

The HERLAND VOICE

SEPTEMBER, 1989

NEWSLETTER'S NEW LOOK

Hey! Have you noticed anything different about the newsletter? After many months, she now has her own name, her own identity, The Herland Voice.

The significance of the name, suggested by one of our board members, can best be described in the words of that board member:

"I feel we should include the word 'Herland' because it carries such power and hard-fought roots in the country as a whole. The word 'voice' works as an instrument with which to spread the power and conviction of our struggle. If we, as a community, raise our voice as one, we can indeed overcome."

As executive editor, my goal is to make this newsletter something you can't wait to get into your hands. Each month we are finding ways to make the newsletter more enjoyable, easier to read, and to include more variety. I would like to see it be more than what it is, and I think, with your help, that can be accomplished.

After we file the necessary paperwork to have the newsletter copyrighted, we will feature local poets and artists when the works are available. If you have any suggestions or contributions, please let me know.

You are the heart of the newsletter. Without you, there is no need for a newsletter. I'm very excited about the "Voice," and I hope you will be, too. ■



N.O.W. MEETING HELD

by Margaret C.

The August 5, 1989 meeting of the local chapter of the National Organization for Women, Metro OKC NOW, drew more than 30 women and one man determined to work to keep freedom of choice in Oklahoma. Following a video and discussion, the group opted to work closely with Campaign for Choice, but at the same time to do separate actions to more accurately reflect the more radical attitude of NOW members.

The first undertaking was ambitious, requiring the gathering of data, writing of articles, lay-out and printing for a brochure to present to the legislature on August 14, the first day of the Special Session called by Gov. Bellmon. The brochure was ready for delivery, and at 9:00 a.m. on Monday the 14th, several NOW members wearing buttons declaring "I'm Pro-Choice—and I Vote," delivered the brochures to all of our state legislators, the Governor, Attorney General, etc. The brochures were also "wearing" a button, this button with the "no more hangers" logo.

Metro OKC's next meeting was planned for August 26, 1989. At that meeting the preliminary work began on setting up a phone tree. Other projects and actions will be planned. Anyone interested in attending a NOW meeting may call (405) 528-0400 for information. ■

NAMES PROJECT QUILT IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

A delegation of at least 20 people so far are going to represent the Oklahoma chapter of the NAMES Project at the national display of the AIDS Memorial Quilt in Washington on October 6th, 7th and 8th. The display will be the last time the Quilt is shown in its entirety due to its increasing size.

The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt was begun as a way to remember the names of those who have died of the AIDS epidemic. The Project has grown to encompass over 15,000 names and cover an area over 14 football fields in size.

A portion of the Quilt was shown in Oklahoma City at the State Fairgrounds last May. The display was put together by the Oklahoma chapter of the NAMES Project with the help of hundreds of volunteers. Over \$9,000 was raised and distributed to local organizations in Oklahoma City and Tulsa that provide direct services to Persons With AIDS (PWA's).

The delegation from Oklahoma will be helping with the national display as volunteers filling several capacities. Anyone interested in attending the Washington, D.C. display can get discounted air fare and hotel rates by calling The Oklahoma NAMES Project at 949-2952.

The Oklahoma Chapter of the NAMES Project is sponsoring a garage sale to raise money for the national display of the Quilt in Washington, D.C. in October. The garage sale will be September 23rd. The Oklahoma Chapter is seeking donations of garage sale items for the fund raiser. Interested donors should call 949-2952 or 525-3221 to make arrangements. ■

HSR — CALENDAR OF EVENTS — SEPTEMBER

- Sept. 1 - 4** - Annual Fall Retreat, Lake Wister State Park
- Sept. 8** - Friday Night Video, "The Accused," 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 11** - OK Gay/Lesbian Political Caucus, Resource Center, 7:00 p.m.
- Sept. 15** - Deadline for submissions to newsletter.
- Sept. 17** - HSR monthly board meeting, Resource Center, 4:30 p.m.
- Sept. 22** - Friday Night Video, "The Women of Brewster Place, Part I," 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 23** - Garage Sale sponsored by OK Chapter of the NAMES Project, 2509 Clermont (near Nichols Hills), 9 - 5; for more info call 525-3221.
- Sept. 23** - Seminar on animal rights by PETA, 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.; call (301) 770-7444 for more information.
- Oct. 1** - Volunteer Orientation, Resource Center, 2 p.m.

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.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FORM

Name(s) _____

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Oklahoma City, OK 73112

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DEADLINE on all advertising and submissions is the 15th of each month.

SUBSCRIPTIONS to the HERLAND VOICE are free upon request.

EDITORIAL POLICY!

The HERLAND VOICE is offered as an open forum for community discourse. Materials printed herein reflect 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 must be signed by the writer with full name. Letters will not be printed with name unless writer requests it. Editing may be necessary for space or to avoid obscenity, libel, or invasion of privacy, but ideas will not be altered. Publication of all materials is at the discretion of the editors. Anyone having a complaint about the content of this newsletter may contact the editors at 521-9696.

HERLAND IS . . .

A non-profit corporation composed of a collective of wimmin — 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 wimmin's community. It is a place to learn and grow, meet other wimmin, 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.

LESBIAN/GAY YOUTH SUICIDES

A report just released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Task Force on Youth Suicide acknowledges that lesbian and gay youth are at increased risk for suicide, and calls for "an end [to] discrimination against youths on the basis of such characteristics as disability, sexual orientation, and financial status."

The report, which was prepared under former DHHS Secretary Otis R. Bowen, was completed in January, 1989 but did not receive publication until August.

"According to research discussed in the DHHS report, suicide is the leading cause of death among lesbian, gay, and other sexual minority youth," said Kevin Berrill, Director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Anti-Violence Project. "The increased risk of suicide facing these youth is linked to growing up in a society that teaches them to hide and to hate themselves. We welcome this report and hope it will

lead to action that will save lives."

The report revealed that studies show that lesbian and gay youth "may comprise up to 30 percent of completed suicides annually," and "homosexuals of both sexes are two to six times more likely to attempt suicide than are heterosexuals."

In a section focusing on prevention and interventions, the report stated that "mental health and youth service agencies can provide acceptance and support for young homosexuals, train their personnel on gay issues, and provide appropriate gay adult role models; schools can protect gay youth from abuse from their peers and provide accurate information about homosexuality in health curricula; families should accept their child and work toward educating themselves about the development and nature of homosexuality."

Copies of the 4-volume report of the DHHS Secretary's Task Force on Youth Suicide cost \$45.00 and can be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. ■

Around the Country

GAY PRIDE MARCH DUBUQUE, IOWA

It is time once again for Dubuque, Iowa's annual lesbian/gay pride rally/march, this one being its third. The date is set for September 16, 1989 at Washington Park. The rally begins at noon and the march to follow at approximately 1:00 p.m.

This event began on September 19, 1987 and was the beginning of confronting homophobia in this community and the surrounding areas. This event is now the continuation of confronting homophobia. Dubuque's first rally/march stimulated numerous hecklers to come out and physically and verbally harass supporters, of which were few. Many eggs were thrown and the thirty people who dared to march that first time were all hit by the end of the march. The second march/rally became a national event and was quite different than the first, with approximately 600 supporters flooding Dubuque from everywhere from San Francisco to Washington, D.C. There was no egg-throwing at the second, although many eggs were confiscated by the police.

In between the Dubuque marches, the fight to convince Dubuque's city council to include "sexual orientation" in the city ordinance as a protected category was on. This first fight, however, was recently terminated on May 15, 1989, by a 4-3 "no" vote. Another additional action that has kept the continuation of confronting homophobia alive is the filing of two discrimination claims by a Dubuque lesbian, Stacie Neldaughter. These claims revolve around Stacie being terminated from a softball team she had been playing with for three years and Stacie's team being harassed in league play in Dickeyville, Wi., a town ten minutes outside of Dubuque. The first claim is currently under investigation while probable cause has been found for the latter.

It thus appears that the first Dubuque lesbian/gay march was the stimulus to all the things that followed. It is important to continue this powerful spirit at the third annual march; we hope to see you there! ■

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN FUND SEEKS INTERNS

Washington, D.C., August 8—The Human Rights Campaign Fund is looking for interns for its office in Washington, D.C. Interns work in all program areas, including legislative, political, field, lesbian issues, administration and public relations.

"This is a great opportunity for someone interested in lesbian and gay issues, or just in learning how government and politics work," said HRCF Political Director Eric Rosenthal, who coordinates the intern program. "Interns have an opportunity to make a contribution to the lesbian and gay movement as they work on important Congressional issues."

Interns receive a stipend from HRCF and must work at least 20 hours per week for three months. Interns work under the direction of an HRCF staff member.

People who have questions or who are interested in applying for internships should contact Eric Rosenthal at (202) 628-4160 or at the Human Rights Campaign Fund, 1012 14th Street, N.W., 6th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20005. The application should include a resume, writing sample and a letter discussing why you want to work at HRCF.

HRCF is the largest national AIDS and gay and lesbian advocacy organization and political action committee. HRCF lobbies, educates and helps elect members of the U.S. Congress. HRCF also organizes and mobilizes gays and lesbians and their supporters in the field, and influences public opinion through national and local media. ■

ABORTION RIGHTS & GAY/LESBIAN RIGHTS

Washington, D.C. The Supreme Court will hear **Turnick v. Ragsdale** and **Ohio v. Akron Center for Reproductive Health** in the term beginning in October. The **Acron** case involves access to abortions for minors. The

Turnock case will determine the degree to which states can regulate clinics performing abortions.

The two cases, and one other also scheduled to be heard, may provide an opportunity for the Court to erode or overturn the constitutional guarantees to privacy rights and abortion articulated in the landmark **Roe v. Wade** case.

"These issues are critical to us as lesbians and gays," said Eric Rosenthal, political director of the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF). "Court rulings are built on previous judicial decisions, and the privacy rights guaranteed in **Roe** must stand if our privacy rights are ever to be protected by the courts.

"If we want the constitutional rights of women upheld, if we want to see sodomy decisions like **Hardwick v. Bowers** overturned, then the rights to privacy must be upheld," said Rosenthal.

In July, the Supreme Court seriously weakened women's access to abortion in its decision in the **Webster v. Reproductive Health Services** case. The court also suggested that constitutional guarantees for privacy and abortion may be lost as the Court issues opinions in future cases.

HRCF has been part of the pro-choice coalition organized by National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), Voters for Choice, National Organization for Women (NOW) and others.

Recently, pro-choice advocates won a victory in the U.S. Congress when the House of Representatives voted to uphold funding of abortion clinics in the nation's capital as part of the District of Columbia's appropriations bill.

"Increasingly, we cannot depend on the Court to uphold the Constitution and defend individual liberties, so we must protect ourselves by using the ballot box," said Tim McFeeley, HRCF executive director.

"NARAL and other pro-choice organizations are making abortion a major issue in key election campaigns around the country. Be certain you know where you politician stands before you cast your vote," said McFeeley. "Don't accept vague promises. The stakes are too high for women, for gays and for lesbians." ■

GEORGIA HETEROSEXUAL SODOMY CONVICTION CHALLENGED: Case May Fuel Legislative Repeal Effort

Georgia attorneys are challenging the conviction and jailing of an Atlanta-area man on charges resulting from private and consensual sodomy with his wife. A petition for a writ of habeas corpus was filed in DeKalb Superior Court on July 28 to overturn the man's two-year jail sentence. The petition argues that the conviction under the 156-year-old law is vague and overly broad. Winning Moseley's release from jail does not preclude a legal challenge to the Georgia sodomy law based on his case.

James Moseley was accused by his wife, from whom he was being divorced, of rape and aggravated oral and anal sodomy. On May 12, 1988, a jury found him innocent of all counts of coerced sex, but convicted him of sodomy because Moseley testified that he had engaged in consensual oral sex with his wife. Clayton County Superior Court Judge William Ison instructed the jury that Moseley's admission gave them the option of considering the consensual sodomy charge. The jury returned with a verdict of guilty and Ison sentenced Moseley to five years in jail. Moseley, eligible for parole after two years, has served 17 months.

Moseley's case has received extensive coverage in the non-gay press in Atlanta and around the state. Georgia Attorney General Michael Bowers, who argued to uphold the sodomy law in **Bowers v. Hardwick**, has said that "the law would have serious constitutional problems were it to be applied to a married couple."

In the wake of the Moseley case, Georgia gay and lesbian activists are considering a legislative repeal strategy to strike the law from the books. Kathy Woolard, president of the Lesbian and Gay Rights Chapter of Georgia ACLU, said, "We've got the momentum from the press coverage. This is a big issue right now and we should strike while the iron is hot."

Said Sue Hyde, director of the NGLTF Privacy Project, "We should always take advantage of the opportunities for repeal of sodomy laws. Judge Ison, due to his

bizarre preoccupation with the private consensual sexual behavior of adult Georgians, has presented us with the possibility for outright repeal. This development tastes particularly sweet because Georgia is the site of the **Hardwick** case in which the U.S. Supreme Court declared gay men and lesbians have no right to privacy. How fitting if Georgia becomes the first state to repeal its sodomy law." ■

SEEKING WOMEN'S STORIES ABOUT THE DEATHS OF THEIR MOTHERS

There are no books that speak to the specific grief of women losing their mothers. I know. I looked for one after my mother died. This collection of writings will allow us to find strength and solace in each others experiences and insights.

First person narratives, short stories and essays welcome. Send SASE for more information, or contributions by **December 31, 1989** to:

Helen Vozenilek
P.O. Box 18
Berkeley, CA 94701

FEDERAL APPEALS COURT REJECTS ARMY LESBIAN

In the latest development in lesbian Miriam Ben-Shalom's 13-year battle to re-enlist in the U.S. Army Reserves, the U.S. Federal Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit ruled on August 7 that the Army is not required to re-enlist Ben-Shalom. Justifying its decision in part on the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in **Bowers v. Hardwick**, in which the court held that states could regulate the rights of gay people to engage in private, adult, consensual sexual behavior, the court in **Ben-Shalom** upheld the Army's regulation discharging persons who "engage in homosexual conduct, or who by their statements demonstrate a propensity to engage in homosexual conduct."

The new decision by a three-judge panel in Chicago reverses a lower district court ruling which had declared the Army regulation unconstitutional and had ordered the Army to re-enlist

Ben-Shalom. Ben-Shalom will appeal to a full (en banc) panel of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

Sue Hyde, Director of the Privacy Project of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), and organizer of the Gay & Lesbian Military Freedom Project Coalition, condemned the court's decision. "The damage **Hardwick** did to the lives of gay men and lesbians continues to become clear with each new case. In **Ben-Shalom**, the 7th Circuit extends the dangerous logic of **Hardwick** to say it's o.k. to be gay, o.k. to say you're gay and you favor gay rights, but that it's not o.k. to **act** on one's sexual orientation, not o.k. to live our lives fully, without experiencing discrimination."

Ben-Shalom began her legal battle in 1976, when she was discharged from the Army Reserves because she acknowledged her lesbianism to reporters writing about her appointment as one of the first two women drill sergeants in the Army Reserves. In earlier victories, lower courts held that Ben-Shalom's First Amendment rights were violated by her discharge, and that the Army regulation denied to gay people equal protection under the law because it penalized persons for their status as homosexuals.

Apart from her lesbian identity, Ben-Shalom's qualifications to serve in the Army Reserves had not been questioned, nor had Ben-Shalom been charged with engaging in homosexual conduct. The Army claimed that embracing a homosexual identity indicated a propensity to engage in homosexual behavior, and that since homosexual behavior or a propensity toward it was proscribed by Army regulations, Ben-Shalom's First Amendment rights were not violated when she was dismissed for acknowledging her lesbian identity.

"It is the identity that makes her ineligible for military service, not the speaking of it out loud," wrote Judge Harlington Wood Jr. in the new **Ben-Shalom** decision. "Thus, if the Army's regulation affects speech, it does so only incidentally, in the course of pursuing other legitimate goals."

The Court accepted as "substantial" the Army's rationales for excluding lesbians and gay men from the service. The army's stated reasons included arguments that the presence of gay people in the military was harmful to good

Continued on next page

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morale, order, mutual trust, the integrity of the system and the ability of the Army to recruit and retain members. The court recognized Ben-Shalom's contention that prejudicial attitudes towards gay people formed the basis for the Army's regulation, but went on to hold: "There no doubt is prejudice against homosexuals both in and out of the Army. That possibility may be abating to a degree. However, the Army should not be required by the court to assume the risk . . . that accepting admitted homosexuals into the armed forces might imperil morale, discipline, and the effectiveness of our fighting forces."

Finally, the Court held that the legal standard of review to decide on whether Ben-Shalom, as a lesbian, was denied equal protection under the law by the Army's regulation was a "deferential" one, because "if homosexual conduct may constitutionally be criminalized [under **Hardwick**], then homosexuals do not constitute a suspect or quasi-suspect class entitled to greater than rational basis scrutiny for equal protection purposes." Applying this deferential standard, the Court found that "the new regulation . . . clearly promotes a legitimate government interest sufficient to survive rational basis scrutiny."

The decision in Ben-Shalom's case is a setback for lesbian and gay activists working to secure the right to serve in the military. "We had hoped to find relief in this decision for service members who face witchhunts and prosecutions simply for being gay or lesbian; instead we find judicial prejudice," said Hyde.

Hyde noted that the Gay & Lesbian Military Freedom Project Coalition, which NGLTF spearheads, will continue to pursue a Congressional strategy to overturn the anti-gay/lesbian military policy. Hyde also noted NGLTF's plans to hold a Military Freedom demonstration at the White House on November 10. The Gay and Lesbian Military Freedom Project is a joint project of NGLTF, the National Organization for Women, Women's Equity Action League, National Lawyers Guild Military Law Task Force, ACLU Gay and Lesbian Rights Project, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, and Citizen Soldier. ■

Chatterbox

by Sondra Metzger

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals is presenting a one-day seminar in Oklahoma City for "the beginning animal rights activist." It will be held on Sept. 23, 1989, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., with a free vegan lunch included. The cost is \$20. For more information and a registration form, call PETA at (301) 770-7444 before Sept. 8 . . .

the Quilt is scheduled to be displayed October 6 - 8, 1989, in Washington, D.C. This will be the last time the entire quilt will be displayed due to its size. Sections of the Quilt will continue to tour and be displayed. All Quilt panels that were received at the NAMES Project by Aug. 1, 1989, will be included in this display. A brochure is available at Herland if you would like to volunteer to be a part of this event . . .

if you would like to join the Episcopal Women's Caucus, write to P.O. Box 5172, Laurel, MD 20707 . . .

ACHÉ, the Black Lesbian Newsletter, is still being published. For information, write ACHÉ, P.O. Box 6071, Atlanta, GA 94706 . . .

a 13-month black and white calendar entitled "Take Back The Night" is available from Full Womoon, P.O. Box 1205, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. Cost is \$11.50. The 11 x 17 hanging wall calendar contains works of artists and writers from diverse cultural experiences . . .

the San Francisco Examiner is making their 64-page series, "Gay In America," available for everyone to purchase. The order form can be found within the pages of this issue of the Herland Voice. The Examiner has granted us one-time-only reprinting rights, so we will be featuring parts of the series in this and upcoming issues of the newsletter. It is unfortunate that we lack sufficient space to run the whole series as it appeared over a period of 16 days in the Examiner .

San Francisco Examiner

The Examiner has just concluded an unprecedented 16-part feature on gays in America. More than 60 Examiner staff members contributed to this series, talking to thousands of people in the Bay Area and across the country. This important report studied gay Americans, American society and their uneasy intersection. In every major aspect of our culture, "Gay in America" revealed how gay and straight attitudes are changing as we approach the 90s.

For a limited time, we're making available this extraordinary work as a special reprint package. Each is a full sixty-four pages, printed flexographically (the ink won't come off on your fingers). Every reprint comes with a bonus: the original 13½ x 23-inch poster used to promote the series. Cost for the reprint and poster together (sorry, they're not available separately) is \$5.00. This covers our costs for processing, postage and same-day shipping when we receive your order. The Examiner makes no profit on sales of these reprints.

Quantities are limited; order soon.

Examiner "Gay in America" Reprint Offer

I'd like to order reprint(s)/poster(s) as follows:
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San Francisco Examiner

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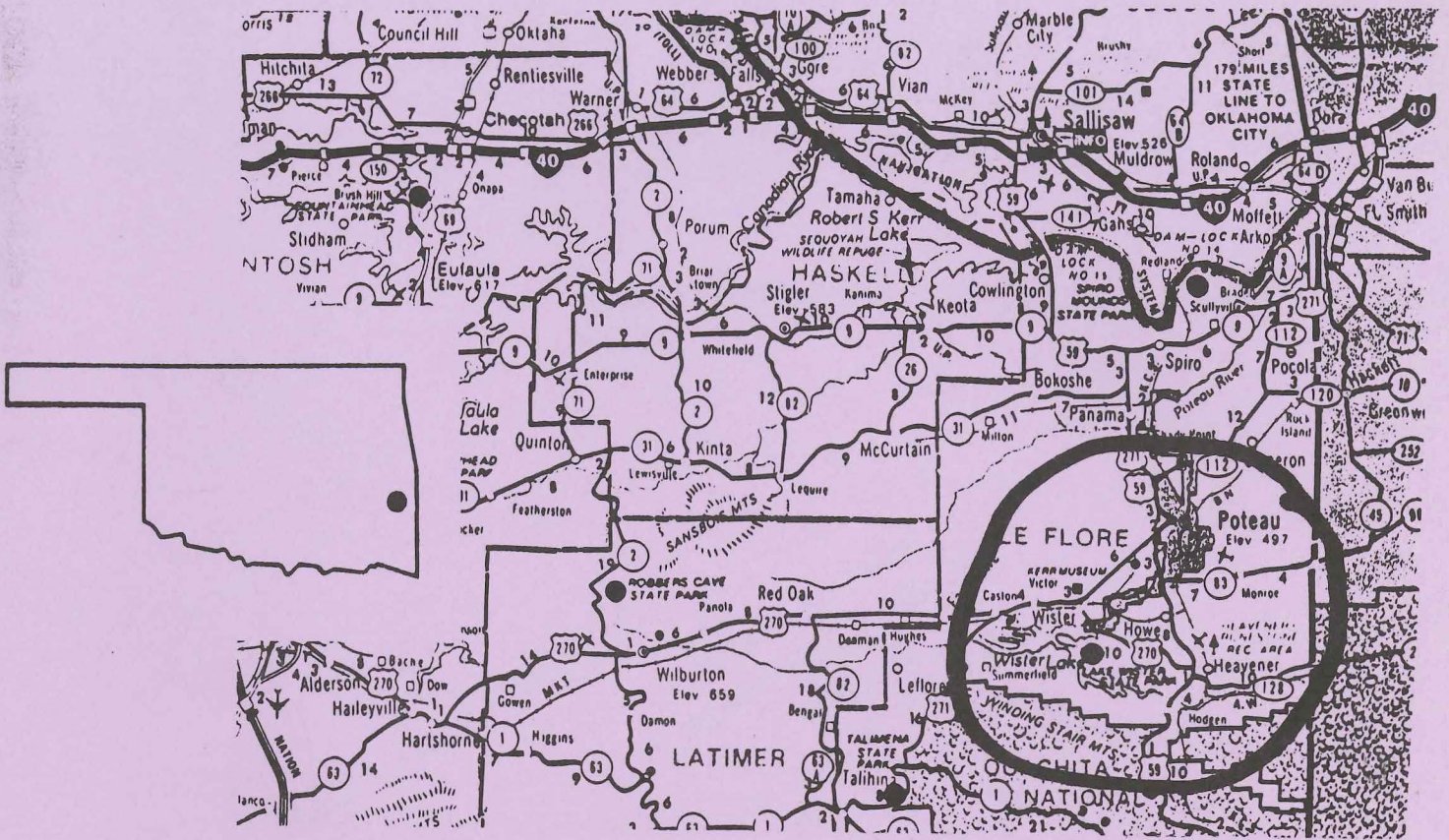
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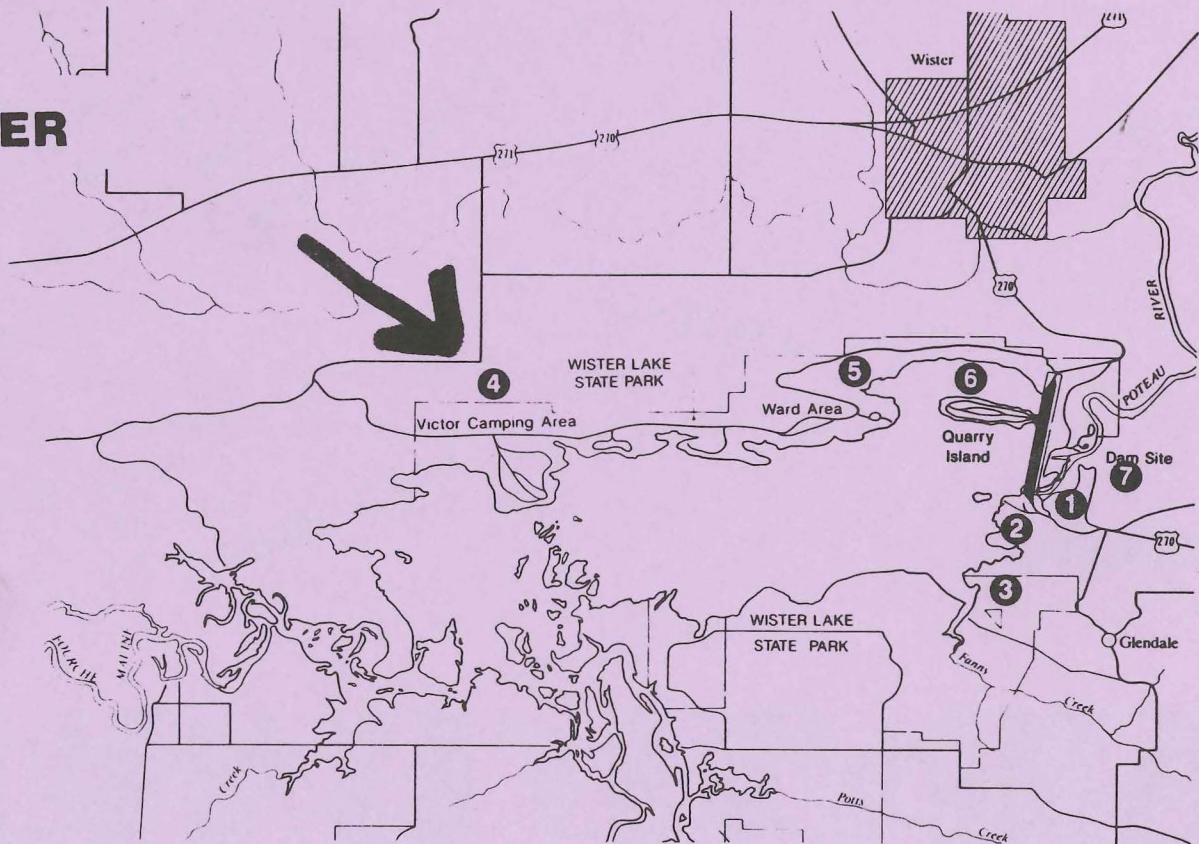
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**IF YOU STILL WANT TO REGISTER,
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WISTER



Letters to the Editor

Greetings!

I am writing to tell you about my latest project, a tape of music about the experience of and recovery process from sexual assault. As you may know, I have been writing this music since 1985 and decided within the last year to focus on performing and recording it.

My goals with what I call my "survivor music" is to provide a healing tool for survivors and those helping survivors with the healing process—shelter workers, rape crisis workers, therapists and others. My second goal is to raise the public's awareness of the issues of violence and the threat of violence we face in everyday life.

My desire is to offer music that can bring comfort, hope and truth to many people who have experiences they feel they cannot put into words.

Working on projects such as this can be an intense and lonely experience. After feeling the powerful response to this music, I feel it is a project that needs immediate action. Because I have put my own resources into promotion and production in most recent years, I am also in need of your financial support. It is amazing how big a difference even a small contribution can make.

I believe this music needs to reach as many people as possible, as soon as possible. All of the music is written and ready to be recorded. Your support can take it into the studio!

To contribute, you may make a financial contribution; however, because I am not a nonprofit institution, your contribution is not tax deductible. You may ask colleagues who share the same interest in sexual abuse to contribute, or you may purchase one of my current recordings. **Daylight** is a tape of original instrumental music. **By Request Only** is a vocal tape featuring original compositions.

If your contribution is \$150 or more, you will be listed as a contributor on the tape cover and will receive one free copy of the final product. If your donation is between \$50 and \$150, you will receive one free copy of the final product.

No matter what kind of support you have to offer, I trust that you will spread the word about this project, and I thank you for your cooperation, your recognition of my talent and your appreciation. Just as you carry my music with you, I carry you with me. Thanks for listening!

Nancy Day

(NOTE: **Daylight** and **By Request Only** are available at Herland. — Ed.)

Sisters,

Please include us on your subscribers mailing list. A kind soul gave us a back issue. We devoured it. Now, we crave more.

Thank you for your efforts.

(from Shawnee, Oklahoma)

YES! I want to be a Friend of Herland. My minimum donation of \$12 allows me use of the Herland Library and a 10% discount on store purchases over the next 12 months. (My \$12 is enclosed.)

YES! I want to help Herland with a donation to the New Building Fund.

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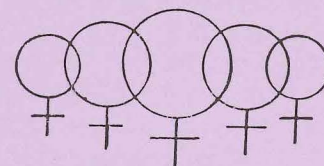
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GAY IN AMERICA SERIES DEFINITIONS

The following are a list of definitions whose history might surprise even the most knowledgeable gay or lesbian.

GAY — homosexual. In the 17th century, the word gay went beyond its original meaning of happy to include men who were playboys. By the next century, it was applied to women with promiscuous reputations. By the early 20th century, it had been adopted by homosexuals to refer to themselves. Since 1970, the word has gained acceptance as a standard, nonslang, nonpejorative synonym for homosexuality.

LESBIAN — a woman attracted to women. It derives from the isle of Lesbos, where the ancient Greek poet and teacher, Sappho, established a school for girls about 580 B.C. As Sappho became known for her poetry celebrating love between women, the term "lesbian" evolved from the meaning "one who lives on Lesbos" to "a woman like Sappho and her followers."

HOMOSEXUAL — a person who is attracted to people of the same sex. Karl Maria Kertbeny coined the term in 1869 in a pamphlet arguing for the repeal of Prussia's anti-homosexual laws. U.S. Medical journals adopted the term in the 1890's, and it filtered into general use in the 1920s.

HETEROSEXUAL — a person who is attracted (most of the time) to people of the opposite sex. The word came into being after the introduction of the word homosexual.

DYKE — originally a 19th century slang word referring to male clothing. When first used in reference to women, it carried a derogatory connotation of masculine appearance or behavior. While the masculine connotation often remains, many lesbians have adopted the term, thus reducing the negative nuance.

FAGGOT — a male homosexual. Originally a term of derision, it has been adopted by many of those to whom it refers. Experts disagree over the word's origin. Some suggest it derives from FAG, a British schoolboy term for a younger student required to perform menial tasks for an older student.

LAVENDER — is the color most often associated with being gay, because it is the combination of colors traditionally representing male and female—blue and pink.

LADSLOVE — 19th century poets used this plant as a symbol of homosexuality.

CALAMUS — a plant used by poet Walt Whitman to symbolize homoerotic love.

LABYRIS — a double-bladed ax that is the symbol of lesbianism often used in jewelry. Appearing in mythological times as a scepter for the Amazon goddess Demeter (Artemis), scholars speculate the ax may have been used in battle by female Scythian warriors, who adopted it when male priests overtook the goddess' shrine at Delphi.

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MOM, I'M IN LOVE WITH A WOMAN. I'M GAY.

By Jacqui Tully

I was 24. An adult. And a mess of an adult, too, skidding precariously toward panic. And why not—my mother sat calmly across from me, scrutinizing my spice rack while I prepared to change her life by telling her I was gay. It was 1974.

"Mom, you know Jeanette. Remember her?"

"Of course I do. She's sweet, but too thin."

"Mom, I'm in love with her. I'm gay."

The blood drained from her face and all I recall was a blur of red lipstick and two blazing green eyes. She stared at me. The daughter of Polish immigrants, my mother has always been heroic in a crisis, and I would see her straining to say something to mask the pain I knew she felt.

She cleared her throat. "You're out of tarragon."

That conversation took place 15 years ago. But we haven't had a meaningful conversation about my homosexuality since then. Or should I say, yet. She has welcomed my lovers into her home and I always try to talk freely about my life, but we have never discussed how she feels about having a lesbian for a daughter.

She has never acknowledged how much she actually reveals to her friends about her middle child's life. My life. I strongly suspect that they know very little and I'll tell you why: My mother has three aces up her sleeve—two other daughters, both married, and one granddaughter.

I've never felt I could help her with the private hardships I am certain she has struggled with because of my homosexuality. If my mother experiences guilt over a soggy potato pancake, you can be certain she suffers through sleepless nights, wondering how she did "this" to me. Still, we never really talked. Had we, the fact of my sexuality might seem more real. Who needed that?

I have been grateful to have escaped the real horror that can occur when gays reveal their sexuality to parents. My mother didn't disown me. Nor did she sink into an intractable depression.

No. We were a pretty ordinary gay kid/shocked parent: truth followed by silence followed by years of strained cordiality.

And so, without ever speaking of it, we both did what we thought would preserve the connection. We avoided "it." Unfortunately, "it" was the fabric and heartbeat of my life.

Much later, avoidance turned to anger, but I still believe even the freest gay people move through the world with a reserve that springs from these early fears. We learn to travel the gray zone of the untruth with the best of them.

We must always work to be free, but we will never be entirely fearless.

This notion embraces the almost constant conflicts gays face: the yearning to be honest vs. the fear of reprisal; the longing for approval battling the need to be ourselves; and, the resignation we feel because of the self-consciousness of being gay.

Years back, when I took my first newspaper job in a smaller city back East, I interviewed a woman for a story about a local art museum. A vivacious talker with two young kids and a prominent lawyer husband, Barbara soon asked if I were single or married. Single, I told her, even though I had been living with Norma for several years.

Within two weeks Barbara was calling me regularly, trying to "fix me up." I became so exasperated I sank deeper into the convenient untruth.

"Well, actually, Barbara, I am involved with someone. I mean, I am single, but I'm tied up."

"Oh, what's his name?" she asked quickly, and I, panicking, replied,

"Norman."

"Well then," Barbara cheerfully sang out, "why don't you and Norman come to dinner Friday night?"

Part of going gay is being covert, even when secrecy is merely a bad habit rather than a necessity. The problem is, you cannot predict how people will respond. Sometimes you don't know whether you're being careful, cowardly or reasonable.

When my nine-year relationship with Norma ended, I plunged into a state of emotional devastation. Still living in the house, Norma grew so worried that she packed me into the car and drove me to my internist's office.

He bustled into the examining room

where Norma and I were sitting. What was wrong, he asked?

"My lover broke up with me. It's been nine years. I've been drinking and taking pills and I feel very frightened and unstable."

Insistently, he began taking my pulse. He said, "I'd like to see him in?"

"He is in," I answered dully. "That's him behind you in the blue dress."

What struck me most about the moment was this: For seven years I had let this kind man press a cold stethoscope to my chest while I confided my worst medical fears to him, but I had never told him I was gay. I was afraid to. Not seriously afraid. But seriously hesitant. Humans learn, early on, to view homosexuality with either terror or disdain. We can and do unlearn these unsuitable lessons, but we can't always predict when caution will be replaced by confidence.

After moving here, I started working with a remarkable man, a man you could tell anything. Yet I didn't tell him I was gay because I have never been able to figure out how you ease your sexuality into a job interview.

Several weeks into the job, we were working on a big case and he needed help in New York.

The night I arrived, he took me to dinner. Over a bottle of wine and a pleasant conversation, he casually mentioned that his wife had wondered if I were single or married. I jumped in and told him I was gay. He responded with characteristic kindness. It was a kindness we sometimes don't welcome. It can be condescending, a form of dismissal. With my boss this time, it was simply a relief.

Later, as we grew closer, and I was completely relaxed with him, we would sometimes find ourselves watching the same beautiful woman walk down the street, then laugh as we realized what we were thinking. The point is: Our gayness invades all corners of our lives. We never forget what we are.

Ultimately, big issues disguise themselves as small nuisances and frustrations.

A friend recalled standing off to the side at a wedding while the bride and groom fed each other cake. "Both of their families stood near them, clapping wildly. I just can't imagine what it

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would be like having the world drown in my happiness."

When I don't hold hands with my lover in the grocery store, the issue isn't how much I can display affection publicly. It's freedom. My freedom. I don't have as much of it as heterosexuals do.

I sometimes watch men and women standing on a street corner, kissing. I love these moments; they're wildly romantic. But it reminds me I am not as spontaneous in the same situation.

A wise old friend once told me that happiness consists of being perfectly satisfied with what we have got and with what we haven't got. Gays may best understand the paradox in that remark: Our liberation triggers a kind of imprisonment—the subtle constrictions of homophobia. If we can break that chain reaction, we may be liberated.

People wonder: why are gay people gay? I don't know. Two women once told me they were gay after watching "Peter Pan." Another friend said she simply had never fallen out of love with Donna Reed. The truth about these moments is that we have been asked to justify them since the moment we articulated them.

My demarcation point arrived weeks after I graduated from college. I had never once thought I was gay. I had never said the word "lesbian" out loud.

I took a trip with my best friend. On the first night we slept in the same bed, in a dusty motel in the middle of the New Mexico desert. It was too hot to breathe. In the middle of that still night I became so aware of my friend's presence I could not sleep. I had no idea why.

The next night we slept in the same bed in her brother's house in Colorado. When we woke up that morning, we couldn't look at each other, though nothing had happened. I was bewildered and frightened. That day, as we drove from Denver through the Midwest, I leaned over and put my hand on her face. I experienced a kind of joy I had never felt before. And I knew my life had changed forever. Though I had lost my place in the world, I was free.

Tully is a free-lance writer in San Francisco.

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ANNOUNCES

ANNUAL FALL RETREAT

September 1 - 4, Lake Wister State Park

FRIDAY NIGHT VIDEO

September 8, 7:30 p.m. - "The Accused"

BOARD MEETING

September 17, 4:30 p.m. - Resource Center

FRIDAY NIGHT VIDEO

September 22, 7:30 p.m. - "The Women of Brewster Place, Part I"

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION MEETING

August 20, 2:00 p.m. - Resource Center

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