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herland

VOICE

VOLUME 33 No 1 SPRING 2015

## Tax Tips for the Newlyweds

We've seen some major steps toward marriage equality in the United States and here in our state of Oklahoma. Many married (now legally) same-sex couples will begin 2015 with a full year of married benefits. But what of the earlier years? Health Insurance? Adoptions? Home purchases and 401k's? We've pulled some information together to help you start your journey by answering a few questions. As always, if you have questions pertaining to any filing you do for the IRS or the State of Oklahoma, please contact a tax consultant or the office directly.

The IRS federally recognizes same-sex marriages for tax purposes regardless of the individual's state of residence's marriage equality status. When it comes to doing federal taxes same-sex married couples are federally recognized as married and have the option to file jointly or separately. It does not matter what state you currently live in to be federally recognized. Additionally, the IRS recognizes all federal tax provisions for same-sex married couples which include: claiming personal and dependency exemptions, taking the stand-

ard deduction, employee benefits, contributing to an IRA and claiming the earned income tax credit or child tax credit.

**Same-sex married couples can file claims for a variety of refunds for previous tax years from the federal government.** Do you believe that you would have had a

higher return in the previous years if you and your spouse had been allowed to marry and file jointly? Well, the IRS is allowing you to file original or amended returns for the last "three years from the date the return was filed or two years from the date the tax was paid, whichever is later." Form 1040X is the form to use when filing for an income tax refund while Form 843

(Continued page 2)



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Regular hours 2nd and 4th Saturdays from 1-5 pm



## TAXES

(Continued from page 1)

should be used for filing a refund claim for gift or estate taxes. Now what if your employer covered your same-sex partner on your health care coverage and included the value of that coverage in your gross income or you paid premiums on health coverage with a cafeteria plan that covered your same-sex partner? You can file a claim for a refund! At least for all the years for which the period of limitations for filing a refund is open. And not only that but you can also file a claim for a refund for previous Social Security and Medicaid taxes on benefits. Be sure to research this on the IRS website or discuss it with your CPA.

If you file separately on your federal income taxes only one parent can claim the dependency deduction for a child on their tax form. If you choose to file your federal income taxes separately, only one of you should claim the dependency deduction for your child. If you both try to claim the deduction, the IRS will award the dependency deduction to the person whom the child lives with the most during the year and if you live together it will go to the person with the higher income. On another note, if you adopted your same-sex spouse's child you cannot claim the adoption credit for the expenses related to the adoption.

The status of marriage equality in the state that you currently live in will determine how you file your state income taxes. If you live in a state that allows same-sex marriage, you will file state income taxes as married. Just like federal taxes, you may be able to file a claim for refund from your state of residence for previous years' income taxes. Check with your local tax office or consultant before filing.

With marriage equality and the ability to file taxes jointly comes the need to be responsible and do the research into areas otherwise not encountered before. Be sure to make a list of any questions you have and bring them with you when addressing an authority for filing. You can find more information at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and [www.tax.ok.gov](http://www.tax.ok.gov).

## Looking Back and Looking Ahead

This is a great year for all of us and for Herland as 2015 sees marriage equality from the beginning to the end. We have a lot to be thankful for as we slowly see our civil rights changing and the world becoming more accepting.

The introduction of the Herland Health Initiative by Andrea is a great success and is helping us make better choices. Supper Club attendance is growing and there is nothing we love more than to see so many women coming together to enjoy their lives and have some fun.

The Bookstore and Internet Cafe has been updated with delightful add-ons of gourmet coffees and teas. We welcome you to come and visit on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month.

This year also marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Herland's incorporation as a non-profit and our commitment to you, as we move through these momentous times, is as strong as ever. We encourage you to join our Facebook page and check our website, [www.herlandsisters.org](http://www.herlandsisters.org), where events are scheduled and information is posted.



We look forward to bringing you ways in which your (and our) lives can be richer with community involvement.

## Save the Date for Fun!

The Herland Spring and Fall Retreat dates have been set and we are excited about our 2015 time to get together and enjoy a great weekend. Starting with Friday Night

dinner through to Sunday Brunch, our annual Herland Retreats are the best way to come and get to know your sisters from around the State (and all over).

The Herland Spring Womyn's Retreat at Roman Nose State Park (just outside Watonga) will be **May 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> 2015**. Our Herland Fall Womyn's Retreat is at Lake Eufaula (east of OKC) on **November 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> 2015**.

Our Herland Retreat are a community effort and we appreciate all of the hard work so many women have put into making it happen twice a year! So mark your calendars and schedule some Sister time! Questions or concerns? E-mail us: [herland@herlandsisters.org](mailto:herland@herlandsisters.org)





## What's Happening at Herland

### YOGA

6:30 pm, Tuesday, Feb 3, 10, 17, and 24. Bring your mat and a donation of any amount.

### HEALTH INITIATIVE

4 pm, Saturday, Feb 14  
We're going to talk **Sexy Sauces** and **Dishy Desserts**!

### SUPPER CLUB

5:30 pm, Saturday, Feb 14  
Be our Valentine and join us at **Crabtown**, 303 E Sheridan.

### HEALTH INITIATIVE

4 pm, Saturday, Feb 28  
Low blood sugar, high blood sugar, what to do? We'll talk about the **Glycemic Loads** in today's foods.

### YOGA

6:30 pm, Tuesday, Mar 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31. Bring your mat and a donation of any amount.

### GAME DAY

1 pm—4 pm, Saturday, Mar 14  
Shake off the winter and warm up to some games at Herland.

### HEALTH INITIATIVE

4 pm, Saturday, Mar 14  
Power up with **Protein Shakes**!

### SUPPER CLUB

5:30 pm, Saturday, Mar 14  
Let's do Indian at **Taj**! 1500 NW 23rd St

### HEALTH INITIATIVE

4 pm, Saturday, Mar 28  
Check our website/Facebook for topic.

### YOGA

6:30 pm, Tuesday, Apr 7, 14, 21, and 28. Bring your mat and a donation of any amount.

### HEALTH INITIATIVE

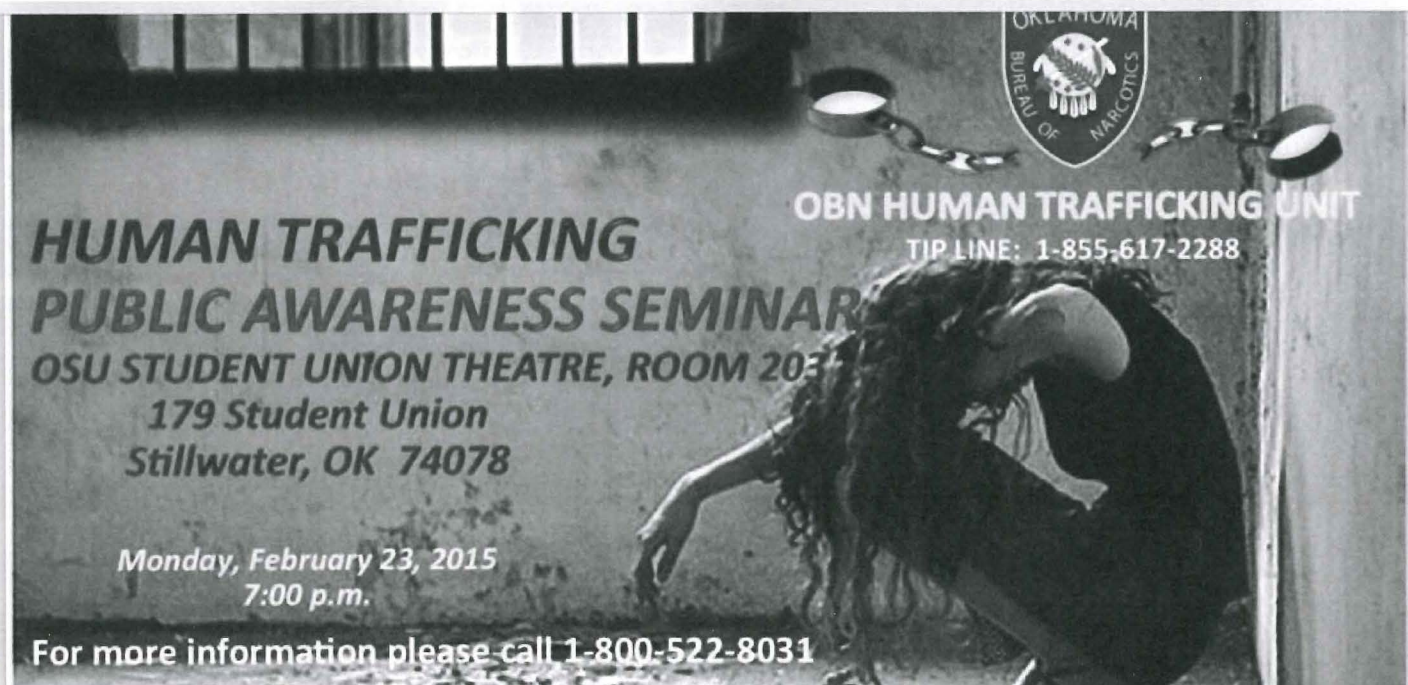
4 pm, Saturday, Apr 11  
Check our website/Facebook for topic.

### SUPPER CLUB

5:30 pm, Saturday, Apr 11  
Let's get sauced at **Sauced**, 2912 Paseo.

### HEALTH INITIATIVE

4 pm, Saturday, Apr 25  
Check our website/Facebook for topic.



**HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
PUBLIC AWARENESS SEMINAR**  
OSU STUDENT UNION THEATRE, ROOM 203  
179 Student Union  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Monday, February 23, 2015  
7:00 p.m.

For more information please call 1-800-522-8031

**OBN HUMAN TRAFFICKING UNIT**  
TIP LINE: 1-855-617-2288





## Supper Club: More Room, Lots More Fun

Supper Club has been growing! Growing from 12-18 participants per month last year to 20-30 each month over the past several months. Due to this growth, we are making an effort to book restaurants that can provide a separate meeting room to ensure enough space and provide a quiet atmosphere for visiting. Here is the Supper Club schedule for the next few months:

Feb 14, 5:30 pm, Crabtown, 303 E Sheridan

Mar 14, 5:30 pm, Taj, 1500 NW 23rd

April 11, 5:30 pm, Sauced, 2912 Paseo

May 9, 5:30 pm, Golden Palace, 1500 S Meridian

## New Board and Officers

Herland would like to welcome our two newest board members, Pamela and Donna, who join the current board members Christa, Andrea, Lara, Sannie, Jean, and Ginger.

The Board elected a new Chair and Vice Chair for the term of 2 years. (They join the Secretary and Treasurer who are serving till the end of 2015.) The current officers are:

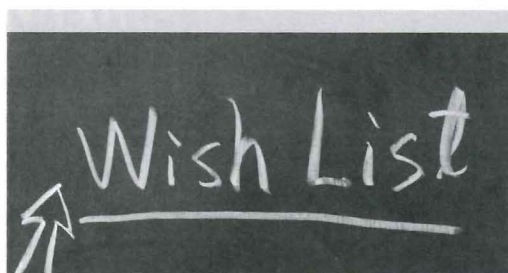
Chair – Lara

Vice Chair – Sannie

Secretary – Jean

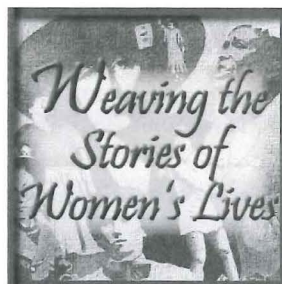
Treasurer – Ginger

The Herland Board is comprised entirely of volunteers who donate their time and energy to bring to you retreats, events, and workshops.



You asked what we needed and now we can share with you! Our Amazon Wish List has been created and will be included on our emails to you. We thank you so much for asking and as we move through the months, will try and keep the variety of pricing on

there for everyone to be able to give what they can – from soap to toilet paper to a TV to stream Netflix/Amazon on for movie nights! It will be there!



The Herland Voice is a publication of Herland Sister Resources, 2312 NW 39th, OKC, OK 73112. Our center is open the second and fourth Saturdays from 1-5 pm. Call us at (405) 521-9696 or email us at [herland@herlandsisters.org](mailto:herland@herlandsisters.org). Visit us on the web at [www.herlandsisters.org](http://www.herlandsisters.org).

## THE BIG EVENT 2015

Last spring, thirteen OU students generously donated their time, and with help from some of you, we made many improvements to the Herland property. The students helped us install a fence, repair the back steps, paint the ramp, and lots more!

We're participating in The Big Event again this year and we need your help! If you have time to spare, please join us on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. We'll be painting the trim, hanging a door, and making general improvements, inside and out.

If you have a ladder or paint brushes we can use, please bring them along and let's show Herland some much deserved love!





## Dear Herland Friends

A new year is beginning which started me thinking about what I want for the year to come, which brings me to thoughts of what I would like to see happen with Herland. I thought Herland was a good idea thirty-three years ago when I first heard about it. In the summer of 1982 Patrice Latimer, a partner in my law firm, was asked by Barbara Cleveland, later to be known as Wahru, to draft a lease agreement on storefront building on N.W. 19th Street in Oklahoma City for a group of women who planned to open a women's book store. That lease was the first step that would become Herland and would later move from 19th Street to its present location on N.W. 39th Street.

Although my practice (and my home) were 165 miles away in western Oklahoma, I participated in Herland as often as my schedule allowed. In 1989 my son was diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. Since Oklahoma City was the only place we could find medical care for him in those dark days of the epidemic, I rented a small apartment a few blocks north of Herland for the two of us during the bitter time between the day of his diagnosis and the day of his death in December. That year I found Herland to be a place I could come and relax without having to explain or lie about my son's illness. It became a refuge for me during the short periods I could leave my dear son alone, to take time for myself. The 39th Street community was where we found respite from our sadness. We ate at the Family Restaurant (one block west of Penn Avenue); we attended support group meetings at the Men's Health Clinic and at other organizations on the "strip." I still remember how welcome I felt at Herland where I checked out books, or had some quiet time reading there, or talking with other women. It was hard to find places of acceptance in those days when we were getting hate mail and mean-spirited anonymous phone calls every day.

I was grateful, and still am, that Herland was there for me and for all the other women who have walked through those doors during all these years. That's why I have kept in touch with Herland from the beginning (though some years more than others) and why you will see one of the entries on the 1994 "Mortgage Paid" plaque at Herland that says "In Memory of Kim Alexander." But, that's only one of many, many important things that Herland members achieved during the past 30+ years. They assisted women who were threatened with loss of children through the prejudice in state courts, they educated all of us on the issues, provided a safe place for fun and social gatherings, and much more.

Admittedly, things have vastly improved for the majority of us in recent years, most notably the marriage equality gains, etc., and perhaps that has made us become somewhat lax in our support of the efforts it takes to maintain momentum. But, we should bear in mind that those who would take away those gains women have not let up, have not relaxed their efforts to beat back our march toward acceptance and equality. For instance, the assaults on reproductive rights, equal wages for women, adequate medical care for women and children, to name only a few. The "legitimate rape" crowd is still out there working day and night to take us back to the 1950s or even further. I also think that in the near future there will be a renewed effort to pass an Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which we still desperately need, and I hope Herland will be ready to participate fully and effectively in that effort. But, it will take all of us. Just a few hard workers will not be enough.

For all the reasons I have mentioned, we still need Herland, both the physical structure and the spirit with which it came to be. We need a place to come together for social interactions, to encourage each other, and to do the work necessary for our mutual benefit and well being. That takes work and resources and cooperation. And ALL of us need to

shoulder the load. Not just a few, but ALL of us. It's important now more than ever that EACH and EVERY ONE of us claim our place at the wheel. Each and every one of us needs to get behind our Board and take an

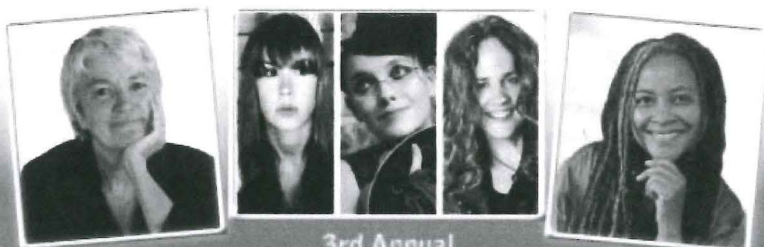
active part in making Herland work and do what it is designed to do. That means regular contributions of work and or money. It means we will have to "put up or shut up." Do we believe that we, as women, can control our own destiny, or do we not? I am more than 80 years old and I want this work to outlive me! I want to know that Herland will keep going, will carry on the work that started 33 years ago! I am now retired from my law practice out west and live in Oklahoma City almost full time, I will become as active in Herland and its agenda, along with my life partner and wife (!) Devey Napier, as our "advanced age" allows.

Please join me in this effort and pledge your monetary, physical and moral support of Herland Sister Resources! I CHALLENGE EACH AND EVERY WOMAN WHO READS THIS TO DO THAT!

Sincerely,  
Dorothy Alexander



Amazon Music Festival, in our 3rd year, celebrates and honors the 40th Anniversary of Cris Williamson's **The Changer and the Changed**



## 3rd Annual AMAZON MUSIC FESTIVAL

April 10-11, 2015 • Fayetteville, Arkansas

**Featuring: CRIS WILLIAMSON, THE TRAVELING FATES, UBAKA HILL, KIYA HEARTWOOD, BIG BAD GINA, SUMMER OSBORNE, JYN YATES, TRISH BUSH, & VELVET ARMY (making their Women's Music Festival debut!)**

**Plus:** • Drum Workshop with Ubaka Hill, • Friday Night Womyn's Dance, & • "Songs of My Soul" by Jori Costello – a one-woman performance piece honoring the beginning of the women's music movement.

[WWW.BIGBADGINA.COM/AMAZON-FEST](http://WWW.BIGBADGINA.COM/AMAZON-FEST)



# Herland Sister Resources

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