeGeneres, Hillary Clinton, Clara Luper, Wilma Mankiller, and Karen Silkwood. Herland she-roes also include founders and early leaders of the organization such as Wahru (Barbara Cleveland) and Margaret Cox. Herland's she-roes aren't only drawn from the ranks of feminist and gay rights activists, but from all movements for peace and social justice.

Herland almost never conducts ceremonies, but it does have a number of **rituals**. I am defining a ritual as an event that is repeated regularly and that serves to increase a sense of belonging and dedication to the group. Herland's rituals include its monthly Supper Club, which meets at a different local restaurant each month, and its yearly Pride Picnic, usually held during Oklahoma City's annual GLBT Pride Celebration. Herland's most important rituals are its twice-yearly retreats, held in May and October at an Oklahoma state park. These are weekend campouts that include campfires, workshops, shared meals, a talent show, a Saturday-night concert, a raffle, and much informal camaraderie. Women make new friends and discover new abilities within themselves. This experience increases the self-confidence of the participants and also their connection with Herland.

Tales of the happenings at past retreats are examples of **stories** that Herlanders tell. In this context, a story is an account of past events that gives context and meaning to the organization's past, present, and future. Before Herland was founded, Oklahoma was a battleground state in the campaign to pass an Equal Rights Amendment to the US Constitution that would have protected women's rights. This effort failed in Oklahoma and the nation. The founders of Herland were mostly women who had been involved in this struggle. Thus, many

of Herland's most important stories have been stories about the ERA campaign. Other important stories include those told about the founding of the organization and the purchase and renovation of its building. Between the time of its founding and the middle 1990s, Herland was very involved in social justice activism. Some of the organization's stories are about demonstrations or conferences that group members took part in. The organization's Web site tells the story of how Herland's Legal Defense and Education Fund helped to establish the right of lesbian and gay parents to retain custody of their children in Oklahoma (Herland Sister Resources 2008 b).

Herland's special language, symbols, objects, she-roses, rituals, and stories all play their part in maintaining the norms of the organization. Norms are the shared values and aspirations that give the organization its reason for being. In trying to create a just world without oppression, Herland focuses on empowering women, including lesbians, to take their rightful place in the world. Herland's entire culture places a high value on egalitarianism, on giving everyone a voice in decision making and treating everyone equally.

This commitment to equality culminates in the organization's management structure. Herland's board of directors makes decisions by consensus, which means that all board members must agree before a decision is reached. This is not an easy process. Decision making happens slowly, because it is possible for a single determined board member to block plans that have majority support. The goal is to build strong commitment to decisions that have been made with everyone's consent.

New members of the board are recruited by existing members, and every participant in Herland is encouraged to apply. Leadership positions on the board are rotated among those in the "sisterhood rotation." The disadvantage to this system is that an important position might be held by someone without experience or aptitude for that particular job. The advantage is that this process trains new leaders and helps prevent

the organization from becoming too reliant on a single strong individual.

Some members of the Herland community have become disenchanted with this egalitarian decision making process, feeling that it is too difficult and cumbersome. But this process persists, largely because it is supported by all of the other elements of Herland's culture. If the goal is to create an egalitarian world, it is important for the organization to be a model of how this can happen.

Herland has been struggling in the past few years, but my observation that this is not caused by the decision-making process. I believe the difficulty is that most of Herland's stories come from the early days of the organization. This means that it is often difficult to draw younger women to participate, because they don't relate to stories that deal with events that happened before they were born. As Herland has changed from an organization rooted in activism to one that mostly creates social events, it has lost vigor and focus. The wave of

legislation in the Oklahoma Legislature in 2011 and 2012 directed against women's reproductive freedom and right to choose abortion may prove to be a blessing in disguise for Herland. In this situation, Herland may find a new inspiration for activism and a source of both new stories and new members.



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