

To the

HERLAND VOICE

JULY, 1990

SOME GLIMPSES INTO THE FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY

by Peggy Johnson

(The following is an excerpt from a more extensive work by the author entitled "Women and the Court: Do We need an ERA?" For a complete bibliography of works cited, write Peggy c/o Herland.)

In the years following the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1982, sex discrimination has continued to be a problem in the land of the free and the brave. Though in an historical context, strides have been made in the status of women in the United States, the ruling class (white males) has continued, through blatant and covert methods of sexism, to perpetuate a society in which women are kept subjugated in varying degrees. One can liken this to political gerrymandering in which the party in power draws up voting districts in such a way that its hold on power is continued. Such is the yoke of women within a patriarchy.

Granted, a woman's place is not still assumed to be solely in the home. She is in the general work force in greater numbers than ever and enjoys some rights long taken for granted by males (such as suffrage and the

right to serve on a jury). Often, however, this "right to work" placed her in the position of a double job—the traditional role of homemaker and the new role of worker. Also, employment opportunities for women are limited within the powerful patriarchal framework. Furthermore, the 1980s have been witness to the feminization of poverty. The effect of divorce laws which upheld woman's dependency role, her secondary status in the class structure of the job market, and the general stereotype that women are not prepared to meet the pressures of the public sphere have all served to make and keep women poor.

The 1980s have been witness to the erosion of the gains made by women in the 1970s (Benokraitis et al., 1986). Support for the religious right and their endorsement of traditional sex roles along with efforts by the Reagan Administration to undermine social legislation and human rights progress have led to the sorry state of affairs in which we find ourselves in 1990. The religious fight

over abortion in the political arena has only added fuel to the fanatic fire.

The Reagan Administration refused to enforce Title IX of the Civil Rights Act which prohibits sex discrimination in employment and education (Benokraitis et al., 1986) and rejected the equal pay for equal work concept (Kinoy, 1987). For example, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission chairperson under President Carter, in 1980 considered the question of whether pay for "historically segregated jobs" has been lower for women and minorities as "the largest and most difficult issue left unresolved under Title VII" (qtd. in Barnett, 1986). On the other hand, Clarence Pendleton, chair of Reagan's conservative U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, said that comparable worth is "the looniest idea since Looney Tunes came on screen" (ibid).

The Supreme Court, however, has ruled on this "apples and oranges argument," stating that a job comparison rating on the

(continued on page 2)



ELAINE TOWNSEND IN CONCERT

with PEGGY JOHNSON opening

Herland will present Elaine Townsend in concert on Saturday, July 28 at 9:00 p.m. in the City Arts Center on the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds. Advance tickets are available at Herland for \$6.00. Admission at the door will be \$7.00.

Born in North Carolina and currently based in Oakland, Townsend has recently released her debut album, *Heartbreaker Blues*. The album is a collection of nine of Townsend's original compositions which presents a broad range of styles—blues, bluegrass, samba, rock and reggae. "My songwriting is a deeply personal experience to me and these nine songs reflect my growth as a songwriter and my growing up," says Townsend.

Feminization of Poverty

(continued from page 1)

basis of skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions is an objective way to decide a job's value. Presumably, the Reagan Administration thought of sex discrimination suits as a hindrance to the free enterprise system (Barnett, 1986) and consequently "distorted the meaning of affirmative action" ("Women in the Work Force" 1986). Also, in a clear policy statement, a Reagan task force charged with eliminating "excessive legislation" zeroed in on sexual harassment rules as those most in need of trimming down (Kirp et al., 1986).

In the job market, women receive 60 cents on the dollar compared to those workers who are men (Barnett, 1986). Kocol puts the figure at 64 cents (1987) but even on the high side the discrimination message is obvious. Women with a college degree earn the same, on average, as men with an eighth grade education (Kocol, 1987; Benokraitis et al., 1986) and Social Security benefits for women are barely two-thirds what men receive (Kocol, 1987). Though affirmative action created a significant improvement in the hiring, promotion and training of women in the 1970s and early 1980s, the Reagan Administration's distortion of the meaning and value of affirmative action has eroded some of that progress ("Women in the Work Force," 1986).

In 1970, 28.3% of all university and college teachers were women and by 1985 this number had climbed to 35.2% ("Women in the Work Force," 1986). An April 3, 1990 article in the *Washington Times* stated, however, that only 26.5% of college professors are women. Is this a disparate statistical study or a sign of the times? Similarly, a disproportionate number of grammar and high school teachers are women. This is a clear indication of the spread of the class and economic structure. Though the recent teacher walk-out in Oklahoma was a tax issue on its face, it was certainly a women's issue at its core.

A 1981 National Academy of Science study showed that while women and men generally do different work, women are overwhelmingly paid less. The more women dominate a profession, the less the pay (Jackson et al., 1988). Also, the Directory of Occupational Titles lists 420 jobs and shows that 80% of working women work in only 25 of them. Over half of those women work in 1 of the 2 major jobs as clerical and service workers (Jackson et al., 1988).

In 1982, 60% of the women working outside the home (53% of all women are now in the labor force) made less than \$10,000 per year (Jackson et al., 1988). Women of color fare particularly poorly in employment. Black women were the most likely of all

women to be in the labor force in 1984 (55%) and 72% of all black families below the poverty level were headed by women in 1983. Of all black families, 53.8% headed by women were below the poverty level compared to 28.3% of households headed by white women ("Women in the Work Force," 1986). While 20% of lawyers and 40% of law students are female (*Time*, 1989), less than 2% of all attorneys are black women ("Women in the Work Force," 1986).

These few figures are just a glimpse into what has been termed the feminization of poverty. Some of the blame has been placed on no-fault divorce reforms. According to a 1987 California Senate task force, "There is a direct relationship between the operation of the current legal system of divorce... and the resulting impoverishment of women and children" (qtd. in Crites et al. ed., 1987). Indeed, 90% of children live with their mothers after a divorce and their standard of living drops an average of 73% in the first year. Ex-husbands incomes increased an average 42% in the same time period. Of single mother households, 18% are unwed mothers, 50% are divorced, and 31% are separated. According to a 1985 U.S. Census Bureau

report, 54% of children in single parent, mother-headed households are below the poverty line. As poverty households have increased, government assistance decreased during the Reagan presidency.

The core of the problem, though, is sexism. Bringing an end to institutionalized sexism is no simple task. As those subject to racial discrimination know, centuries of subordination are not overcome by a single action or even by years of dedication. Likewise, the quest for equality must be a diligent one. Sexism is so ingrained in society that women often add to their own oppression. The solution is partly in the day-by-day personal struggle to overcome the yoke of sexism. Consciousness-raising groups where women speak out loud to each other about the way they are treated at home, in the work force, and by themselves are beginning to spring up again as the backslides of the 1980s give way to the hopeful 1990s. The more individuals—women and men—stand up and disallow subtle remarks to pass, the more educated the general public will become. This, as the saying goes, is a long row to hoe but I want potatoes! ■

THE FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY

In Oklahoma 3 of every 5 poor people are women. More than 18% of women in Oklahoma are poor. 1/4 of all women aged 65 and older are poor and 72% of the elderly poor are women. 1/3 of Oklahoma's women of color live in poverty. Nearly half of all families with a female head are poor. Families headed by women make up 48% of all poor families.

The poverty rate for women has steadily increased. In 1960, only 1/4 of the poor were women or households headed by women. By 1976 the majority of those living in poverty were women and children living in families headed by women.

Changes in the "traditional" family have contributed to the rate of poverty among women. Teenagers with children are poor women. In Oklahoma, there are 30 babies born to teen moms every day. Divorce contributes to poverty among women. After a divorce a man is single while the woman is a single parent. Only 25% of those eligible actually receive child support and of those 60% receive less than \$1,000 per year. Displaced homemakers, women who are abandoned after having spent large portions of their lives in unpaid labor supporting a husband, are often unprepared for employment and even if a displaced homemaker receives training, she faces both age and sex discrimination in the job market.

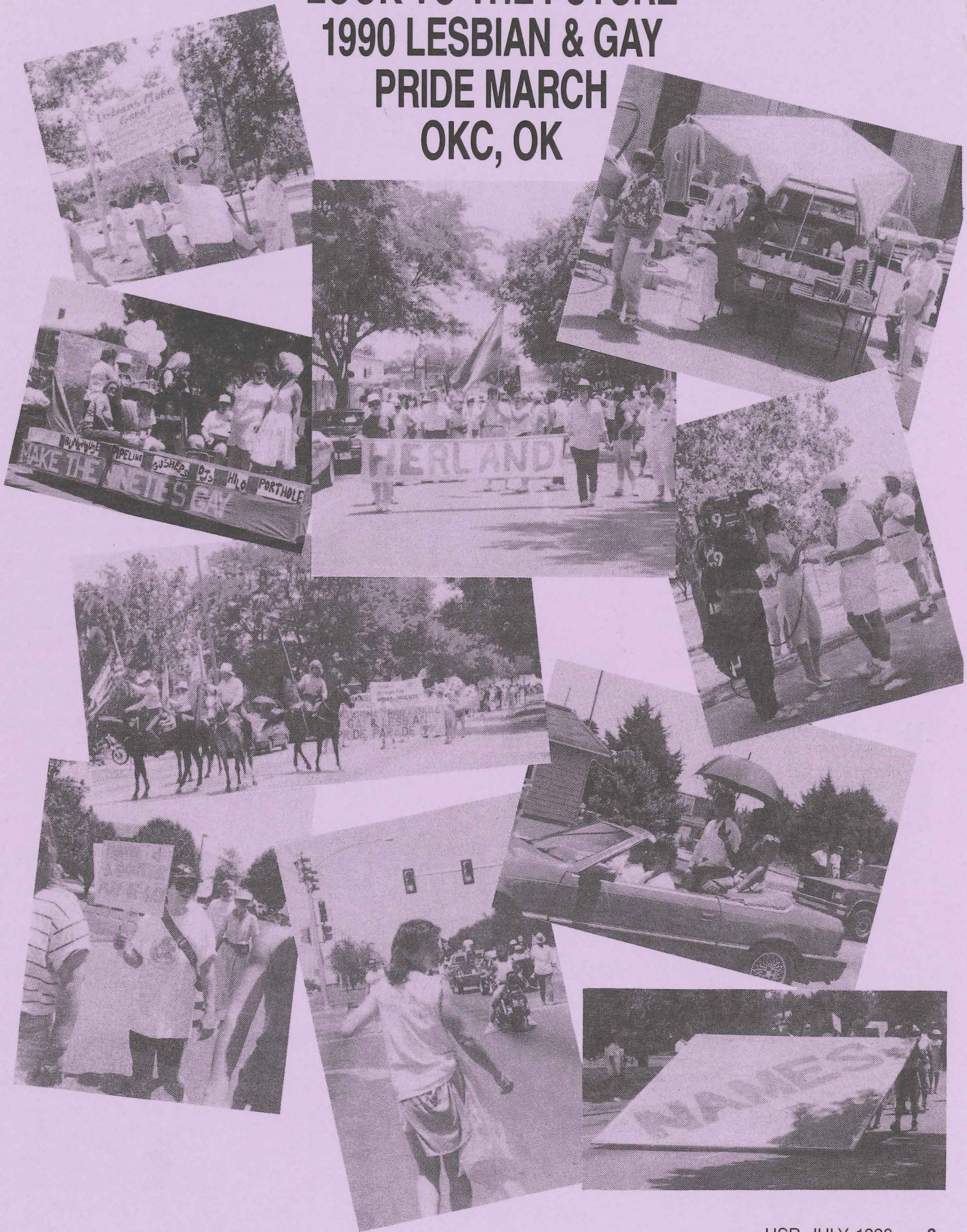
The low wages paid women contribute to women's poverty. Women earn approximately 60 cents for every dollar earned by men. Black women earn only 54 cents per dollar earned by men and Hispanic women earn only 49 cents per dollar earned by men. According to the National Advisory Committee on Economic Opportunity (1981), "If wives and female heads were paid wages that similarly qualified men earn, about half of the families now living in poverty would not be poor." Many women work at or near the minimum wage. A single mother with two children who works full-time at minimum wage would still be below the poverty level.

Reductions in the federal budget support of poverty problems have worsened poverty among women. Federal and state poverty programs primarily serve women and their children. Families headed by women comprise 93% of recipients of Aid to Families of Dependent Children. 85% of all those receiving Food Stamps are women and their children. Women make up 2/3 of the recipients of medical assistance. As social service programs were cut in the early 1980s the poor have become impoverished with little relief available.

Inflation has worsened poverty among women. Welfare payments in Oklahoma have not kept pace with inflation. Inflation has continued while the minimum wage did not increase between 1981 and 1989. ■

This article is based on workshop materials provided by Sandy Ingraham.

"LOOK TO THE FUTURE" 1990 LESBIAN & GAY PRIDE MARCH OKC, OK



BARBARA BUSH SUPPORTS PARENTS AND FRIENDS OF LESBIANS & GAYS

Barbara Bush has written the head of an organization of parents of gay children that "we cannot tolerate discrimination against any individuals or groups in our country."

The letter was addressed to Paulette Goodman, president of the Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, or Parents FLAG. It came in response to Goodman's plea that the First Lady "speak kind words to some 24 million gay Americans and their families to help heal the wounds and to keep these families in loving relationships."

Mrs. Bush replied that "I appreciate... your encouraging me to help change attitudes." Discrimination, she said, "always brings with it pain and perpetuates hate and intolerance."

She said Goodman's "words speak eloquently of your love for your child and your compassion for all gay Americans and their families."

Mrs. Bush frequently has made clear her distaste for discrimination based on sexual orientation, according to an Associated Press report of her letter to Goodman.

Last month, President Bush aroused protests from some conservatives when he invited representatives of gay groups to attend the signing of the Hate Crimes Statistics Act, which targets bias-motivated violence.

Tim McFeeley, executive director of the

Human Rights Campaign Fund, lobbying arm of the movement for gay and lesbian civil rights, said Mrs. Bush's letter "reinforces values that American mothers and American families are all about." ■

LETTER FROM BARBARA BUSH

Dear Mrs. Goodman,

Thank you so much for your letter and for sharing your work with the Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc. You sound like a caring parent and a compassionate citizen.

I firmly believe that we cannot tolerate discrimination against any individuals or groups in this country. Such treatment always brings with it pain and perpetuates hate and intolerance. I appreciate so much your sharing the information about your organization and your encouraging me to help change attitudes. Your words speak eloquently of your love for your child and your compassion for all gay Americans and their families.

With all best wishes,

*Warmly,
Barbara Bush*

WHAT'S THE FUSS?

by Sally Blevins

Here we are again, ladies-hot weather and short pants. Again I find myself stuck in the middle of the age old quandary: to shave or not to shave, that is the question, whether 'tis nobler to fight razor burn or to ignore the sidelong looks from those that society has conditioned. When I was younger I couldn't wait to start shaving. I thought that made me grown-up—a right of passage. Now I find it to be a major pain in the body parts.

I do believe men initiated shaving for women, but I'm not sure it was for the reasons I've heard around town. I believe that they did it to keep us from having fun! That's right, fun! I recently went out with my hairy legs and found it to be a lot of fun to have the wind blow through the hairs on my legs. I stood outside for five minutes just letting the breeze spin my beanie propeller and caress my legs. When I let this be known to some of the men there with me one said, "Oh, so you get off on having the wind blow your hair." I told him, no, that I had said exactly what I felt; it was fun. I do think that short skirts and sheer hose look better on shaved legs, but that is just my personal opinion.

Now we get around to that touchy subject of the underarms. I have a serious problem with razor irritation in this delicate area. I have had women tell me that underarm hair causes people to have a problem with bad body odor. I say this is nonsense most of the time. People with bad body odor are going to have that problem even if they shave their whole body. We have become a perfumed society. I think the smell of a woman is attractive. I have stopped shaving my underarms and using deodorant except on occasions of high stress and I have not had any complaints yet. (I know I can count on my friends to tell me if this ever does become a problem!)

If you are looking for better reasons not to shave than those aforementioned, think of the environment. There will be fewer plastic containers used and thrown away, not to mention disposable razors. Our rallying cry shall be "Go natural for Nature!" Until next time....

Sally

EMPLOYMENT FOR HIV-INFECTED

A new program providing employment opportunities for HIV-infected individuals kicked off during the month of May. The program, entitled Contact Services, is responsible for employment coordination for persons testing positive to HIV or having either ARC (AIDS Related Complex) or AIDS.

Jim Carter was named Project Director. Carter will work with individuals to develop and implement employment goals based on needs, desires and abilities. Interested persons will be aided in finding appropriate employment where the employer and employee will be comfortable and both will benefit.

"Being productive is essential in helping maintain one's self worth," Carter said. "Persons with HIV have lost their jobs for many different reasons. Some are unable to physically continue in a particular position or have difficulty in coping with day-to-day stress. And some people have lost jobs due to prejudice. Frequently, HIV jobless enter into a spiral of depression or hopelessness. Financial losses can be tremendous and picking up those pieces can be overwhelming.

Work, although sometimes a cause of stress, can create productive stress," Carter said. "HIV persons who continue to work are less susceptible to depression which, in turn, can improve their overall health status."

Contact Services is funded through a grant from the Insurance Industry AIDS Initiative. Monies from this grant provide the necessary funds to launch the program. The program will work in conjunction with the current AIDS services provided at Red Rock Mental Health Center, 4400 N. Lincoln Boulevard.

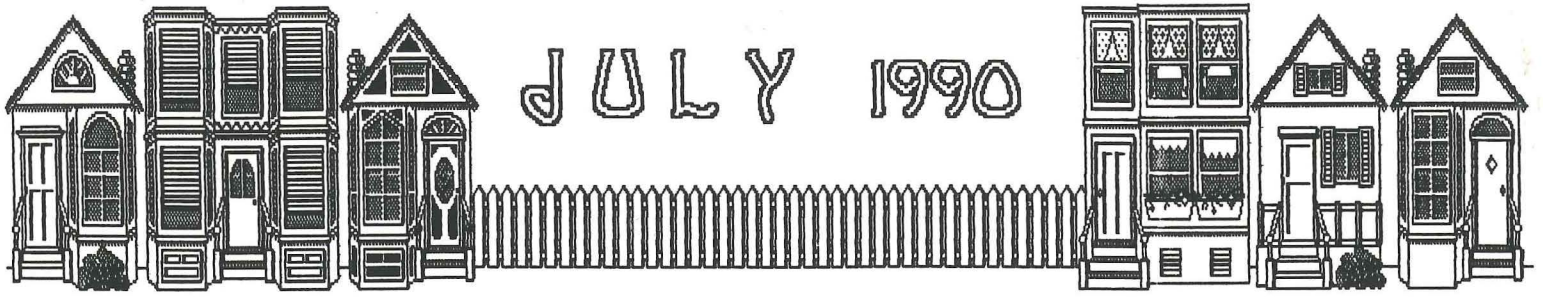
Currently, Carter is seeking to locate several part-time positions in the community in areas of general office, sales, floral design, delivery and in-home work. "I am excited about working with the community in a team effort to improve the quality of life for persons with HIV and AIDS," Carter said.

If you are interested in hiring a full, part-time or temporary employee through Contact Services or if you are interested in participating in the program, call Jim Carter at (405) 425-0381. ■


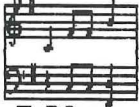
SEVEN SINS:

*Wealth without work
Pleasure without conscience
Knowledge without character
Commerce without morality
Science without humanity
Worship without sacrifice
Politics without principle*

—Mohandas Gandhi

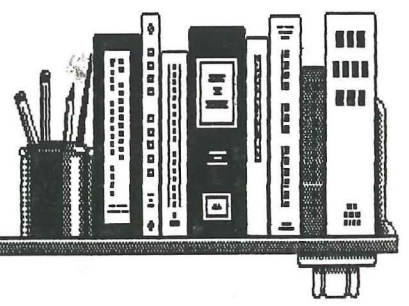


JULY 1990

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--------|---|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 7:30 pm, Program Committee Meeting, at Mary's | 4  JULY FOURTH | 5 Sound Workshop 7:30 p.m. at Mary's Call 528-0020 for details. | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 7:30 pm, Sappho rehearses at Mary's # Mary McLeod Bethune, 1875-1955 | 11 | 12 | 13 PEGGY JOHNSON at KERR PARK 11:45 a.m. # "MISS BROWN TO YOU": at Mary's, 9pm* | 14 PEGGY JOHNSON at the Cantina 9:00 p.m. |
| 15  Board Meeting 4:30 pm | 16 | 17 7:30 pm, Program Committee Meeting, at Mary's | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24  7:30 pm, Sappho rehearses at Mary's | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 ELAINE TOWNSEND in Concert 9 p.m. at the Fairgrounds; PEGGY JOHNSON opens |
| 29 | 30 | 31 7:30 pm, Program Committee Meeting, at Mary's | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Every Wednesday at Noon; Silent Vigil for Peace in Central America; fourth & Robinson; across the street from the Federal Building. ▪ CODA meeting, every Friday at Herland, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. ▪ Program Committee Meeting, every other Tuesday at Mary's, 7:30 p.m., beginning July 3rd. ▪ Sappho, every <u>other</u> Tuesday at Mary's, 7:30 p.m., beginning July 10. | | | |

* Call 528-0020 for reservations; donations at the door.

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WOMEN AND POVERTY

by Deborah Fox

It began when women-centered cultures were conquered and destroyed by marauding tribes of men wielding swords, millenia ago.

Today poverty, hunger, and homeless rates keep escalating while the men in power continue their obsessive preparation for war, draining all human and earthly resources. And it is primarily women and their children who end up suffering for it.

Under male-domination/patriarchy, women have been ripped-off and ripped-out of their roles as leaders. All of the technologies for life, created by women for the benefit of the many (i.e. language, teaching, pottery, writing, weaving, farming, animal domestication and architecture), have been stolen and exploited by men for men's sole benefit and gain. Since then women have been confined to the unpaid and belittled work of domestic labor. ("If housewives were paid for their domestic work alone, they would earn \$17,000 a year." *The Great Cosmic Mother*, M Sjoo & B. Mor.) Men's wars forced them to "allow" women into the paid workforce, though we are still expected to do the housework and raise the children, which keeps us dependent upon men and therefore under their control.

"The effect of increasing poverty (hunger and homelessness) is to force the new generations of women into accepting the old traditional terms of patriarchal marriage. American women see less and less chance for economic survival, for themselves and their children, outside of marriage" (Sjoo & Mor). Our work in society was stolen from us; our jobs of creating peaceful, harmonious, creative, intelligent, just, humane, and comfortable civilizations has been replaced with two choices today: "Economic enslavement within marriage or economic enslavement outside of marriage." (M. Sjo & B. Mor)

Approximately 100 years ago women were "allowed" into men's educational institutions. But women are essentially still denied a college education: Amish women are pulled from academic pursuit at 13 years of age, for example, and women from large families with male siblings often can hardly hope to go to college.

Those women who are fortunate enough to earn degrees have had to be twice as good as their male peers just to be considered in the running with their male peers. Then there is the stiff competition in a woman's chosen field because most positions are awarded to men (take, for example, "head of household!") The fact that many households are headed by women is ignored or minimized, and these families are the poorest in America. "While women represent half of the global population and 1/3 of the labor force, they

receive only 1/10 of the world income and own less than 1% of the world's property. They are also responsible for 2/3 of all the working hours on earth" (*The Anatomy of Freedom*, Robin Morgan). "The average American woman works almost twice the hours, and receives a little more than half the pay, of the average American man" (Sjoo & Mor). "...Neoconservatives insist, 'hard work is rewarded, and only the lazy are poor.' The bitter truth is, under four thousand years of patriarchal 'exploit for profit' economics, the women of the world have worked long and hard... to keep the human race minimally alive. In return, we receive mostly dismal statistics signifying not reward, but rip-off. If hard work equalled wealth, all the world's women would be rich." (Sjoo & Mor)

Women's issues are global issues. The world's poor are mostly women and their children, most of the starving millions are women and their children, a burgeoning number of homeless are women, two out of three older Americans living in poverty are women, and millions of working women in America are just one notch above the official poverty level.

President Bush thinks it is more important to put an American flag on Mars (!) than to feed, house, educate and ease the financial strains of Americans. If the system's men in power really wanted to end the suffering in the world they could have done so many times over by now.

We desperately need a whole new system. A "partnership system" as Riane Eisler asserts in her book, *The Chalice And The Blade*. The slogans that say: "You can't beat the system," or "Change takes time, we won't see it in our lifetime," are blatant lies used by the system to bully us into feeling powerless, defeated and submissive. We cannot afford to submit until the entire globe is reduced to a vast desert wasteland or until the men in power blow us to smithereens with nuclear warfare. We *can* transform the system if we are willing to take the necessary actions. What would happen if we organized a revolt against poverty, and, for example, refrained from using our electricity on a specified date. This would cost the system and show that we have a voice. Look what was accomplished through the boycott of tuna, or the campaign to stop the slaughter of baby seals for fur.

10% of the population controls the flow of money and resources, the other 90%, of which women are at least half, have the *power in numbers*, and could be the beginning of the partnership system. As Sonia Johnson said: "they can't do patriarchy without us." We live at a crucial time in history when the threshold for massive change is extremely low. The importance of seizing the moment has never been greater. ■

THE START OF A NEW DECADE OF RETREATS SOUNDS LIKE...

- "That's Mary Reynold's equipment." "Where?" "Over there in that parking lot." "No it's not." "Yes it is!" "How can you tell?" "They've got those orange GHS stickers on them." "Anybody can have those stickers." "Are you Tuffy?" "Yeah." "I'll be damned, You're right, it is Mary's stuff."
- "I don't want some goody-two-shoe altruist Unitarians pointing fingers and feeling sorry for me behind my back."
- "Uh, put that to music and we can dance to it."
- "I was sure that going to bed with a man was tantamount to a siege of battle."
- "I've always felt there are just some things that men are naturally better suited for." (gag)
- "I've got some sweaters and chains in that drawer I want to take can I borrow that bag?"
- "The lesbian dog is at it again."
- "Sally, you've got to introduce me to some single women." "Go up and say hello—I don't have a list."
- "I really like these stone-lined drainage paths—we slid down them last night in the rain."
- "Does it bother you to handle bacon?"
- "Isn't this park scenic?"

*Is scenic the new Buzz word?
The poem of a bitch and a bone
Creedy, the bird and lost closeness
Herds of single-named women*

- "Ladies and Gentlemen." *Flashback?*
- "What do you call a boomerang that doesn't come back? A stick."
- "Is this song about me?"
- "Next retreat I'll be the one causing all the trouble!"
- "Mary do a sing-along, we're losing them!" "Sally, it's 3:30 in the morning; it's OK to lose them!!!"
- "It's the four-thirty version."
- Herland's Breakfast version of "Oklahoma" complete with genuine leather dashboard.
- "Lighten your load for the trip home-put your spare change here in the bucket."

Just a few of the sounds and comments floating around the Spring Retreat. Be sure to mark your calendars now for the fall retreat August 31 thru September 3 at Arrowhead State Park. Watch the Voice for more information. ■

NATIONAL LESBIAN CONFERENCE PLANNING CONTINUES

by Karen Lewis

Kansas City—Getting underway at 9 a.m. "lesbian time" on April 27, 28, and 29, over 100 lesbians worked to organize and plan for a momentous event in America's herstory—the National Lesbian Conference, to be held in Atlanta, Georgia April 24–28, 1991.

Meeting in Kansas City, organizers hoped to seat the 70+ steering committee delegates from 11 regions across the U.S. so that necessary decisions concerning the conference could be made. By the end of this 3rd national planning meeting, 38 permanent delegates had been seated and an interim body of 13 had been selected to meet monthly to make important definitive decisions regarding the conference. It is now hoped that all permanent delegates will be seated by the next steering committee meeting set for September in Atlanta, Georgia. Failure to seat all the permanent delegates at this meeting rested on the unfortunate fact that several regions have not yet organized on the more local level to elect all the required regional delegates. Sadly, the Gulf States region, including Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas, was one of these regions.

The purpose of the National Lesbian Conference is to satisfy the lesbian nation's need to create, publicize and implement a national lesbian agenda. Through the conference, lesbians can meet each other, identify common issues, have fun, build coalitions and plan for their collective future. It may also be seen as a vehicle for creating a foundation for empowerment for social and political change in America. It will be what *we* make it.

The primary objective in the organizational stage for this conference is to allow as many contingents as possible and every region a voice, as delegates on the steering committee, in bringing their issues and ideas together, with the belief that a national lesbian agenda must be developed through collaborative means to form a lasting foundation. As a result, the steering committee's structure represents an array of our diversities: 50% lesbians of color, 20% disabled lesbians, and 5% older (over 50) lesbians. And, in addition: 2 deaf lesbians, 2 Jewish lesbians, 2 Arab lesbians, and one: lesbian mother, young lesbian, S/M leather lesbian, separatist lesbian, rural lesbian, and lesbian in the military. And, a representative from each of a dozen or more national lesbian and gay organizations.

The conference planners are dedicated to exploration of the issues of racism, ageism, and ableism in an effort to sensitize our community as a whole to these issues, and to generate understanding among our sisters.

To this end, every NLC planning meeting and the conference itself will include workshops on these "isms." The workshops held in KC, as evidenced by feedback gatherings, were educational and very enlightening and succeeded in their objective to heighten awareness and increase sensitivity among their participants.

Other accomplishments of the KC planning meeting were the tentative selection and proposal to the interim steering committee of a conference logo design and conference theme. The logo design includes full silhouettes of female figures representing a number of our diversities—a lesbian using a wheelchair, lesbians of color, young and old lesbians—together in poses of celebration. Above the figures are the words "National Lesbian Conference • Atlanta, Georgia • April 24–28, 1991" and below the figures the proposed theme of "diversity • solidarity • empowerment." Both proposals were reached by a consensus of the logo and theme subcommittees after much discussion over submitted designs and brainstorming for a theme. A "closet tax" of \$2.00 was proposed for conference shirts with the NLC acronym instead of the words "National Lesbian Conference" on them. Also announced was the hiring of Mary Lou Lewis, a black lesbian activist, to the position of Conference Organizer to staff the national office in Decatur.

Events at the KC meeting included a dance Friday night and an Alix Dobkin concert and dance Saturday night. A generic 12-step meeting was held Friday night to accommodate lesbians in recovery.

Among the 100+ meeting attendees were several published authors and well-known performers, a number of lesbians of color and lesbians using wheelchairs, as well as other differently-abled lesbians, young lesbians and older lesbians: a well-represented microcosm of our diverse community. The weekend was filled with accomplishments, frustrations, and fun. As one lesbian summed it up at the end of the final meeting: "It has been a stressful, pleasure-filled weekend."

While the National Lesbian Conference is being funded in part by residual monies from the 1987 March on Washington, the Human Rights Campaign Fund, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Chicago Resource Center, among others, the vast majority of funding must come from individual donations and local fund-raising events. One of the tasks of the regional delegations is to assist in raising these much-needed funds. Fees are set up on a sliding

scale, so that everyone who wants to attend the National Conference may have that opportunity. Both hotel and community housing will be available.

For more information on the conference call 404-584-9671 or write the National Lesbian Conference; P.O. Box 1999; Decatur, GA 30031; attend the local planning and information meeting on July 7 at 3 p.m. at Herland, 2312 N.W. 39th St. Oklahoma City; or call Karen at 405-528-3151. ■

LOCAL NLC MEETING PLANNED

5,000 lesbians are expected to converge on Atlanta, GA, in April 1991. This conference is happening, dear sisters, and it will be one big event in America's lesbian herstory. Does Oklahoma and the Gulf region want to participate in its planning? Do we want to have a voice in defining this country's lesbian agenda? Do we want to be a part of it? Or, shall we simply settle for being spectators, watching while others plan our future?

It's up to us. An information, feedback and planning meeting for lesbians in Oklahoma who wish to participate in the National Lesbian Conference will be held at Herland; 2312 N.W. 39th St. in OKC at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 7. Hope to see you there!



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NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE: Margaret Cox, Deborah Fox, Pat Reaves

CIRCULATION: 750

GENERAL INFO: (405) 521-9696 (leave message)

SUBSCRIPTIONS to the *Herland Voice* are free upon request.

Do you have ideas about how Herland can better serve the Oklahoma women's community? Do you have 10-15 hours a month to spend working for HSR? If your answer to both these questions is yes, then we are looking for you to serve on the Herland Board of Directors. We are especially interested in adding more women of color to the board. If you are interested, leave a message on the Herland answering machine (521-9696) and a current board member will call you back with more information.

The Herland Resource Center is open every Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; and Sundays from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Come by and look over the books, magazines, and other sale items, check out books from the library, or just to enjoy a friendly women's space.

We hope you are happy with the new mailing format for the *Voice*. Thanks to all the volunteers who have spent countless hours stamping envelopes, folding newsletters, and stuffing envelopes. We do still have our monthly newsletter mailout party—not as much work and more fun, now. If you'd like to join us, just leave a message on the Herland answering machine and you'll be notified of the next newsletter mailout.

SAFO (Singing Amazons From Oklahoma) is still going. The next meetings are July 10 and 24. With Mary Reynolds as director, we're learning lots and enjoying singing together. And we intend to perform in public in the not too distant future!

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Leave message for Ginger at HSR, (521-WMYN) to place an ad.

DEMOCRATS NOMINATE HARVEY GANTT TO CHALLENGE HELMS

Washington, DC—Harvey Gantt, former mayor of Charlotte, NC, has won the Democratic Senate nomination in North Carolina, defeating prosecutor Mike Easley 57% to 43%. Gantt received early financial support from the Human Rights Campaign Fund, the largest lesbian and gay political organization in the country. He will face Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) in the November general election.

The 14 percent margin of Gantt's victory in the Democratic run-off election surprised many observers. "Harvey Gantt's strong lead defies the conventional wisdom that North Carolina Democrats would not nominate a progressive African-American candidate for the Senate," said HRCF Executive Director Tim McFeeley.

"His victory is a clear sign that Gantt is in touch with the voters of North Carolina and that he has a compelling political message—Harvey Gantt can beat Jesse Helms." Although he trailed in early polls, a poll released in early June indicates that the race is now a dead heat between Helms and Gantt.

The Campaign Fund contributed \$5,000 to Gantt's campaign in April, long before he appeared to be a viable candidate. The amount is the maximum contribution allowed by federal law in a primary. At that time McFeeley stated that Gantt, an African American, "represents the best of what North Carolina can offer the nation, independence and vision, rather than the ignorance, bigotry and hate that Jesse Helms embodies," McFeeley stated.

"Jesse Helms is a disgrace. The more voters learn about him, the more questions they have about whether he represents their interests," McFeeley noted. "Helms spends his time fighting needed AIDS resources, censoring art and opposing choice. His bigotry against lesbian and gay Americans has no place in the U.S. Senate"

Helms is the author of notorious amendments which have weakened AIDS prevention materials aimed at gay and bisexual men. He strongly opposed the Hate Crimes Statistics Act which overwhelmingly passed the Congress earlier this year and was signed into law by President Bush. Increasingly in recent years, the Senate has refused to side with Helms when his anti-gay amendments have reached the floor.

"Harvey Gantt is willing to fight for the basic civil rights of all Americans. We intend to do all we can to help him in the coming months," McFeeley said. ■

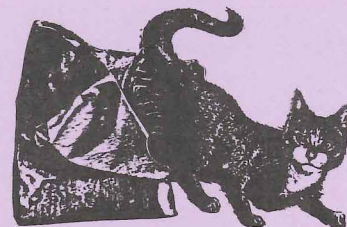
WOMEN WITH WOMEN WITH CHILDREN

The first gathering of Women With Women With Children (WWWC) was on June 9th at Will Rogers Park. Fifteen women and nineteen children, aged 2 through 19 years old, cooked out, swam at the public pool, played softball and simply enjoyed themselves

Not all the conversation was about children and the problems parents cause them; actually, not all of the women there had children. It turned out to be a time where women could feel free to be with their children and other women.

A BBQ is being scheduled for July 21st at Will Rogers Park, at 2:00 p.m.; and plans are being made to go camping and canoeing down the Illinois River the weekend of August 3rd, 4th and 5th.

Whether you are single, have children or not and would like to join us, call (405) (942-4331) for more information. Everyone is welcome. ■



BE A PART OF HERLAND

Herland is the collective effort of the women of Oklahoma. You can be a part of creating and sustaining this very special community we call Herland. Join a committee, volunteer to work in the resource center, or make a contribution to help meet the monthly expenses. Herland will be what you make it.

YES, I want to help Herland continue to grow.

- I'm interested in working on a committee. Please have the committee chair call me.
- I'd like to volunteer at Herland. Please have the volunteer coordinator call me with more information.
- Here's my contribution of _____ to help support Herland.

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