

the HERLAND VOICE

NOVEMBER 1991

JUSTICE — THOMAS Contradictory Terms

by Jo Soske

Having been asked to write this, I have begun my introductory paragraph three times. Each time, I have found myself being far more personal and far less political than I had hoped to be. But alas the goddess has whispered to me, "Remember the personal is the political." Therefore, I shall write about my experience.

On Tuesday, October 15, I stood among a group of friends and strangers at the O.U. School of Law. Our eyes were fixed on a television screen as the U.S. Senate voted on the confirmation of Clarence Thomas. Though I knew what was coming, a part of me held out hope until they announced that Thomas was confirmed by a vote of 52 to 48. At that moment, I spontaneously screamed out in rage and pain.

As a feminist, an educator, and a counselor, I have said to wommin for years, "When we are sexually harrassed and sexually abused in other ways, we must speak out. We must tell our stories and make our voices heard." That evening, we were told in a most chilling way that we should remain silent. The message from the boys of the senate was clear. "Even if you are a woman of the greatest integrity, even if you have impeccable corroborating witnesses, even if you are willing to jeopardize your career, even if you are willing to face national humiliation, even if you take a four-hour lie detector test, even if two other wommin confirm your experience with their own; we will not believe you. We want you to remain silent and we will use all of the tools of our system against you."

Though I have been a political activist for much of my adult life, I have never felt so profoundly impacted by a national event. The implications of this decision cut to the soul. Those of us who have been sexually mistreated, and I believe that is most of us, can know more deeply than we have ever known that there is no protection in our country. So what does this mean? Shall we again be silent? Absolutely not!

In the few days since the decision, I have come to realize that my scream was also a scream of freedom. At that instant, I was able to release the last vestiges of the deluded hope for patriarchal change, remnants which I was unaware I kept. Having seen "America's brightest and best in all of their glory," I am free from all desire to give the boys any more of my hope, attention or energy. They do not represent me, they never have, and they never will.

Personally, I believe it is time for a non-violent but extremely dynamic revolution—a revolution of wommin putting energy into wommin. I would like to see us organize, vote Nickles and Boren out of office, and replace them with wommin centered wommin. I have renewed my commitment to donate what money, time, and resources I have solely to wommin's causes. Other wommin have shared with me that they intend to do the same.

I am angry. It is a healthy anger which will lead to action, and I am not alone. There are many of us. We will not forget October 15th, and we will not go away. ■

Dealing With Feelings

(Jo Soske, M.Ed/MHR/CAC)

As a counselor, I am aware that the Thomas confirmation has resulted in the reliving of painful memories and feelings for many wommin. This is to be expected. We have witnessed the denial system of an incestuous family being played out at the national level.

I would like to make just a few suggestions for handling these feelings. First, tell or retell your story. Choose somebody who will listen to your entire story and believe you *unconditionally*. If the feelings are too overwhelming, I would suggest seeking a professional. In many cases, however, a close friend can provide the needed support.

Secondly, put your feelings into action. Take some steps, large or small, to reclaim yourself through action. You may wish to:

1. Write to Nickles, Boren, or other elected officials, and express your outrage
2. Write to Anita Hill and affirm her courage
3. Volunteer some time working for NOW, Herland, or another wommin's organization
4. Become involved in a political campaign
5. Listen to the story of another woman who has been offended.

The possibilities are limitless, but taking action can help to keep you from falling prisoner to the old fears.

Finally, and perhaps most important, find ways to affirm yourself. You have suffered a loss, and you deserve to be treated gently. ■

SEXUAL HARASSMENT Speak Out... Take Action

This is a forum to talk about the experience of sexual harassment and to plan ways to address the problem. This event, sponsored by a coalition of local women's organizations, promises to be really hot. The room it's being held in holds 100 people. The media will be there, and there is a slight chance that Ms. Hill herself will be present. Let's fill the place to overflowing and show the world that we're here and we've had it!

6:30 P.M. November 19 • NSO, 431 S.W. 11, OKC

NO IDLE CHATTER

According to the *Tulsa World* (10/17/91), a Tulsa attorney's letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee denouncing Professor Anita Hill was prompted by the White House. Mary Constance T. Matthies said she was asked to write a letter critical of Professor Hill even though she had never met her. Ms. Matthies' letter was one of those released by Senator Simpson days after he said he had received letters from Tulsa saying to "watch out" for Hill. ■

MISINFORMATION, ERASURE, AND LIES

by Deborah Fox

Language and the written word are tools in the oppression of women and other minorities. We can never accept what we are told or taught without our vigorous scrutiny. Patriarchal bias is the art of deception.

For example, we are taught (from a tender and impressionable age on up) about the "heroic" exploits in "The New World" by our forefathers against the Native Americans. America is spotted with Historical Sites and Monuments boasting of these *heroic deeds* for which our bossom is to swell with patriotic pride. The facts are, however, that "America" is *founded upon stolen land*. The Treaties made and *broken* by white men to the Native Americans are what instigated Indian wars, and the "heroic exploits" of our forefathers were really the savage murders of Indian women, children, the aged, as well as the Indian men.

We are taught that witches were evil, devil worshipping, sexually impure, vile people. The fact is that witches were predominantly female, adhered loyally to the Old Religion (of the Goddess), were lesbians, widows, women who did not wish to marry, in short; independent, and were *the first doctors*, midwives, healers, herbalists, counselors and teachers, which the Church and the budding male dominated medical "profession" saw as a threat because they could not wrest away from the witches the trust of the masses.

Witches, then, were an impediment to the "progress" of the patriarchal religion and medical profession just like Native Americans were an impediment to the "progress" of white male culture, or Jews an impediment to the "progress" of Nazi Germany. The "Witchcraze" was a holocaust—it is estimated **nine million people, mostly female**, were raped, tortured, burned at the stake/savagely murdered. The "confessions" of witches to the vile acts dreamed up by their accusers were extracted under horrific torture. But we don't read that in your history books!

Nor do we read of the magnitude of the worship of the Great Goddess and yet it is not for want of hard evidence and fact. We read, instead, of "fertility cults" and "idols," which are blatant lies. The religion of the Goddess was a full-blown religion, geographically widespread, and Her images were not mere idols but statues of *female divinity*, much like the Catholic statues of Christ, saints, and the virgin Mary (that tamed, patriarchal version of the Goddess, which the church had to acknowledge *somehow*, in order to even begin to win the trust of the greater populations). We owe this legacy of minimalization and omission to patriarchal scholarship. We are not taught the truth by the supposedly

professional/objective scholarship of Academia; instead we are *conditioned to patriarchal bias*.

Everything we read, hear, and the language used we must scrutinize for bias, lies, or omissions.

In the Lawton daily newspaper yesterday I read a Paperback Review of two biographies about Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*. Not once was it mentioned that she was the daughter of the feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, author of *The Vindication of Women's Rights*. This omission also acts as an erasure of Mary Wollstonecraft's fame.

In this same newspaper I read a column by Erma Bombeck titled: "At Wit's End," where not only does she trivialize spouse battering but she creates the illusion that this violence is committed by men and women equally. A grossly misleading picture of reality that gives the covert idea that male violence against women is justified.

Then there was an article titled: "House Cats Feasting on Rabbits and Birds," that claimed house cats are "directly responsible for the loss of millions of songbirds and other wildlife." Which gives the impression that the general populace is primarily at fault rather than the corporations who are destroying the rain forests (which are home to a tremendous variety of migratory birds of North America and Europe) and other natural habitats of a variety of wildlife.

These are just a few examples of the veiled truths and outright lies paraded as professional scholarship and journalism. Many people are unaware of these deceptions and are seduced into false consciousness, unwittingly perpetuating patriarchal bias. Women and other minorities cannot afford blind trust and acceptance. We must evaluate everything we are taught, everything we are told, everything we hear, and scrutinize language. The name of the game is Exposing Deception. If we lose this game we lose our identity, our heritage, and our culture. ■

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TO ADOPT GAY & LESBIAN PRISONERS

International gay and lesbian groups responded positively to a recent decision by Amnesty International to adopt as prisoners of conscience those imprisoned for their homosexuality, including those arrested for homosexual acts. The decision is a major development and victory in the more than 12-year battle to change the global human rights group's policy toward gays and lesbians.

AI made its decision to defend gays at its biennial International Council conference in Yokohama, Japan, September 7, The decision was made by consensus.

The Gay and Lesbian Task Force to Change Amnesty International, a worldwide coalition formed this year to pressure the organization, issued the following statement:

"We, as representatives of thousands of gay men and lesbians around the world, would like to thank Amnesty International for taking this long-needed step. We offer our deepest thanks to Amnesty sections that worked so hard to achieve this victory, especially the USA, Canada, Ireland and Norway. The Task Force has faith that Amnesty will implement this important decision immediately. ■

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DENVER CITY AGENCY RULES LESBIAN PARTNERS ARE A FAMILY

In a landmark legal ruling, an employer has been ordered to grant sick leave to a lesbian employee to care for her life partner. A hearing officer of the Career Service Authority of Denver, Colorado ruled last Friday that Denver General Hospital violated Department of Health and Hospital regulations when it refused to allow a lesbian employee to take three days sick leave to care for her injured companion. The decision recognizes lesbian and gay relationships as families.

In an eight-page opinion, hearing officer Margot Jones held that the agency violated the rights of social worker Mary Ross by refusing to give her sick leave to care for her "permanent life partner," Jeannie DiClementie, who had fractured her skull. Jones said that Ross had demonstrated that she and DiClementi are a family, and that the agency's action was "discriminatory on the basis of appellant's sexual orientation."

Specifically, Jones ruled that the agency had violated its four-year-old anti-discrimination policy, which prohibits it from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation. Denver city officials said they would appeal the decision.

Jones also relied upon testimony supplied by Dr. Anne Rankin Mahoney, a professor of sociology at the University of Denver, that lesbians create family units. "By every measurement used by society to determine whether people have created a family, appellant's relationship with her permanent life partner, measures up to that standard," Jones wrote in her decision. In the three years Ross and DiClementi have lived together, they have had a monogamous relationship and have shared their finances, living expenses and responsibility for raising DiClementi's two children.

William B. Rubenstein, the Director of the ACLU's national Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, said the decision was an important step toward greater recognition of lesbian and gay relationships. "Little by little, courts and administrative tribunals are giving legal recognition and tangible rights to relationships that are, by definition, families," he said. "More and more cities and states will have to take notice of this encouraging development and incorporate it into their own laws." ■

COYOTE CLUB HOSTS HELPLINE

COYOTE CLUB, NOV. 10—Peggy Johnson, Bonnie H., Donna D., Mark Agnew and Randall Powell will be featured singers and musicians at a fundraiser for the Gay and Lesbian Helpline of Central Oklahoma on Sunday, November 10 at 7 p.m. Prizes will be raffled throughout the evening. A \$3 donation is requested for admission. Proceeds will support operating costs of the Helpline.

The Helpline hours are 8 p.m. - 12 a.m. Thursday - Monday. Volunteers are needed. For more information, or if you are interested in volunteering, call 447-GAYS. ■

Emphasis on the problems of gay people.



848-5429

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ST. SYBIL

Sybil Ludington, Matron Saint of the Forgotten Woman, answers the occasional odd question in the Herland Voice.

Dear St. Sybil,

With Thanksgiving and all coming up, I've been wondering. Are you a vegetarian? Should I be?

Sincerely,

Morna Littlelamb Ivalent

Dear Morna,

Where I am, we are not exactly *eat*ers anymore, you know? Our thirteen senses and our fifteen basic needs are tuned to a spiritual base which allows satisfaction without a corporeal interaction—face it, we are disembodies folks here, Morna; I haven't had 'food' in 200 years.

If you are asking if I would be a vegetarian if I were alive today knowing what I know now, there is no one answer; is there ever? If I were a cat or a squid or a Venus fly trap I would be a meat-eater; that's the way it was meant to be. If I were an elephant or a diplodocus or a fruit fly I would be a herbivore. If . . .

What's that? Oh, sorry, no need to get testy; where I am when we think of 'life' we don't zero right in on the two-legged animal variety, you know? Saint Trigger wouldn't like it, and it would really infuriate the Passenger Pigeons. So your question is, if I were a live human being today, would I be vegetarian? Knowing what I know now? You bet your sweet life I would. Should you be? If you're like me and can't discern a gnat's worth of difference between yourself and Fluffy and Tom Turkey, you wouldn't ask. But if your thirteenth sense is impaired it's not your fault, and there are no contact lenses or other aids to compensate for a defective 13th. What you should be, what you *have* to be, is who and what you are. If you are a vegetarian you are a vegetarian; there is no deciding to become one; it just happens, you just get lucky one day and your thirteenth sense kicks in. So good luck, and whatever else you do on Thanksgiving, give thanks.

Love,
Sybil

Dear St. Sybil,

Have you heard that RU486 reverses male-pattern baldness?

Jess Hopon

Dear Jess,
Yes.

Love,
Sybil

* * *

HOMOSEXUAL ORIENTATION OR BEHAVIOR NOT CAUSE FOR SECURITY RISK, SAYS LEAKED DOCUMENT FROM PENTAGON LAWYERS

Gay men and lesbians should not be disqualified from obtaining military security clearances solely on the basis of their sexual orientation, states an internal memorandum issued by the Department of Defense Office of General Counsel.

The National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), which obtained the internal document from an anonymous source, says the memo's acknowledgement that gays are eligible for security clearances contradicts and "finally destroys" the Pentagon's argument that gay men and lesbians in the military represent a security risk.

The memo also addresses the issue of same-sex marriages in the military and says such relationships would not be grounds for disqualification unless "other circumstances were involved."

The advisory states that a person's sexual orientation is relevant to security clearance eligibility "only if" [emphasis added] an individual's "sexual practices, whether homosexual or heterosexual . . . (1) make him or her susceptible to exploitation, or (2) reflect untrustworthiness, unreliability, or lack of common sense judgement that must be demanded of anyone with access to classified information."

"The Counsel's memo is quite clear in stating that homosexual orientation or 'homosexual behavior' in and of itself is not sufficient reason to categorize someone as a security risk," said Tim Drake, director of the NGLTF Military Freedom Initiative. "This memo, from their own legal department, destroys the Pentagon's reasoning for defending its taxpayer-funded policy of discriminating against gay people serving in the Armed Forces."

In addition, the memo explains that "a claimed marital relationship with a person of the same gender" would be disqualifying "only if" other circumstances were involved, namely the two conditions stated previously.

The memorandum goes on to assert that violations of local sodomy laws—which make homosexual acts criminal behavior in 25 states and the District of Columbia—are not sufficient grounds to deny a security clearance.

"The general lack of enforcement, and acceptance of this type of private activity suggest that it would be of security concern . . . only if it is indicative of poor judgement other than criminality such as involvement with minors or sex in public places," the memo states.

Dated January 9, 1991, the memorandum was sent out on Office of General Counsel letterhead over the signature of Michael Sterlacci, the Assistant General Counsel. It stands in sharp contrast to the military's policy of excluding homosexuals from service because the Pentagon alleges they pose a security risk. ■

1991 Fall Peace Festival

Sat., Nov. 23, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
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CREATING CHANGE CONFERENCE— 63 Workshops Slated

Washington D.C.—Noted speakers, leaders, activists and other luminaries in the gay, lesbian and bisexual movement are slated to make presentations and spark debate at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF) 4th Annual Creating Change Conference. The skills-building conference, held this Nov. 9-11 outside Washington, D.C., will feature 63 workshops, a gay and lesbian cabaret, networking sessions, social events, provocative plenary speakers and much more.

Workshops include: organizing against violence, fundraising, drag activism, media advocacy, activism and stress, sexual liberation/sexual diversity, censorship, AIDS organizing and health issues, lobbying, international activism, direct action, organizing the workplace, staging visibility actions, the March on Washington, election year activism, movement in-fighting and more.

Besides staff and board members of NGLTF, presenters include: Robin Tyler, comedienne and lesbian activist; Alexander Robinson, ACLU—Washington lobbyist; Tim Sweeney, exec. dir., Gay Men's Health Crisis; Anita Taylor, Nat'l Minority AIDS Council; Letitia Gomez, Nat'l Latino/a Lesbian and Gay Organization (LLEGO); Suzanne Pharr, former exec. dir., Women's Project of Little Rock, author, *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism*; and many more.

Plenary speakers at the conference are Jewelle Gomez, writer, poet and activist; Mario Solis-Marich, national board co-chair, LLEGO, and AIDS Project L.A. public policy director; and Minnie Bruce Pratt, lesbian poet, essayist, teacher and NEA fellowship recipient.

Three pre-conference institutes will also be offered: *Campus Organizing*, Nov 7; *People of Color Organizing and Diversity Training*, Nov. 8. The conference will be held at the Old Colony Inn in historic Alexandria, VA., minutes from downtown Washington, D.C. Last year's conference sold out at more than 700 activists. This year's attendance is expected to exceed that number. Register now to ensure a place. For registration info, contact Brian Albert, NGLTF, 1734 14th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009, (202) 332-6483. ■



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WOMEN VETERANS SUPPORT NETWORK FORMED

Throughout the history of our nation, women have served in our Armed Forces. In the early years, women primarily followed units of male soldiers, acting as cooks, laundresses, nurses and helpers for the soldiers. Occasionally, women dressed as men to take part in the action of combat.

During World War I, a unit of Women Marines was formed to assist with clerical work in Defense offices; when the war ended, the women were immediately discharged. During World War II women were accepted for service by all branches of the Armed Forces and for the first time, women served in a wide variety of job fields in the military. By the end of World War II, the women's contributions and proven ability to work well under adverse conditions led to the continuation of women's branches of each service.

To date, approximately 1.2 million American women have served in our Armed Forces. For as many reasons as there are individuals, these women have donned military uniforms and survived the rigors of training designed to mold individual personalities into soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines, each a part of a much larger team with the common goal of providing defense for the nation. While immersed in the military sub-culture, women have served proudly and with distinction in peace time and in times of conflict.

No matter what era, branch of service, or the length of time spent in the service, every woman who has served in the military has been changed by the experience. When women veterans re-enter the mainstream they are thrust from a highly structured environment into a world of endless possibilities and options.

Women veterans, aware of a lack of resources specifically designed for women veterans, have created the Pallas Athena Network, named after the Greek Goddess of Wisdom, Craft and War whose likeness served as the branch insignia for the Women's Army Corps.

The bi-monthly publication, "Pallas Athena," provides an open, supportive network environment through which women veterans can discuss issues, thoughts and experiences with other women who share the common experience of military services. It provides articles of interest to women veterans and resource information as well as letters, fiction and creative works by women veterans.

All women veterans are encouraged to participate, regardless of race, creed, religion or sexual orientation. A special, discreet supplement by/for lesbian veterans is available.

For further information contact: The Pallas Athena Network, P.O. Box 1171, New Market, VA 22844. ■

ENCODINGS

Volume Two, No. One

WOMEN WRITING WOMEN'S LIVES:
a sampling of new poetry.

Artwork by Kanti R. Campagna

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for their generosity and support

from the bottom of my heart

THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!!

TO YOU... And the Rest of the Wife Abusers Out There...

I am the wrong woman to mess with. I am intelligent, life-educated, smart, and angry. I have been hurt, insulted, embarrassed, humiliated, and injured by you once too often. I am NOT to blame, and my children are NOT to blame for your lack of control, your insecurities, your inability to respect women as fellow human beings with the same rights you were born with, your psychotic temper, and the rest of your character defects. I am the wrong woman to mess with. And I am ANGRY!

I am angry with a society that still treats me and others like me as personal possessions of you clowns. I am angry at the cops who were afraid to interfere, I am angry with the friends, family and co-workers who were afraid to help, or refused to acknowledge my pain and suffering that you caused, and, buddy, I'm angry with you. I am not to blame and my children are not the problem... your problem is YOU!

I know what my rights are, even though you refused to respect them. I have the right to my opinion without you telling me I'm too stupid to have one. I have the right to socialize and be with friends of my own choosing, not the people you select. I have the right to come and go as I please without reporting to you, and without you spying on me and insisting that I give you a play-by-play of who I talked with today, what was said, where I was and who I was with, etc, etc. I have the right to not have my possessions smashed, broken, and torn when you don't get your way. I have the right not to be hit, and so do my children. I have the right to not be yelled at, threatened, intimidated, or belittled in any way, by you or anyone else WITHOUT A REASON if I choose to do so. I don't have to explain... after all, you don't! I am my own person, whether married or not, and YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME ANYMORE! I will love, and be loved in return, I will care for myself and my children, and by the grace of God, will know better next time someone like you comes along.

I am the wrong woman to mess with. And I left you. So put your own damn log on the fire, and boil up your own pot of tea, if you can. I don't sympathize with you, I don't hear your pleas for me to come back to you... I only want a life free from fear of you. And I will have that life. Without you.

There are many more women like me. I am not alone, even without you. And we're ALL angry. So... LOOK OUT!

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CHRIS WILLIAMSON: The theatre dimmed and as the spot lights rose a vibrant clear-eyed woman with a mischievous grin stepped onto the stage. She donned an acoustic guitar and with the very first note, her music captured the hearts of the crowd.

Chris Williamson's musical career began in the folk and rock clubs during the early 70's when she recorded her first commercial album, CHRIS WILLIAMSON. Soon after, Chris was to be instrumental in the creation of a whole new genre of independent music.

One of the most beloved and successful artists in independent music today, Chris Williamson writes and performs "healing music" that touches her audiences deeply. For those who flock to her sold-out concerts in major venues like the venerable Carnegie Hall, and those who have bought her 13 albums and catapulted her record sales to nearly one million, Chris Williamson's music and message are restorative balms that soothe, enlighten and inspire.

TRET FURE: "If it's a woman rocker you want who can sing and write . . . strong music that takes risks both in the extent of personal expression and in the composition . . . Tret Fure's for you." Tret Fure's latest album "Time Turns the Moon," produced by award winning musician Teresa Trull, shows Tret's versatility as both a singer and songwriter.

Chris Williamson and Tret Fure will be performing in Tulsa November 9th, 1991 at 8:00 p.m. at The Tower Theater, One Williams Center, Tulsa, OK. General Admission \$15.00, Reserved \$20.00 For more information or tickets by mail contact: Step Forward Productions, P.O. Box 700333, Tulsa, OK 74170, (818) 481-0261.

MIDWEST WIMMIN'S FESTIVAL NEEDS HELP

Dear MWF wimmin, friends, and interested ones,

As you may know, the Festival planning group decided on July 1 as the date by which a site must be found in order to give us adequate time to prepare for the 1991 Midwest Wimmin's Festival. That date has passed, and at the June 29th meeting, the planning group reached consensus that there will be no 1991 Festival. Group members remain committed to working toward making a 1992 Festival happen, and future meetings of the planning group and the land search committee have been scheduled.

Land Search. The land search committee welcomes all wimmin who want to participate either by attending meetings, offering suggestions, or investigating and reporting on possible Festival sites. Copies of a one-page "wish list" of guidelines for information needed by the committee are available for those who want to help.

Planning Group. The Festival planning group has made a commitment to participate in anti-oppression work. The gathering of this group was on September 14 and 15, at Mel's, Mary's and Faux's in Ava, Missouri. The focus of the weekend was on racism and anti-semitism.

Regional Gatherings. One way of keeping Festival alive until we can all gather again is to organize and participate in local or regional gatherings. Some wimmin have volunteered to be regional contacts for planning and/or gathering information about such gatherings. Members of the planning group have offered to facilitate networking between regional contact wimmin and wimmin desiring to receive information about events in their area.

Finances/Fund Raising. The present balance in the MWF checking account is \$1,144.79. Our ongoing expenses include communication (keeping planning and land search happening and keeping us all in touch) and rent on a storage locker (\$27.50/month on an 8' x 10' space).

In the past we have needed a minimum of \$1,400 to "start-up" Festival. We face many unknowns about financial needs for our next Festival. So we are again urging local fund raising efforts for MWF and encouraging everyone to donate what we can to help in this time of transition. Please consider these suggestions: 1. donating one hour's wages for each day of Festival you would attend (1-13 days, more if you can/less if you can't); 2. organizing attending an accessible event to generate funds; 3. adding a fund raising component to regional gatherings.

Keeping in Touch. Anyone who wants information about Festival planning, land search, fund raising, accessibility, and/or regional gatherings may write or tape to MWF, P.O. Box 861, Columbia, MO 65205. Please tell us what information you want: planning group minutes; planning meeting notice; land search meeting notice; land search info sheet; regional gathering info. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. This will allow Festival money to be used for Festival.

Although Festival funds are at an all-time low, the planning group felt that keeping you in touch and informed about process and decisions the group has made is important.

Know that Festival is not over, that many wimmin are continuing to put time and energy into finding a place for a 1992 Festival and into keeping the spirit of Festival alive until then.

WOMEN CAMPAIGN GLOBALLY FOR EQUAL SAY AT UN FATE-OF-THE-EARTH CONFERENCE *Will Develop Action Agenda at November 1991 World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet*

NEW YORK—Women around the world are campaigning for an equal say when "fate-of-the-Earth" decisions are made at the biggest UN environment and development conference ever held, next year in Brazil.

"Women have been almost invisible in policy-making on environment and development issues," said Bella Abzug, a founder of the U.S.-based Women's Foreign Policy Council and an initiator of the global women's campaign. "That's why women, who are more than 50 percent of the world's population, must participate—and be heard—when decisions are made that affect all our lives and the health of Mother Earth."

The June 1 - 12, 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) could draw heads of state from as many as 159 nations, making it the largest summit meeting ever held—an Earth Summit. In addition, thousands of citizen activists are expected in Brazil for a parallel People's Congress. Together, they will comprise the largest forum ever held for international legal and other actions on such issues as climate change, saving species, Earth ethics and financing sustainable development. Their decisions will affect life on Earth well into the 21st century.

To make sure women's voices and concerns are heard at the Earth Summit and in the national and international meetings preparing for it, women activists and experts from around the world have mobilized for a World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet, to be held November 8 - 12, 1991, seven months prior to the UN meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

Organizers of the Congress—an International Policy Action Committee of 50 women from every world region—met for the first time October 19 - 22 1990 in New York, invited by the Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO) of the Women's Foreign Policy Council.

The *New York Times* reported, "Although they came from diverse cultures, the women had little difficulty in reaching a general consensus on their basic goals, principles and plan of action." They decided women must organize worldwide for a significant impact on Earth Summit decisions, and that they should meet at a World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet in Miami.

The five-day Congress will be conducted as a Tribunal with a panel of distinguished women jurists—from Guyana, Kenya, Australia, Sweden and India. Margarita Aris, former first lady of Costa Rica and President of the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress, will give the keynote speech. The judges will hear dramatic testimony from women in every region of the world, who will present evidence of their battles against ecological and economic devastation. The participants will act as jurors taking evidence from the Tribunal, along with their own experiences, to a series of workshops where they will develop recommendations and actions for a healthy planet.

Their Women's Action Agenda will go to a Summit Meeting of women heads of state and government, top UN officials and other world leaders at the concluding session of the Congress, November 12th. Among those participating are Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, who led the highly influential World Commission on Environment and Development, and UNCED Secretary-General Maurice Strong.

One thousand women are expected at the Miami Congress, with the majority coming from developing countries. The Congress is open to all. It will directly follow the invitation-only Global Assembly of Women and the Environment, convened by the UN Environment Programme's Senior Women's Advisory Group, which will focus on replicable environmental successes. ■

ACLU SUES ATTORNEY GENERAL OF GEORGIA; Alleges Religious, Lesbian/Gay Discrimination

ATLANTA—In a challenge to both religious and anti-gay discrimination, the American Civil Liberties Union today sued the Attorney General of Georgia alleging that he improperly fired a woman after learning of her plans to undertake a Jewish religious ceremony of marriage with her female partner.

The lawsuit, which was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia by the American Civil Liberties Union's national Lesbian and Gay Rights Project and the ACLU of Georgia, charges that Attorney General Michael J. Bowers violated Robin Shahar's rights to religious freedom, freedom of association and equal protection under the United States Constitution.

Shahar, who graduated 6th in her class from Emory Law School in the spring, had been offered and had accepted a job as a staff attorney in the Attorney General's office. On July 10th, however, she was presented with a letter from Bowers in which he withdrew his offer, saying that his action had become necessary after he learned of her "purported marriage" to another woman.

Shahar and her partner of 5 years were joined in a private Jewish ceremony performed by their Rabbi on July 28, 1991. The religious ceremony was attended by the family and friends of the couple.

"After long and careful consideration and consultation with our Rabbi, my partner and I committed to one another as an act of our faith," stated Shahar. "I was stunned when Attorney General Bowers fired me—even before the ceremony had taken place—for my religious practices. I know enough about my religious freedom to believe that my rights have been violated."

"Bowers has clearly acted unconstitutionally," said Ruth E. Harlow, an attorney with the ACLU's national Lesbian and Gay Rights Project who is handling Shahar's case. "Although lesbians and gay men cannot be civilly married to one another in Georgia, the state's refusal to recognize gay marriage does not preclude individual couples from making religious vows to one another," stated Harlow. "Robin's marriage was a purely religious ceremony, centrally protected by the First Amendment."

The lawsuit seeks both compensation and punitive damages and asks the court to order Bowers to rehire Shahar. Shahar's case will be litigated by the ACLU's national Lesbian and Gay Rights Project, with the ACLU of Georgia, and cooperating attorney Debra Schwartz, of the Atlanta firm of Stanford, Fagan & Giolito.

As a result of the Attorney General's discriminatory behavior, the Emory University School of Law earlier this week prohibited Bowers from recruiting on its campus. The law school determined that the Attorney General's action amounted to discrimination based on sexual orientation which violates school policy, as well as the policy of the American Association of Law Schools. The American Bar Association also condemns discrimination based on sexual orientation.

"The real losers here are the people of the state of Georgia," stated Teresa Nelson, the Executive Director of the ACLU of Georgia. "First, they have been deprived of the services of one of the finest young lawyers in the state because of the religious intolerance of the Attorney General. What's worse, every Georgian's religious freedom is in peril if the state is permitted to make employment decisions based upon whether it likes or dislikes particular religious practices." ■

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Classifieds . . .

MUSICIANS WANTED—Rhythm and lead electric guitar and keyboard players needed. Call 528-0621

Chatterbox

LESBIAN ONLY THERAPY GROUP. Wednesday evenings. Call Jo Soske. M.Ed/MHR/CAC at 364-5708

STILLWATER LESBIANS . . . Two sisters in town want to organize some kind of regular get-together. Volleyball, softball or anything else, until the weather turns chilly, and over the winter maybe a weekly or bi-weekly potluck dinner. Let's get together; let's form community. It give us strength and makes us happy. Call Judi Kaufman at 377-4718 or Alice Anderton at 377-9425

FOUND AT RETREAT, WILL TRADE beautiful pyrex casserole with lid found at retreat for recipe of delicious rice "stuff" it contained. Call 794-3035. Check at Herland for other items found at the retreat

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS. Why do you garden? Gardening as Lesbian Art; Gardening and Feminist Ethics; Politics of Gardening and Ecofeminism; Making a living as a gardener; Market gardening; History of women and gardening; Herbiology; etc. etc.! Send essays, poems, stories, narratives, line drawings, black and white photos with self-addressed stamped envelope by August 1, 1992 to: HerBooks, P.O. Box 7467, Santa Cruz, CA 95061

SECOND ANNUAL WOMEN'S ARTS AND CRAFTS FESTIVAL. The Women's Activities Department of the Metropolitan Community Church of Dallas will showcase arts and crafts produced by local and regional women artisans on Saturday, November 9th at the Second Annual Women's Arts and Crafts Festival. This year the show will be held on the church grounds at 5353 Maple Avenue (1 block south of Inwood).

The doors will open at 11:00 a.m. There is a \$1 admission charge. Parking is free. Refreshments will be available through the day. We invite all of you to come by and kick off your holiday shopping at this growing annual holiday event. For more information contact: Sue Schrader, 214-526-6221

THE FALL PEACE FEST, sponsored by the Peace House will be November 23 at the Civic Center Hall of Mirrors. This promises to be one of the biggest and best Peace Fests ever. Be sure and stop by the Herland table and say Hi.

THE ASTON MESSAGE

RHONDA L. SMITH
Practitioner

(405) 942-4748
(405) 524-2958

ANNOUNCING NEW VENTURE AT HERLAND: CRAFTS WANTED

Herland is looking for quality crafts to carry at the Herland bookstore. All items will be offered on consignment, with artists receiving 60% of sales. A committee has been formed to review all articles for appropriateness for the store. We're asking for well-crafted items in good taste. Please contact 521-9696 and leave a message.

The "crafts room" should be completed and ready for merchandise by mid-November, just in time for the holiday season. ■

FALL RETREAT... We Were There!

Red Rock Canyon State Park was the site of the thirteenth semi-annual Herland Retreat. Almost 150 women (147 we think) and several children participated in the retreat. Women from Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, California, Colorado, Iowa and Alabama were in attendance.

The retreat officially opened with the presentation of Herland's colors with a custom tie-dyed banner and the symbolic lighting of the first campfire by Sister I, Peggy Johnson.

The highlight of the workshops was a well-attended nature walk led by Sally Blevins' mom (or was it really Red Rock Canyon's First Gay Pride Parade?—rumor has it that over 50 women were seen traipsing through the woods). Other workshops ranged from "Ask Your Almost Vet," to "Self-Empowerment," "Why Women Need the Goddess" and "Sensuality, Sexuality and Spirituality."

Nancy Scott came in from Austin, Texas to provide her own special blend of music and humor on Saturday night and joined us around the campfire after the concert.

Thanks to everyone who worked to make this retreat a huge success. Everyone who attended pitched in to keep the camp clean and make retreat activities successful and fun.

Plan now to be a part of the next retreat in May of 1992 at Robbers Cave State Park. Watch *The Voice* for more information. ■

WOMEN'S CRAFTS FESTIVAL — Success at the Porthole

The fund and fun-raising women's arts and crafts festival at the Porthole on October 6th was a rousing success; and Herland wants to thank all the folks who contributed, and especially of course Shatzy and Carol. The Herland Building Fund is richer by \$349.96, and everyone involved had a lot of fun as well. There were wonderful crafts for sale, and the open mic had some fantastic talent. Thank you, Shatzy and Carol. It was great. You are a true supporter of our community. ■