

ALIX DOBKIN AND LINDA WATERFALL: A GOOD OMEN

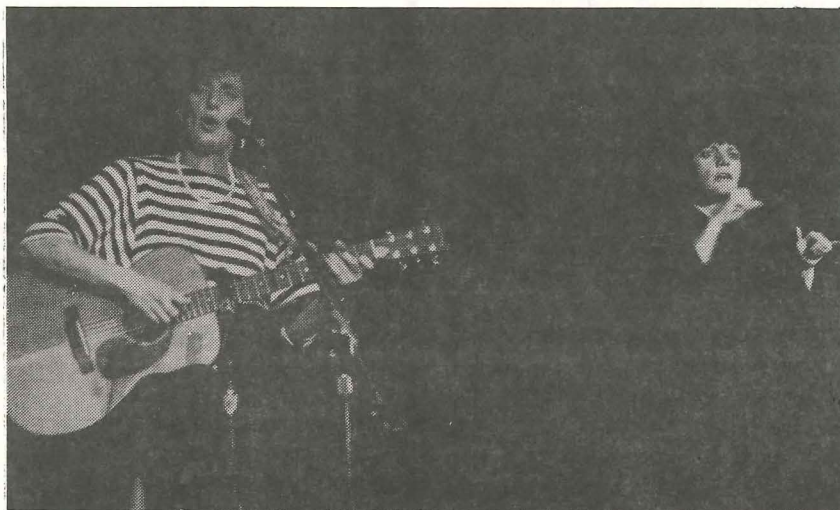
By Mary Reynolds

I think it's an omen. A good omen.

You see, I have this book that I keep on top of the water tank of my toilet. It's called *The Hundredth Monkey*. And here's the story: there are a hundred monkeys living on an island in the Pacific. Some of the monkeys - monkey children - pick up the idea of washing their food just before eating it. They teach their parents to wash their food, too. This goes on until 99 of the monkeys in the community have the habit of washing their food. Then, finally, monkey number 100 washes its food. At that moment, inexplicably, all of the monkeys of that species on the surrounding islands begin to wash their food. It's a true story - it really happened. And the implication is that when a certain critical mass of humans learns the habit of living together in peace and treating each other with respect, the human race will make a dramatic revolutionary step into the next stage of humanity. One can only hope so, looking at the headlines.

And I think I've seen an omen that the day is coming. Because here in Oklahoma City, in the short span of three weeks in November and December, we listened as two prophetesses of a brighter day sang to us their visions of the other side. As powerful as Old Testament sages they decried the staleness and lethargy of the status quo. They challenged us to do better, they chided us for complacency and then comforted us and upheld our spirits with music and good fellowship. Then they told us to get ready for the promised land, 'cause we women are going to be leading the way.

For you young kids who missed the 50's and 60's, I'd like to explain something about Alix Dobkin. She's an old-fashioned folk singer. In those ancient times before Bob Dylan turned folk



Alix Dobkin and signer "Zyra Shelley"

singers into a cult object, to be a folk singer was to be a communicator, someone who listened as well as sang, one who was a practitioner of culture without trying to be #1 on the "hip" parade. Yes, that's what it was like in those days, and Alix gave us all the classic elements of the form: *The Talking Lesbian Blues* (see Woody Guthrie), *The Typical American Chicken* song (see Falderal String Band) and of course, that ancient tradition, the Women's concert sing-along.

All the parts were there, and as a whole, they drove home the message: Lesbians are a planet-wide manifestation. Women have a power unto themselves which is mystical, inescapable and indestructible. Male violence is not a fairy tale but a tangible enemy not only of women but of all life. She moved and delighted us with stories, and she reached us in song where mere prose fears to tread. And perhaps most memorable was the way Alix revealed herself, "The Woman in Your Life," to all of us in her performance. In fact, this reviewer has never witnessed a performer who was more at ease in front of an audience.

Alix told of the many faces of Lesbian culture that exist around the world. How different from the many

entertainers we've seen who can only tell us about Lesbian culture in California! She affirmed our idiosyncratic contribution to the world Lesbian picture. She spoke to us in Yiddish, Australian and signed for us in American Sign Language. I can still see the beauty of her hands and the warmth in her eyes as she signed the words "so easily." There is something about watching and listening to a woman who is both signing and singing that gets into my brain and just sticks—I love it.

Alix was assisted in signing by Zyra Shelley, who is not just an interpreter but a consummate artist of sign. Alix's standard contract requires that all of her performances be signed by a woman versed in women's culture. Signing is not just for the deaf, you-all. It is a vital brick in the foundation of women's culture, and it is also important in Native American culture.

Next item. OK, I'll admit it. Linda Waterfall is one of my own personal heroines. There. I've said it. Look, I listen to the woman's music constantly. In the car, driving, wherever. Her albums stay on my turntable for months at a time. I just keep turning them over and listening again. I know every note on three of her albums. I'm totally familiar with the

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

niceties of technique, songcraft, musical skill, all the things that are sleight-of-hand to the average listener are old hat to me. But I was still amazed, moved, thrilled and totally captivated by Linda's performance here on December 2nd.

The Linda Waterfall concert was not promoted as a quote-unquote women's concert, as it was advertised to the general public as well as to the women's community. Certainly Linda's music deals with some things that are not normally approached in women's concerts, such as dealing with men as lovers. But thanks to the women who supported the concert so enthusiastically, her music was able to touch on a new direction for the community here in central Oklahoma: that a woman doesn't have to be a Lesbian to make "women's music." There's a lot to recommend that idea. That's why Lady-slipper distributors (that handle Alix Dobkin's music) are so cool, because they make available all music that has a woman's sweat and blood on it, and affirm it as woman-identified music.

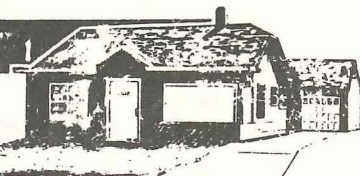
Right on! I mean, didn't we all grow up singing "you make me feel like a natural woman?" Oh, I forgot. Some of us are younger. One song in particular Linda explained, *Love Song*, expresses her independence, her *Room of One's Own*, her *Woman in Your Life* - because she earns her own living and makes her own way. She is free to love whomever she chooses . . . She included several examples of one of my favorite devices in her performances - the "sex as food" metaphor. There was *Cherry Tomato*, *Coconut Milk*, and the classic blues item, *Jelly Roll*. "No-one," she sang, "can make sweet jelly roll like mine." Oh, that stuff is just so good when a woman does it.

Why, you'd think that the whole concert was about sex! Please! Linda sang us songs written by children. She sang songs about coping with the day-to-day insanities we all face. And most of all, more important than sex, she sang us songs about how to make peace with our human companions, with our own hearts, and with our Mother Earth, that *O-original Right-On* woman.

There I go, talking about peace again. These two concerts, so close together, so much alike. And what a surprise - East Coast, old style folk poetess; New Age songstress. So different, yet so alike in that Alix and Linda both told the story of the wide world of women, and the bright future of this wonderful planet.



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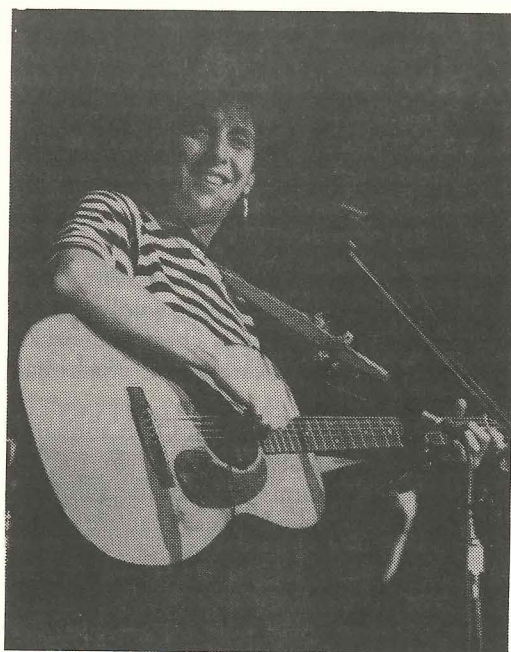
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SUBSCRIPTIONS to this Newsletter are free upon request.



ALIX DOBKIN: THE DAY AFTER

by Sondra Metzger

If you attended the Alix Dobkin concert last Nov. 18, you were one of the few who were fortunate enough to experience a remarkable woman.

What makes her remarkable isn't the fact that she spent two hours on stage entertaining us with songs and stories about her travels and her life. What makes her remarkable is the fact that she cares about women and made time to get to know us, our community, what's going on within it and educate us about our culture. Most performers fly in, perform, fly out.

The last time Alix was in Oklahoma City was in November 1963. Her most vivid memory of that time was of oil wells in everyone's backyard.

"It was a week after Kennedy's assassination," Alix said. "This time, the mood here is on the upswing. There seems to be a renewed energy for community events. Women are paying by going through programs like Al-Anon and AA. It seems like a lot of this attention is being directed back to the lesbian community, too. I am delighted to notice this because I feel we can't live without our culture. You are all doing great. You have good spirit and you have fun. That's important because we're not going to survive unless we have a good time with each other."

Her latest album/tape, *Never Been Better*, includes two songs produced and arranged by Diane Lindsay and by Sue Fink, who performed in Norman last April.

"I hired Diane and Sue because I wanted their sound," Alix said. "I knew them and respected them both. So, I hired them to produce *Pitfalls of True Love* and *Never Been Better* because I wanted Diane's sound and sensibility on *Never Been Better* and Sue's on *Pitfalls of True Love*. I knew exactly what I wanted to hear from the arrangements and knew I couldn't do it, so I asked them and they did exactly what I had in mind."

The album/tape is a good example of Alix's determination to instill variety in her music.

"I have to be very careful of getting into a pattern," she said. "I write songs in different keys and each key has its own sound. When I write a song in D, it's going to sound a certain way because that's just the way I play after all these years of playing. I'm very aware of the key that I write a song in because that to me determines how it's going to sound and I'm very careful not to have the songs sound too much alike. They do to a point because everyone has a style, and there's nothing wrong with that. But I'm very aware of variety in my concerts and have been ever since I started performing in 1962. I'll do a song acappella, I'll do some show tunes, but I do try to mix it up a lot because I want to do a show that I would like if I was in the audience."

Alix goes into a concert giving 110%. She feels that she only has one chance a year to do that and wants to take advantage of the opportunity to maximize every moment.

"When I'm tired or sick," she said, "I really notice how much work it is. One time in Dallas I forgot the words to *Big Girls* and a woman in the audience helped me out until I finally figured out that I wasn't supposed to do that particular song. So I stopped and started into another one. The women didn't mind. I don't like to look back and think, 'Well, I didn't really do as well as I could,' because I do look back. It's not that I didn't put the effort out. It's just that I forgot to say something or forgot the words."

Her present tour is two weeks long, but during her career Alix has been on the road for 10 weeks at a time. Although she loves the road, Alix finds it necessary to touch base with her home in Woodstock, NY, where her favorite exercise is walking a 2½-mile route every day.

But when she's on the road, her main interest is educating. Alix feels that her primary job is to pass along what she

learns—that educating is even more important than entertaining. She feels music is the most effective way to get the message out to women.

"Women, lesbians, and other musicians inspire me to perform," she said. "It's the universality of our culture. It's the appreciation I get from women wherever I go. It's interesting after a concert when women say 'We really needed this here.' This is everywhere I go. I don't know of any other performers who do what I do."

Alix enjoyed learning about the women in OKC, that they actually participated in making music and didn't just listen to it. She feels it's a great resource for the community, that it's a wonderful way to bond women and bring everyone together.

"We're lesbians because we discriminate," she said. "That's what makes us lesbians, a quality that is very important to us. Relationships are a skill we have to learn, so we practice on each other until we get it better and better. And we do get it better. We don't usually repeat the exact same mistakes. Sometimes we do because we haven't learned the lessons. On the whole, women are being much smarter in relating to each other. You don't expect the moon because you know that that's not real. You learn that, and you learn the kind of compromises or whatever you have to do. The older you get, the pickier you are. We only take what's good for us. We don't engage in anything that is really unhealthy or does not contribute to our well-being. We learn how to recognize these things after awhile, after we go through relationships."

After 26 years of performing, Alix remembered one bad experience that happened while she was performing in Australia.

"I had wonderful concerts there," she said, "but one was located in a town nearest the women's land. There are women there who own thousands of acres, and one of the parcels of land is open women's land where any woman can live free of charge. As a result, it attracted a lot of drug addicts and alcoholics; sad, wasted women. It's a very depressing scene."

About 50 women attended the concert in the town hall who were interested in hearing what Alix had to say, but a handful of others were very hostile and started disrupting the concert. Alix continued her show. Other women asked

Continued on page 4

them to leave, so they did, only to go outside and throw rocks onto the tin roof of the hall.

"I was very afraid of violence," she said. "It was averted. The women there were very angry that their evening had been ruined. They didn't get to experience the kind of energy that we did with other audiences in Australia. They were robbed by those women. It's been an issue for a long time, and it really came out for my concert. I have a way of bringing things out when I travel. Things happen.

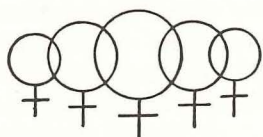
On the lighter side, Alix found no other experience as memorable as her fortieth birthday when 8,000 women sang Happy Birthday to her at the women's music festival in Michigan.

Alix loved doing the concert here and spending time with the women of Oklahoma City. Her advice to several of us is invaluable. She wanted to make sure that anyone interested in our lesbian culture or lesbian cultures music knew about the Association of Women in Music and Culture. Anyone wishing to have more information may write to Olivia Records, 4400 Market St., Oakland, CA 93608.

For our local performers or those aspiring to be performers, Alix recommends that you just do it.

"It's important that you have a place to do that," she said, "because there's nothing that substitutes for experience. My advice would be, don't settle. Don't settle for a cheap laugh, don't settle for second best, don't make a sex joke just because it has sex in it. If you're going to talk about sex on stage or make a sex joke, it's better be really great and original. Don't fall for the old cliches. If you've heard it before, why bother. That's always my advice for songwriters. I'm looking for originality. I'm looking for something unique. I'm looking for something that only you can do, nobody else. If I've heard it before, I'm not interested. Work on whatever it is unique in your own perspective and your own sensibility, your own performance. Whatever is only you. That's what I want to hear."

"Also, love women or die."



UNITY IS THE KEY

Potpourri

WHO'S ON YOUR BACK?

By Sondra Metzger

Valentine's Day is upon us, which means that someone out there will notice the sale ads from the local furriers and buy their sweetheart a fur coat to show them how much they love them. Maybe another local store will give away mink teddy bears with a specified purchase amount.

Although I love animals, this article is not the rantings and ravings of a radical. I do belong to an animal welfare organization, and my dog is spoiled rotten (ask anyone). But, I still enjoy a good hamburger or steak once in a while, and I have work gloves that are made out of pigskin and cowhide, byproducts of death for food. Guilty? Yes, I do feel some guilt. But the sad truth of the matter is, animals are always going to be killed for food whether I become a vegetarian or not. Only so many can be spared. I had to draw a line somewhere, and have decided to exclude using any product obtained from an animal who was abused for the sake of vanity. The perfect example of that is fur coats.

The ways animals are killed for their skins or pelts are listed in a report released by the Humane Society of the United States. Some animals are raised on ranches just to provide a vain public with fur coats. Small animals, such as minks and chinchillas, die when their necks are broken either manually or by a mechanical device. Some animals die when a rancher hooks up a hose to the tailpipe of a running vehicle and connects the other end to an animal enclosure. The carbon monoxide in the exhaust burns the animals' eyes and lungs. Because the dosage is so hard to monitor, not all of the animals die. Some regain consciousness under the shock of being skinned.

Sound pretty gruesome? How about the fox that is electrocuted when the rancher puts a copper cable in its mouth and forces a screwdriver-like device up its rectum. All for the sake of vanity or that cuddly little teddy bear.

Traps are a common way of catching wild creatures. Sometimes the animals bite off their trapped limbs to get away. A neck snare slowly strangles an animal over a period of hours or days. If they

don't die from starvation, exhaustion or dehydration while caught in the trap, some animals are beaten to death with a blunt instrument or their heads are slammed against a tree or rock. Another popular method of killing wildlife is to stand on the animal's chest and neck and slowly suffocate it or crush its heart.

On top of all that, 5 million animals have accidentally ended up in traps, including millions of domestic animals and thousands of others that are considered endangered species.

It's ironic that all these cuddly animals die to provide someone with a cuddly fake animal; that the warmth of their unconditional love is destroyed to provide someone with temporary, external warmth.

Is all their suffering really worth it?

"FOR LOVE & FOR LIFE"

On March 17, JEB will be in Norman at OU for an hour-long presentation of the October 1987 march on Washington. For more information time call Herland.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

If you are planning to move, and you don't want to miss any issues of the HSR Newsletter, please let us know your new address BEFORE you move. For your protection the Post Office will not forward the Newsletter, and Herland will not change your address without your authorization. Therefore, to ensure receipt of the Newsletter, fill out and mail us this change-of-address form BEFORE you move. The form may also be used to add your name to the mailing list.

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Around the Country

DOCTORS FIND KOWALSKI CAN UNDERSTAND AND COMMUNICATE Kowalski to be Moved to Rehabilitation Facility

DELUTH, MN—Three doctors affiliated with the Miller-Dwan Medical Center here have found that Sharon Kowalski can clearly and consistently communicate her needs and wishes, and that she understands the communications of others.

The 32-year-old Kowalski, rendered paraplegic when a drunk driver slammed into her car in late 1983, has been kept in a nursing home since 1985. She has received little rehabilitation there and has not been allowed to see visitors of her choice. She has been under the legal guardianship of her father, Donald Kowalski, since 1984. This was her first full evaluation for competency, although the guardianship order required such testing at least annually.

The tests were ordered in July by St. Louis County, Minnesota, district court judge Robert Campbell, over the strenuous objections of the guardian. In September 1987, attorneys for Karen Thompson filed a motion for restoration of Kowalski to capacity, and the tests were ordered as part of the proceedings on that motion.

Thompson, Kowalski's partner, has been pursuing legal action since 1984 for proper medical care for Kowalski, as well as for the right to visit and help care for her.

At a five-hour private hearing on December 12, 1988, Judge Campbell presented the results to the Kowalskis, Thompson and her attorneys, and Gary Pagliacetti, court-appointed attorney for Sharon Kowalski. He declared that by order of the court the contents of the doctors' reports are personal and confidential to Sharon Kowalski, and shall not be released to the press. However, he released a statement based upon a cover letter from Clyde Olson, the psychiatrist on the evaluation team, which read, in part:

"The evaluation stated that Ms. Kowalski's level of mental functioning is adequate but untested. She is able in a closed but secure setting to express her

needs directly. However, communication skills are not adequate at present time to determine her true level of mental functioning. The evaluation further stated that Ms. Kowalski's level of social and psychological well-being is quite low related to the difficulty of the social situation as well as the chronic nature of her placement in a nursing facility (sic.). At present time it is recommended that Ms. Kowalski be placed into a long-term rehabilitative facility to look particularly at her communication skills and to also assess the situation concerning her family and significant other relationship. With increased communication skills in a safe setting Ms. Kowalski could reliably express her wishes concerning visitation."

Judge Campbell said he will order Kowalski moved to Miller-Dwan from the Leisure Hills nursing home in Hibbing after the holiday season, to receive intensive communication rehabilitation. She can reliably express her wishes concerning visitation, he said, and her visitation there will be determined by himself, in consultation with the professionals working with Kowalski, based upon her own wishes.

Thompson has not seen Kowalski since August 19, 1985 when Donald Kowalski gained complete guardianship and immediately barred Thompson from visiting her companion. Thompson and her attorneys were elated about the full contents of the evaluation. "The results are better than I ever dared expect," Thompson said. "They have validated everything I said in my book, that Sharon should have been receiving much higher quality rehabilitation this entire time, and that Sharon can clearly understand, and can express her wishes. How heartbreaking it is that so many years have been wasted and so many opportunities lost."

Thompson's book, *Why Can't Sharon Kowalski Come Home?*, was published in September. It provided extensive documentation that Kowalski wanted to see Thompson and her other friends, that her cognitive and social skills were high, and that because she cannot walk or communicate in traditional ways, her many other abilities are overlooked and discounted.

When the judge asked Donald Kowalski what he thought after reading the reports, he reportedly stated that

they validated what he has said all along, that Sharon was helpless and needed constant care.

The Kowalskis' attorney, Jack Fena, resigned from the case one month after the final personal injury settlement was made in July, a settlement which netted him over \$50,000 and yielded only \$20,000 for the estate of Sharon Kowalski.

"The results really open the door to a future for Sharon," said Tacie Dejanikus, co-chair of the National Committee to Free Sharon Kowalski. "We're thrilled." The National Committee represents a coalition of seventeen committees nationwide.

Press Release

ABC TV'S SERIES HEARTBEAT UNDER ATTACK

ABC TV'S SERIES *HEARTBEAT*, which features an openly lesbian character, is under postal attack by fundamentalists to the tune of 1,800 letters a week. Those who favor the program's positive treatment of lesbianism are urged to write: Aaron Spelling Productions, Warner/Hollywood Studios, 1041 Formosa Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

WOMEN ARE MAKING POLITICAL STRIDES

By Pamela Porter
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The 1988 election produced gains for women candidates on all levels, but women's assimilation into politics has proven to be slow evolution rather than the quick revolution activists once hoped for.

"Overall, 1988 was another good year for incremental gains," National Women's Political Caucus Chairwoman Irene Natividad said in a news briefing with a coalition of other women's groups here yesterday.

Twenty-three incumbent women House members were re-elected, and two new women won House seats Tuesday. The newcomers are both Democrats—Jolene Unsoeld, of Washington, and Nita Lowey, of New York.

"We were able to break our logjam in our numbers in the House of Representatives which have remained constant for several years," Natividad said.

On the state level the number of women governors remained steady at

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

three. Vermont Gov. Madeleine Kunin became the first woman in U.S. history to win a third term as governor.

Natividad's group also counted four lieutenant governors, two attorneys general, 12 state treasurers, 15 secretaries of state and numerous other state offices held by women.

Jane Danowitz, chairwoman of the bipartisan Women's Campaign Fund, applauded the gains by women but noted at the rate women are moving into Congress, it will take 410 years for women to catch up to men. In addition to the 25 women representatives, there are two women senators.

"We haven't done enough," Danowitz said. "We want a future for our women. The demon is clearly incumbency."

Challengers have trouble beating incumbents because political action committees and other big donors pour most of their money into incumbents' campaigns. To even the playing field, Danowitz urged stricter limits on campaign contributions. She also called for an end to negative campaign advertising, which she said is particularly damaging to women candidates because they are considered (to be) weak if they don't respond or "bitches" when they fight back.

11-13-88
The Washington Post

S. AFRICA PRISONER NEEDS HELP

Janet Small, 26, a field worker for the Black Sash human rights organization in Grahamstown, South Africa, was held in a prison notorious for its poor conditions from June 13 to September 16. There were no charges filed against her—ever!

The Security forces are empowered under the State of Emergency regulations, to detain people indefinitely at the discretion of the Minister of Law and Order who said at one time that Small's detention would be extended indefinitely, and gave no reason for this decision.

At the time of her detention, Janet Small was assisting detainees and their families in her capacity as regional representative for the Black Sash in the Eastern Cape. A trained social worker, she has held this position for the past 18 months. A former student from Rhodes University in Grahamstown, Janet was also previously active with the



National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), which was prohibited from receiving overseas funding after being declared an "affected" organization in the 1970's. In 1986 she was elected NUSAS National General Secretary.

Under worldwide pressure, Small was released after 3 months in the North End Prison. However, those three months of total isolation (she was segregated from all other detainees because she is white and the others are Black) has taken a terrible toll.

Since her release, the vindictive regime has continued their harassment of Janet Small: she is not permitted to return to her job; she is not permitted to leave her mother's house after a certain time each day.

Readers are urged to send cables or letters to express concern about the continuing punishment of Janet Small without trial and without charge. Call for the immediate lifting of all restrictions on her right to move freely within her own country, and on her right to return to work to support herself and her family.

WREE - View of Women
Nov.-Dec. 1988



HAVE YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO LEARN SIGN LANGUAGE?

Rebekah H. will be offering two separate class sessions in Sign Language at Herland Sister Resources. The sessions will run for 10 weeks. Cost is \$25⁰⁰ in advance - no refunds. Classes are limited to 25 people each.

YES! I'm interested. Please register me for:

☐ SESSION A: Thursdays, 7-8 p.m. from Feb. 16 to April 20

☐ SESSION B: Sundays, 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. from Feb. 18 to April 23

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Sliding scale and limited scholarships are available.

FIRST ANNUAL LAMBDA LITERARY AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Gala Awards Program Planned

WASHINGTON, DC—The publisher and the editor of the *Lambda Rising Book Report*, a bi-monthly review of contemporary gay and lesbian literature, announced plans on Dec. 15, 1988, for a new annual awards program to recognize excellence in gay and lesbian writing and publishing.

"The time has come for the literary excellence of the lesbian and gay community to be recognized," said Jane Troxell, editor of the *Book Report*. "1988 has been a tremendous year for the writers, editors and publishers of gay and lesbian literature. As a result, all lesbian and gay people have benefitted from this unparalleled growth in both substance and quality."

The public is invited to participate in the Lambda Literary Awards by nominating their favorite gay and lesbian books of 1988. Nominations are accepted in twelve categories: Lesbian Fiction, Gay Men's Fiction, Lesbian Non-fiction, Gay Men's Non-fiction, Lesbian Mystery/Science Fiction, Gay Men's Mystery/Science Fiction, Gay and Lesbian Poetry, Lesbian First Novel, Gay Men's First Novel, Lesbian Small Press Book Award, Gay Men's Small Press Book Award, and AIDS (a special category).

A nominating ballot is in this newsletter. The deadline for nominations is

February 17, 1989. Five finalists in each category will be announced nationally on March 1, 1989.

A panel of 60 judges from across the country, representing a broad cross-section of the entire lesbian and gay literary community, will select a single book in each category from among the finalists.

"The Annual Lambda Literary Awards program is a tremendous opportunity for the book industry to work together in recognizing the valuable contribution it makes to gay culture," said Deacon Maccubbin, publisher of the *Book Report*. "The movies have their Oscars, Broadway has its Tonys. It's time for the lesbian and gay community to honor its literary stars."

A gala awards banquet will be held June 2nd, 1989, at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, to coincide with the American Booksellers Association Convention. At that time, the recipients of the 1st Annual Lambda Literary Awards will be announced. Tentative emcees for the gala event are authors Armistead Maupin (*Tales of the City*) and Florence King (*Confessions of a Failed Southern Lady*).

"Not only is this an opportunity for greater visibility for gay and lesbian writers, it is a chance to recognize the editors and publishers whose commitment and unfailing support helped make 1988 a truly memorable year for outstanding new books," Troxell said.

For further information about the awards program or the banquet, please contact Will Guilliams:

BOOK REPORT
1625 Connecticut Avenue, NW,
Washington, DC 20009-1013
or phone (202) 462-6965.

Press Release

Lambda Rising BOOK REPORT™



A Contemporary Review of Gay and Lesbian Literature

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Nominations for the 1988 Lambda Literary Awards

Submit nominations to: Lambda Literary Awards, 1625 Connecticut Avenue, NW,
Washington, DC 20009-1013. Nominations must be received by February 17, 1989.

Lesbian Fiction Title _____ Author _____

Gay Men's Fiction Title _____ Author _____

Lesbian Nonfiction Title _____ Author _____

Gay Men's Nonfiction Title _____ Author _____

Lesbian Mystery/Science Fiction Title _____ Author _____

Gay Men's Mystery/Science Fiction Title _____ Author _____

Gay and Lesbian Poetry Title _____ Author _____

Lesbian First Novel Title _____ Author _____

Gay Men's First Novel Title _____ Author _____

Lesbian Small Press Book Award Title _____ Author _____

Gay Men's Small Press Book Award Title _____ Author _____

AIDS (Special Category) Title _____ Author _____

Around the Corner

HERLAND HAS GOT A PHONE!

Herland Resource Center now has a telephone! The number is (405) 521-9696 or 521-WMYN. Thanks to an anonymous pledge covering the monthly telephone expense and to a local attorney who dropped by the center one Saturday offering a \$60 donation for the purpose of installing a telephone, communication is now a reality.

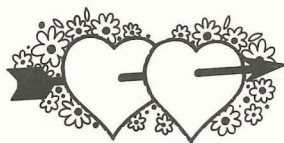
For information on what's happening about town or what's available at Herland Center call 521-WMYN. Hours are 6 - 8:30 p.m. Thurs.; 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Saturday; and 1 - 6 p.m. Sunday.

COFFEEHOUSE

Herland's next coffeehouse will be held Feb. 11 from 8-9:30 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by Peggy Johnson. Peggy is this month's featured artist in this issue's *Spotlight On* column.

Although admission is free, donations to Herland and tips for Ms. Johnson will be appreciated. Refreshments will be provided.

Stop in, catch the talent of Peggy Johnson and enjoy a great entertainer. Herland is located at 2312 NW 39th Street.



HERLAND IS . . .

A non-profit corporation composed of a collective of wommin — open to any womyn who wants to be a part of it — which works to maintain a feminist library and bookstore, sponsors workshops, retreats, concerts and other events for YOU. Herland's reason for being is to provide a framework for a variety of projects for the support and enjoyment of the area wommin's community. It is a place to learn and grow, meet other wommin, develop lasting friendships, receive support and nurture the positive self-image that societal attitudes sometimes make illusive to us. Herland exists to serve YOU.

Your donations are used to pay the mortgage and utilities on the resource center, and printing and postage for the monthly HSR Newsletter and Friend of Herland cards.

All of Herland's services are free, including the Newsletter. This is why your donation is so important. It is Herland's lifeblood.

PROJECT REACHES FIRST GOAL

The January 15 fundraiser at the Hi-Lo for Friendships United raised over \$400 for the organization. This put the total raised over the goal of \$1,000 set by the group.

For those of you who are new readers or are new to the area, Friendships United is a nonprofit organization that is raising money to produce a tape consisting of songs performed by local performers. The first goal was to make the \$1,000 needed to buy studio time and blank cassettes. The second goal is to sell the tape and give all proceeds to the local AIDS hospice, the Winds.

Coordinator Palmira Campos said the group is considering another fundraiser to ensure enough money is available should any unexpected costs arise during taping.

"I was overwhelmed by the turnout at the Hi-Lo," she said. "We were collecting money at the door and people just kept coming in. It was great. We really appreciate it."

Although the goal was reached sooner than expected, the group won't be charging into the studio until March 1.

"We want to do this right," Palmira said. "Now that we know the money is there, we will use this time to fine-tune and let the artists get ready. We've been looking at studios, but haven't picked one yet. We'd like to see the tape go farther than just the community."

Palmira also announced that two more acts have signed on as contributors to the project. The band Desert Hearts and singer Joan Richardson will be adding their talent to the tape.

The HSR Newsletter is offered as an open forum for community discourse. Materials printed herein reflects the beliefs and opinions of the authors of the articles or letters, and not necessarily those of the Newsletter or the Herland Board.

Letters to the Editor

Sisters:

I would like to thank your organization for the support you have given us during the year 1988. It is gratifying to see the community come together as a whole.

We will soon be in contact with you concerning the activities for 1989. This year is going to be a very special year for the Gay Community. The 20th Anniversary of the Stonewall uprising as well as the 10th Anniversary of the Washington March will be celebrated this year.

Unfortunately, our community has been divided for a long time. Last year, we saw a positive beginning. However, that was but only a start. We need to nurture this start to a complete and flowing unity, undaunted by petty differences.

It is my sincere hope and desire to see more unity as well as growth in 1989 and the coming years as well.

Sincere thanks,

Darlene Burgess, Chairperson
Oasis Community Center

Dear HSR -

I was writing to ask about a subscription to your magazine. I got an October issue from a friend of mine and enjoyed it very much.

I'm doing time here in OKC and I'm not a game player, I'm for real but I'm going to be here for awhile and I'd sure like to maybe meet someone out there I can have come visit and write to, to keep in touch with the things in the free world. I can be written to at:

Cindy Johnson 110615
Box 11492 M.B.C.C. -E.H.U.
OKC, Okla. 73136

Thanks.
Cindy

FEBRUARY DATELINE

February 15, 1820: Susan B. Anthony was born.

February 22, 1983: Army Pvt. Valerie J. Randolph accepts the U.S. Army decision that she be discharged because she married another WAC.

February 27, 1973: The official style book of the U.S. Government Printing Office now includes "Ms." as an acceptable prefix, calling it "an optional feminine title without marital designation."

LEGISLATIVE DAY SET

Women's organizations around the state are gearing up for the upcoming Legislative Day at the state capitol on Wednesday, March 1.

The national chair of the Women's Political Caucus, Irene Natividad, will be the keynote speaker.

Workshops will be conducted and will cover women's legal rights, progress reports of economic development, family leave and child care, Oklahoma's prison dilemma and whether abortion is a state issue.

A seminar will be offered on current legislative priorities with separate sessions for beginners and advanced. Luncheon discussions will be conducted by various organizations and individuals and will cover such topics as Superfund Cleanup Sites, mammograms, a possible Constitutional Convention in 1990, legislative process reform and a panel discussion on AIDS.

The opening session will convene at 9 a.m. with a welcome by Gov. Henry Bellmon. Some of the participating organizations and individuals are the League of Women Voters; Women's Political Caucus; the Family Community Leadership Group; Planned Parenthood; Dian England, master social worker; Representatives Freddie Williams and Cal Hobson; Attorney General Robert Henry; Harlan Powell, Dept. of Human Services; and Don Paulsen, Dept. of Commerce.

Pre-registration fees are \$5 per person for the workshops, \$4 per person for the luncheon. The workshops will be \$6 at the door. The luncheon must be reserved ahead of time.

If planning to attend, please fill in the registration form which can be found in this newsletter and mail to the address listed at the bottom of the form with the proper registration fees.

All are invited to meet Irene Natividad at a reception Tuesday, Feb. 28, at the Embassy Suite Hotel, 2101 S. Meridian, OKC, from 5:30-7 p.m.

CALLING ALL MUSICIANS!

The Oasis Community Center, 2135 NW 39th Street, is looking for people who play band instruments to form a band for this coming summer's Lesbian & Gay Pride Day March.

So dust off and polish up the old high school horn and join in the fun by calling Darlene at 525-2437.

VIDEO NIGHT A SUCCESS!

HSR's first two video nights turned out to be quite a success with a packed house of women lounging in various degrees of recline before the TV screen watching *Desert Hearts*, *Liana*, and various shorts. Free soda and freshly-popped popcorn were enjoyed, along with unsolicited comments from certain members of the viewing audience (who shall remain nameless) which provided an abundance of comic relief.

HSR thanks Ginger for the idea of Friday Night Videos at Herland Center and for coordinating the bi-weekly event.

February 10 will feature *Lesbianage*, and Feb. 24 will present *Personal Best*. A donation is requested but not required. So what are you doing next Friday night? Join in the affordable fun at 7:30 at Herland, 2312 N.W. 39th Street.

NOTICE: to organizations, businesses, production companies, etc: Events and happenings planned for the first week or two of any given month should be advertised in the previous month's edition of the HSR Newsletter. By getting your information into the newsletter a month prior to the event it reaches more readers and more people will know about it before it happens. So, when planning an activity or event you hope to share with the women's community keep this in mind and get the word out early—for a happy turnout.

PRE-REGISTRATION FORM LEGISLATIVE DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Wednesday, March 1, 1989

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Organizational membership?: _____

PLEASE CHECK ACTIVITIES YOU PLAN TO ATTEND:

MORNING WORKSHOPS — 10:30-11:30 A.M.

- ☐ Lobbying Techniques (beginners)
☐ Lobbying Techniques II (advanced)

LUNCHEON DISCUSSIONS — 11:45-1 P.M.

- ☐ Mammograms at 35
☐ Constitutional Convention in 1990
☐ Legislative Process Reform
☐ Superfund Sites in Oklahoma
☐ Can further legislation help curb the AIDS dilemma?

AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS — 1:15-2:30 P.M.

- ☐ Ad Valorem Tax Reform: Impact on Education
☐ Women and the Law: Your Rights and Responsibilities
☐ Price Waterhouse Study, "What's Ahead for Families in Oklahoma"
☐ Progress report on economic development

AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS — 2:45-4 P.M.

- ☐ Teen-age Pregnancy (video)
☐ Family leave and child care
☐ Oklahoma's Prison Dilemma:
☐ Is There Hope?
☐ Roe vs Wade: Abortion, A State Issue?

PRE-REGISTRATION FEES:

\$5 PER PERSON for workshops only (\$6 at the door)

\$4 PER PERSON for luncheon only (LUNCHEONS MUST BE PRE-REGISTERED BEFORE FEB. 15, 1989)

Number of persons for workshops: _____ Total amount enclosed: _____

Number of persons for luncheon: _____ Total amount enclosed: _____

This luncheon is for my legislator: yes _____ no _____

IF REGISTERING MORE THAN ONE PERSON, PLEASE INCLUDE A LIST OF NAMES SO NAME TAGS CAN BE PREPARED.

Return registration form with registration fees by FEBRUARY 15, 1989 to:

LEGISLATIVE DAY AT THE CAPITOL
OKLAHOMA WOMEN'S POLITICAL CAUCUS
P.O. BOX 25212
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73125

SPOTLIGHT ON: PEGGY JOHNSON

by Sondra Metzger

This month's spotlight shines on Georgia native Peggy Johnson, who has generously given of her time and talent for Herland whenever called upon, and has recently joined the board of directors.

The 31-year-old moved to Oklahoma City six years ago after an abrupt discharge from the Navy.

"I got kicked out of the Navy for being a lesbian," Peggy said, "and the woman I was seeing was from here. We left Philadelphia, where we were discharged, and drove to see my family in Macon, GA, then came here to see hers. We were on our way to New Orleans but ended up staying here."

Peggy looks back at the time of her discharge as a rough time in her life. "The ironic thing about it was, I was awarded Sailor of the Month the month before I got kicked out. I had a good job and was highly respected in the work force."

She received an honorable discharge, but the whole experience forced her to think about what being a lesbian meant to her and work to improve her level of self esteem.

When Peggy was a child her maternal grandmother was her first real musical influence. "My grandmother played the piano and when I'd go to her house I'd tinker around on it," she said. At 13, Peggy was given a beat-up electric guitar & amplifier. Thus began her singer/songwriter/guitarist journey.

My first song," she said, "was in the key of G and was something serious about people showing they cared about each other in public but really didn't once they got home. That was just how I felt about the whole deal. I was sitting up on a hill watching a softball game and somebody got hurt and everyone ran over to see how the person was. The cynical little 13-year-old that I was thought 'Yeh, they're showing it now but they won't care later.' That tells quite a lot about my character."

The guitar isn't the only instrument Peggy can play. She plays piano a little, and played clarinet while in high school. Early on she bought a harmonica at the Top Value Stamp Store. After satisfying a longing to play the trumpet, Peggy moved on to the banjo.

"I played old folk songs on the banjo," she said. "I didn't pursue it much; I'm not a real traditionalist. But I

did start with the old ones like *Pretty Boy Floyd*."

Her first performance in public occurred the first week she had the guitar. She and three others formed a band and performed a commercial during the seventh grade variety show.

"We learned the BC Powder song," she laughed. "I learned G-C-D chords the first three days I had the guitar and have been using them ever since."

A performance at summer camp followed with talent shows while she was in junior high. All the performances came as a great surprise to Peggy's mother because Peggy was a shy, introverted child.

"I played on the band bus," she said, "and even took the guitar to Latin class. I just always played."

The first time Oklahoma City heard Peggy Johnson was in 1982 when she took the stage at the Long Branch Saloon and sang *Me and Bobbie McGee*.

"I did that at the top of my best Janis Joplin imitation lungs," she said. "Even though it was quite well received, I didn't do it again for quite a few years. I did back porch parties where I started to meet a few people. The very first professional Peggy Johnson performance was at the Samuri in 1984. I just got up in between somebody's set and the owner came up afterwards and asked if I wanted a job. Then the Second Fret opened a few months later and that was really when I became known."

Like Donna DeSalvo, Peggy doesn't know how to classify her music either.

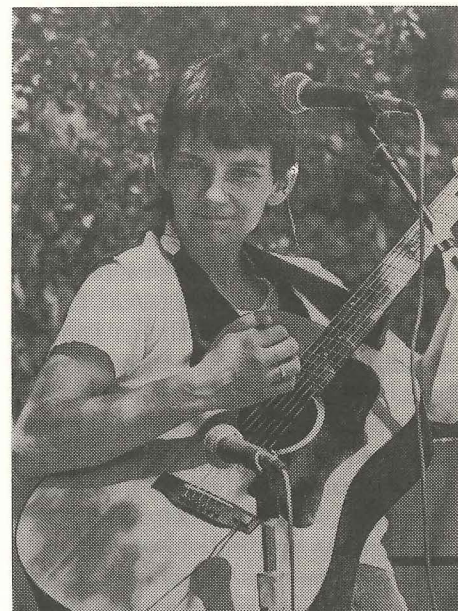
"Some people think it's country," she said, "but that's because of my Georgia accent. I like to call it folk music because that's music about stuff—lesbian folk music, in a way, which is a valid thing. It has a different style to it than your standard folk music."

When she's not doing the singing, Peggy likes to listen to the sounds of Joan Armatrading, Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt, Bob Dylan and Ferron.

Peggy's favorite songs that she has written are the most recent one (whatever it may be), *Pistol At My Door*, and *Creedy's Song*, which is dedicated to one of her two cats. Her favorite place to perform was the Second Fret until it closed.

"That was a music place," she said. "People went there to hear whoever was performing. They didn't go just to drink and talk. It was a music colony. It was small enough to be warm. It wasn't so big you couldn't feel the people."

One of Peggy's fondest memories of



the Second Fret happened in February 1986. Snow was falling and she wasn't expecting anyone to show up for her performance. Instead, Peggy found herself facing a packed house that stayed later than usual even with the deepening accumulation of snow.

Her funniest moment onstage occurred a year and a half ago when she wore a tail in her hair, which she cut off and raffled off to raise money to go to the Women's Music Festival in Michigan.

"I thought it would be okay," she said, "but when my friend came on stage to cut it off, I wanted to change my mind. Several people told me later that they weren't going to cash in their tickets so I could keep it."

Each time Peggy performs, someone in the audience usually requests *Blender Blues*. Some of you might not know that Peggy did not write the entire song.

"That song came from a bluegrass festival I went to in 1979," she said. "I had been listening to Bonnie Raitt for a year. Finding her music just changed my life and I knew quite a few of her songs. She doesn't tend to be a big writer. I was playing in the campgrounds at the festival by the firelight and this guy came up to me and said that he had a great song of hers that she did on a bootleg tape and then wrote the words down on a brown paper bag with a fat magic marker. I didn't think anything of it because people are always giving me lyrics to put music to. I carried it around for a year in my satchel until one day when I had nothing to do and got it out."

Continued on page 11

When Peggy read the first line, *Let me be your Blender, baby*, she eagerly deciphered the rest of the song. After putting chords to it, she had a clever song that is loved by all.

During the day, Peggy works at an artistic foundry that casts bronze sculpture. By the time you read this article, she will be working part-time and attending school at Central State where she is majoring in political science.

The day I took the picture accompanying this article, Peggy was performing before the lunch-time crowd at Kerr Park. At one point, she performed a lesbian folk song. Being in what I consider mixed company, it surprised me when no one reacted negatively to the song.

"Part of it is because you know my music," she said. "I think someone who doesn't know me either does not hear it or they are not sure what they heard. I don't so much try to prove a point like I used to. I just sing songs the way they go for me. It's harder for me to sing the songs in a heterosexual context than it is to put up with anybody giving me a hard time because I sing them as a lesbian. To me, it's lying. It's harder to lie than to be prepared if anybody should be upset."

Peggy has lost one job because of her sexual preference (the navy job). She feels she is not considered for some music jobs more because of her limited musical style than her lesbianism.

Her dream is to do for people what other musicians have done for her.

"My hope is that I can give that back to some people like it has been given to me," she said. "People like Jackson Browne, Bob Dylan, Joan Armatrading and Ferron have literally saved my life with what they've done with their talent. There have been years when all I could relate to was an album."

Although Peggy performs solo, she is also a member of the Three of Hearts, whose other members are Mary R., Elyse A. and Cindy B. She advises aspiring performers to practice.

"Just do it," she said. "Show up everywhere there is to show up and play your songs."

During Herland's December board meeting, Peggy became a member of the board. Up to this point, her involvement with Herland has been through her musical talents in fundraising efforts.

"A woman I met at the Long Branch Saloon told me about one of the gay

bars when I first moved here," she said. "I guess I found out about Herland from reading something posted there. The first time I played for Herland was in 1983 at a women's camp-out at Lake Thunderbird. It was quite an honor to be asked to join the board."

When she has time, our latest board member likes to refinish wood furniture for her house. Peggy is also involved in another nonprofit organization, Friendships United, which is raising money to make a cassette tape of different local musicians. Proceeds from the sale of the tape will go to the AIDS hospice, the Winds.

I think it's a neat project," she said, "because it will give the musicians a chance to use their talents to benefit a good cause over a period of time instead of just having benefit performances. It will be more of a long range thing. The only thing the organization is allied with is the AIDS Support Program. It's really a blend of different people throughout the community. It's not a religious or political organization. It's a group of people who got together to make a tape and any implication that it might be a religious thing is too limiting. Individual beliefs are that it is a good, worthy project for their time."

Peggy joined Herland's board because she wanted to be more helpful to the community through some type of membership on a board or steering committee to share ideas and then find a way to make them happen. Although she felt good helping out with her musical ability, she wanted something more practical.

"My first impression of Herland in 1983 was that it was well-organized," she said. "I didn't know at that time that it was just starting. I thought it had been around for years. I'm looking forward to learning from the experience of the older board members."

Peggy feels that the newsletter has become more political in recent months because it has reported more national news. She had to get a newspaper from Macon, GA, to read the story about Rosa Parks retiring. Parks was the black woman who refused to sit in the back of the bus in the 1950s. The story wasn't found in the Daily Oklahoman. Not surprising

"I really like the shape the newsletter has taken," she said. "That's not to cut down what it has been; it's just grown. It's been going for six years and has

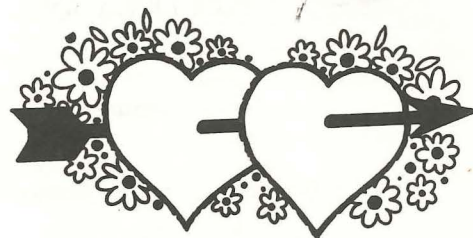
gone through changes and transitions and is still alive. It's the main thing for Herland. Next is the retreats."

Peggy is scheduled to perform at a coffeehouse at Herland on Feb. 11 and is looking forward to it because she has done only one Oklahoma women's event in a year and a half and feels it's an experience everyone should have. Plus, it's for Herland.

"Herland isn't a building," she said. "Herland is a gathering place for a whole bunch of different types of women. From the strength gained as a group, we can branch out into the individual things we like to do. We gain strength by coming together. The other things can get done from the strength of our unity. I still see Herland as a central place or attitude for people to get that strength to go out on their own."

When asked what her personal ambitions are for Peggy, she said she wanted to grow old with a good attitude.

"I just want to grow old gracefully," she said. "I don't want to be a bitter old woman. I try to live my life with an open heart. It's not always easy. I'm not always able to do it. I try to have an open mind about people and how they view life Whatever I do I hope I'm very active because I think that's the key. But I can't tell you specifically what I'm gonna do with my life. Just keep busy."



QUOTE OF THE MONTH . . .

"Last year, after I went on the march on Washington, people said to me, 'What are you doing? They're gonna' think you're gay.' People think that already, because I hang out with a lot of women. There hasn't been a studio head I've worked for who hasn't come out and asked me if I'm a lesbian. . . . I say, 'Normally, this would be none of your business. However, I will answer you.' And I say, 'It's possible. I'm not practicing at the moment, but I will not say it will never happen or hasn't happened in my past.'"

ACTRESS WHOOP! GOLDBERG,
in *The Advocate*

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