

The HERLAND VOICE

APRIL, 1992

I Owe My Life to a Gun

by Laura Choate

When I was asked to write an article on guns I felt rather uneasy about sharing this. I hope it will ultimately convey a positive message. I owe my life to a gun, unfortunately, as with most circumstances with guns involved it meant taking a life. I have a great respect for life and it took many years to come to terms with the incident.

I was 12 years old and had just run away from my abusive home. As with most runaways of the 70's I began hitchhiking. I was picked up by a trucker on his way to New Mexico. After several hours of riding and talking the driver pulled off to an isolated area and attacked me. He beat me unconscious, raped me with a knife, because I was too small for him, then he alternately raped and sodomized me. I remember regaining consciousness, bleeding, in pain and terrified. He was driving again, my clothes were gone and I couldn't find my glasses to see anything with. As I fumbled around in the sleeper compartment, he grabbed me and pulled me towards the driver seat with him. He said he was going to take me to some friends of his so they could enjoy me too, then he threw me back against the wall of the sleeper where I lost consciousness again, believing I was going to die soon.

I woke to daylight. Again I began attempting to find my glasses in the sleeper, I found them, but only after finding his gun he had tucked under the mattress. I had no idea how to use it, I just sat back there against the wall bleeding and in pain pointing it in his direction. I prayed that it would keep him from killing me. (continued on page 4)

No More Guns

by Margaret Cox

They wouldn't let me wear my sixshooters to school, but I wore them everywhere else, slung low on my hips, cool and dangerous, ready to draw. They were handsome, silver, 'ivory' handled, with a good substantial heft and a solid fit in the hand. My gun belt was intricately tooled, nearly as gorgeous as my jeans belt, which was also tooled, and studded with colored stones, a sheathed Bowie knife, a real one, strapped to it. I was cool, I was together, I was tough; I was seven something.

And of course my guns were cap pistols. Those days are long gone now, as are the days of the frontier West I was trying to relive, and I don't want a gun anymore.

It seems to me that we will never have a world without guns until we make a world without guns; until we outlaw them all, stop making them and owning them, until we have giant meltdowns of turned-in and confiscated guns in town squares each year until every gun out there is transformed into a monument to peace. And therefore I think that the ethical decision, at least for most of us, should be clear and simple: hasten the day, no more guns.

I need to voice an exception before I go any further; there are a lot of people, a lot of women especially, who have been, not only oppressed by violence, as all women are, but badly hurt by it; who have had the fear become monstrous reality. If they want a gun, if a gun restores a sense of safety or security or empowerment to them, who is to say they are wrong? They deserve to be the last to give up their weapons. (continued on page 4)

SUPPORT NEEDED FOR CUSTODY BATTLE

For millions of gay and lesbian parents and potential parents, the threat of losing their children in custody battles with heterosexual ex-partners is painfully real. In most cases, fear, lack of financial resources, and lack of legal precedent force the parents to either give up the children, give up the partner, or bargain away their personal rights to avoid losses in lengthy court cases. **But there is a local lesbian couple who is fighting back, and they need our immediate help and financial support.**

A hearing has been set in the District Court of Cleveland County requesting a change in primary custody of two children from the mother to the father because the mother is a lesbian, has a live-in-partner, and wants to move the family out of the state. The father has known about the sexual orientation of the mother for years, but is now using this issue to block the out-of-state move because it is such a potentially powerful weapon.

Though the mother and her partner have provided a safe, healthy, happy, and loving home for the children, the judge may still award custody to the father, restrict visitation, and/or force the partner to leave the home. If any of these happen, the couple will appeal to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. And, if the couple wins, it is possible that the father may also appeal. This means that either way, the couple must be financially ready to handle the estimated twenty-thousand dollar cost of the battle.

A decision at the Supreme Court level affects us all. Help us stand with this couple by donating money now for legal costs. Their court date is less than a month away, and they desperately need funds for witnesses, attorney fees, court costs, transcripts, and depositions.

Send a donation today to Herland, c/o Legal Defense Fund, 2312 NW 39th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73112. Let us stand with these women in this very important case.

ST. SYBIL

Sybil Ludington, Matron Saint of the forgotten woman, occasionally contributes to this space.

Dear St. Sybil,

So what do you think about guns? In this violent world are women being foolish when they refuse to own guns, or are they behaving responsibly in trying to create a better world by living it as they would wish it to be? Should a self-respecting woman own a gun to protect what is ultimately her only possession, her life? Or does the fact that most women are killed by lovers or husbands mean that owning a gun would make her more likely to be a quick kill some day, because it would make it 100% certain that there would be a gun around during moments of rage? What about the ethics of having a gun around the house for young children to find and blow their little playmates away with? With so much violence directed against women just because they are women, shouldn't women have an equalizer? Would a woman shoot a date rapist? Doubtful. A stranger rapist? If she could get to the gun, probably. Is not wanting to own guns women's collusion in their own victimization, or is it high principle? Is it principle women can't afford yet? Help, St. Sybil. If my mind keeps spinning on this dilemma it may just spin right out of the universe.

In honest confusion,
Maggie Mac

Dear Maggie Mae,

Like a good many of us here where I am, I come down squarely on both sides of this issue; as you obviously do too.

In the long run, of course, which is more clearly visible to us where I am, the world will never be peaceful until all people eschew all weapons; and this is going to take a lot of unilateral, pacifist type action. So get rid of your gun.

However, where you are, seeing the world narrowly - up close and personal, so to speak, - you tend to feel pretty stupid and scared if the time comes that you "need" a gun and on principle you don't have one. So get a gun?

Now, you realize that there truly are issues on which rational, honorable, ethical people can disagree; and this might be one of them. The best help I can give you is to suggest that you go to Herland's discussion group on this very knotty topic on Tuesday, April 21st, at 7 p.m., and thrash it out with other concerned and good women. You certainly won't all agree at the end of the evening, but you should be firmer and more comfortable in your own decision.

Good luck,
Sybil

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Dear St. Sybil,

Where you are, are there cats and dogs? Do the dogs have fleas?

Gotta have my pets, and prefer them flealess,
love,
Lotta Katz

Dear Lotta,

Not only are there all kinds of animals here, they don't have to worry about traffic, or animal experimentation, or fur coats, or furballs or any of those nasty things. There are fleas, sure, but the fleas don't bite. They just form little circuses and hop around entertaining everyone. So not to worry, you don't have to leave Smokey or Creedy or Tigger behind. All in all, in fact, when we manage to keep our eyes averted from the human condition, this is a pretty nice place to spend an eternity.

Love to you and all your critters,
Sybil

P-FLAG PUBLICATIONS

Four new P-FLAG publications for families and friends of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals have been published by Parents Flag Federation; and are available on the research shelf at Herland.

"Supporting Our Gay Loved Ones: A Parents FLAG Perspective" is a reproduction of the paper presented by national President Paulette Goodman to the American Psychiatric Association in May of 1991. The booklet discusses the common issues that affect gay people and their families and the coming out process for parents. The author described the history, objectives, and purposes of the Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

Three issue papers written by noted sexuality educator Ann Thompson Cook provide the latest information and most compelling arguments for recognizing the special needs of lesbian and gay youth and providing them with a safe and nurturing environment.

Issue Paper # 1: "Who is Killing Whom?" explains why sexual orientation is the primary motivation for 30% of all adolescents who succeed in taking their own lives. This paper challenges the reader to become part of the solution by 1) helping to cultivate an affirming environment for lesbian and gay youth; and 2) assisting these youth to actively develop coping skills to handle the painful rejection of bigotry and discrimination.

Issue Paper # 2: "You Can Help" presents an overview of the social context lesbian and gay youth experience as they grow up. This piece provides the reader with a sense of the loneliness and isolation experience by these adolescents attempting to reconcile their sexual identity to society's norms.

Issue Paper # 3: "Youth and Homosexuality" discusses the distinct issues of sexual identity, orientation, and behavior and the implications of sexual diversity throughout childhood. The paper makes recommendations for fundamental changes in the way institutions care for, educate, and serve youth in order to prevent serious physical and mental health consequences. A set of all four papers may be ordered by sending \$5 to Parents Flag, Department RAY1, P. O. Box 27605, Washington, DC 20038

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PROFILE--Maria Mitchell, 1818 - 1889; A librarian by day and astronomer by night, she was the first person using a telescope to establish the orbit of a comet, later named in her honor. She was the first woman to be elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and was professor of Astronomy at Vassar, 1865 - 1888.

TO THE EDITOR

Dear Newsletter Committee

I would like to commend you on the March issue of "The Herland Voice". I always look forward to receiving my issue and usually read it cover to cover that evening. This issue was no exception.

I enjoyed the writings on the theme of role models. They made me reflect on my own childhood and remember memorable women in my own life. Thanks to all the women who made the effort to share their experiences with me.

As always there were articles informing me of the political arena in the gay world - information I could never find in Gaylord's paper. It's also enjoyable to read other women's views - as evidenced by the reviews, cartoon and satirical articles.

The thermometer for the building fund was just what I needed to renew my commitment for a monthly donation.

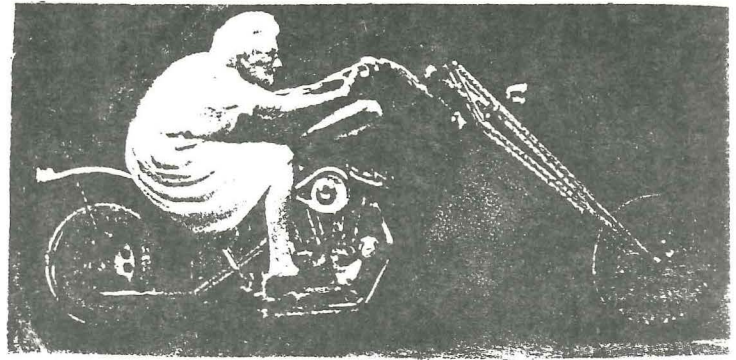
There are exciting things happening in the women's movement and you - the newsletter committee - are to be congratulated for being such a stimulating part of them.

Great work! Thanks!

K. Rogers

♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀ ♀

A Southern Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C has voted to approve the blessing of a union of two gay men according to an AP report published in the *Daily Oklahoman* on Saturday, March 14. Sixty-four percent of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church members voted to approve the union while 94% supported full church membership for lesbians and gays.



Twanda -- Ready for Retreat! R U ?

May 15-17, 1992
Robbers Cave State Park

Hey Y'all,

Well, Twanda and I just finished putting together the agenda for the Spring Retreat. Mark your calendars, get your checkbook, find a pet/baby sitter and get ready -- its gonna' be good. You'll want to be at Robbers Cave State Park (again) on May 15, 16, and 17, 1992.

We will have dance lessons - complete with a dance Friday evening to utilize your new skills. Workshops will include "Spirituality and Self Esteem"; "Song Writing", "American Sign Language", "Goddess", "Creative Writing", and more not yet definite. Erica Wheeler will be in concert on Saturday evening. In addition there are always sports, open mike, games, videos, food, fun and women.

Meet new friends, get reacquainted with old friends and have some fun.

For the old time Retreat folks, I'm planning to put together a scrapbook so bring photos of past retreats. Help identify year and season on some of mine and lets re/create some Retreat memories.

Clip and mail your registration today. If you are able to pay a little extra to provide a scholarship please do so. We always have a lot of requests and strongly desire to honor all. If you need a scholarship, please send your registration and request early. When scholarships are exhausted, we will need to request partial payment. If you would like to share a ride, please include your phone number so we can help work out details.

Oh! Twanda just reminded me, we will be having a raffle of items generously donate by our signors. There will be at least 12 different prizes you can win. Also, our stock of snack items will include fresh roasted peanuts, fruit, juice, pop, mineral water and lots more so bring your change jar.

As always the Retreat itself is one big group effort. When you arrive, don't forget to sign up for small (or large) work details.

If you have any questions call Herland (521-9696) and leave a message for me and I will get back to you ASAP.

See you there,
Laura

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No More Guns

(continued from page 1)

I also feel the need to say, for honesty's sake, that if I would feel a lot safer with a gun I would probably get one in a minute, whatever the ethics of it. But unless a gun is accessible I can't see how it can do much good; and if I can't strap it around my waist it's not very accessible. If it is in a drawer or under the bed or up in a closet it is most likely to be found and used by small children, drunks, suicides and burglars. And I don't want to keep a gun around for any of those folks. So it seems to me that both the sensible choice and the ethical choice are the same, which makes it easy: No more guns. ■

Guns?

by Peggy Johnson

Guns? What do I know about guns? I took a class on how to shoot a gun when I was about 17. We had gotten a .357 magnum. I got my picture in the paper and everything.

Then a close friend stole the gun from my sister's apartment and this caused a major rift in my family. He sold it for \$30 so he could go to camp. I think he got a deal (he got into more trouble later) so that he had to join the Air Force when he was 17. They have some really big guns in the Air Force.

When I got broken into a few years ago, a friend of mine loaned me her gun for a few weeks because I was a little scared. I finally realized that the gun was bothering me as much as anything so I gave it back to her. The first few days I had it, it did lend some comfort, I must admit.

A couple of years ago, I started thinking I might want to get a gun and do some target practice. I was taking a class at the time -- American Political Parties, Political Behavior. The professor made an interesting comment that has stuck with me. He bluntly said that guns are for killing people and that target practice is just practice toward that end.

Well, I haven't been able to bring myself to practice killing people and I don't think anyone should have a gun who "doesn't know how to use it," as the saying goes. There are other skills I'd rather learn.

Furthermore, the anti-waiting period argument is stupid. It doesn't necessarily preclude one's ability to purchase a gun like the right wing radicals profess. Why can't they use their energy (and money) on some worthwhile cause like stamping out hunger? Anyway, I'm not so sure about the background check and a possible infringement of constitutional rights but I do favor a cooling off period for people who make decisions to buy guns. Who knows? It might save a few self-inflicted head wounds (or whatever other body parts people tend to blow away).

All of this comes from a kid who played army when I was young, had cowboy holsters with six-shooter cap pistols, toy rifles, and my favorite -- a little play derringer that would fit up a shirt sleeve.

Maybe if I lived in a war zone or in the wilderness, I'd have one, I don't know. My neighborhood is on the fringe, after all. Plus, who didn't cheer when Louise blew away that creep who was raping Thelma? Or a year ago that 70 year-old woman who shot the guy who broke into her house in Oklahoma City?

For me right now, though, I prefer the safety and comfort of knowing that there is no gun under my pillow or in my drawer that I may feel compelled to use in a moment of desperation. May you all rest easy in your own choices and may your strength come from inner peace instead of your peace coming through presumed outer strength. ■

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I Owe My Life to a Gun

(continued from page 1)

With the flap closed he couldn't see me, had he, I'm sure in the condition I was in he could've easily taken it from me. I had no idea where we were at the time, I felt the truck stop and all I could think of was what he had said about his friends. I later found out it was only an intersection. When he stopped, I first froze, then reacted, I knew I couldn't take anymore. I pushed the flap back, pointed the gun at his head and squeezed the trigger with the last of my strength. The noise got people's attention and the police came. I don't remember anything until I was being put in the ambulance. The police called it self defense on the spot. I was taken to the hospital for transfusions and emergency surgery. They were able to salvage my reproductive organs, however, they told me they doubted I could ever become pregnant.

For 15 years I blocked the memory of the incident. Then the memories became overpowering along with guilt and shame. I started having vivid flashbacks and entered treatment being diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It was then with a lot of therapy I grew to realize how lucky I was to be alive. With the development of my spirituality I came to believe it was far from luck. Since that incident I have accomplished many things and touched many lives. I believe that gun gave me a choice I might not otherwise have had to save my life and prevent this man from harming others. I believe in unfair situations guns give us a choice to protect ourselves. I own a gun today and I know that given a life or death situation I could use it. I touch many young lives in my work today and I strive to instill a respect for all life. Using a gun should never be a choice taken lightly. With a gun at least I have a choice. ■

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Should Women Have Guns?

by Nancy Dwyer

Since being approached to write an article regarding whether women should have guns, I have gone through various stages of self examination. Though I am personally opposed to guns, I can likewise see their necessity in cases of self defense.

My opposition to guns can easily be negated by advocates of the National Rifle Association. Not only is the right to bear arms guaranteed in our Constitution, but "guns don't kill, people do". How does this type of flippancy explain children killing children in schools, the senseless "drive-by" shootings and women being gunned down because they left abusive relationships? Something is very wrong with our society when a person's right to own guns becomes more important than an innocent person's right to live!

As previously stated I do believe that there are times when, in cases of self defense, owning a gun may become a necessity. Let me relate my own story with the hope that this will clarify some of my confusion on this issue. A few years ago I entertained the idea of purchasing a gun because I heard that my life style and my children's was being threatened. Upon learning this I planned how I would go to a store, purchase a small handgun, take lessons to develop accuracy and competence. Envisioning how I would await this person entering my home, I would calmly take aim, shooting first an appropriate part of his anatomy, then aiming from his heart afterwards. He would never bother my children or myself again. (I should mention that the "he" was not my ex.)

After having justified the purchase of a gun for protection I took this one step further: why should I wait for the provocation? Why not simply stalk him down, blow him away and be done with the suspense? This change of tactic terrified me. I was willing to murder someone over a rumor? Calling the police never crossed my mind. Women with court ordered restraining papers and peace bonds die expecting they will be protected.

After thinking about this topic further, I began to question, why is "should women have guns?" even a question. "Should men have guns?" is rarely asked in our society? Are women incapable of handling guns? Surely this is not the case. Women have proven themselves from the beginning of our country, through the world wars, Vietnam and Desert Storm. This questioning of women sounds like another one of our patriarchal double standards where women and men are differentiated. Who would lose most if women who are abused, battered and raped decided that they needed to take up arms to stop the violence? What would happen if men realized that women were not going to stand for the intimidation any longer? Would the courts change the laws regarding violence towards women or would the media run a campaign how "crazed" women suffering from PMS are gunning down innocent men?

Each woman must make up her own mind about owning a gun. She must become trained in its use, comfortable with the knowledge that it will more than likely be her only source of protection and more important, not be afraid to use it. I called one local company that offers training for women at a cost of \$50.00 per class. Classes are 6 to 8 hours in length which is sufficient time to learn I was told. As the spokesperson verified, more women are taking classes and realizing the need for protection.

I still have not changed my opinion about guns and the violence associated with them. My fantasy of searching out and destroying my harasser confirmed for me that purchasing a gun at that time was not wise. However, I strongly recommend that if women are going to own guns they need to be trained to use them, care for them properly and lock them away from curious children. ■

Why I Own A Gun

by Deborah Fox

As long as guns are made, criminals will have them. White collar crime is a result of greed and street crime is a result of oppression. Crime is a gauge of a society's sociological health or lack of it. Crime rates are in direct proportion to the greed, sexism, classism and twisted/tabooed sexuality of this male-designed culture. Until the root causes of social ills are remedied, drug abuse, murder, rape, theft, and other malefactions will plague us. I refuse to be a sitting duck for male violence.

Perhaps it's easier for me to justify owning a gun since I live so remote and far from police protection. I'm on my own, literally, and must defend myself alone. But cities are where most crimes are committed and I can't see how a woman in a parking lot could phone the police or fend off a rapist nonviolently. And having been raped I feel justified in concealing a weapon upon my person if I so choose.

I am concerned about the dangers involved in keeping a gun; the chance that a child could get hold of it and hurt her/himself or someone else, that a thief might steal it and use it in the next crime or on me, or that I might accidentally shoot myself. And that's why I am a firm believer in gun education and training.

I used to be against the bearing of arms and I thought keeping a gun would attract that kind of energy and the situations in which I would need the gun. I used to be afraid of guns and didn't even like touching them. But when a gun-toting, sly-eyed fella stopped by my remote country house and looked me up and down, I realized how vulnerable I was. So I bought a gun and learned to use it and care for it proficiently. It hasn't attracted situations in which I'd need a gun, on the contrary I feel confident and I don't worry when I'm alone. I'm not afraid and therefore bad situations aren't on my mind.

Another idea is that women are conditioned **not** to fight back and maybe owning a gun gives a woman a sense of confidence about fighting back. Some women learn karate, and that's good, but for me I don't ever want to be that close to an assailant, though karate is a good skill to have. I believe wholeheartedly in nonviolent activism, but there you have power in numbers and the message is broader.

I envision a world of woman's values; equality, peace, fairness, respect for the earth, that's what my life is for. But until violent crimes are rare and **no one** has access to guns, I think I'll keep mine. I'd rather be a gun toter than a victim of violent crime. ■

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A Different View

Judith Rycroft's Report from "Over There"

"Remember--Tonight, when you put out the cat, don't forget the empties!"

Empties? Wow! You know how sometimes a word flashes an image? I had this picture pop into my mind: eyes, empty eyes--drained by pain, numbed by loss, sucked by demands...it shook me.

I glanced up at the TV in time to see a gleaming trio of milk bottles huddled on a doorstep. Silly me! Switching my mind to British mode and duty, I trudged downstairs with two bottles, no cat.

The familiarity of watching the ten o'clock news had fooled my subconscious. Instead of being across the States and ocean from you, I was ready for OK TV's "It's ten o'clock. Do you know where your children are?" I just wasn't tuned in to milk bottles.

Speaking of milk...one problem with travel these days is that the world has been semi-homogenized. Go thousands of miles any direction and you'll still be in the familiar country of MacDonalds, Coke, and Levis. My tip, to get the most out of any journey, is to play the game of "Spot the differences." Honing in on similarities just seems to warp impressions--I mean, those hamburgers are never as good, Coke never as cold, Levi's never as cheap, as they are "at home."

Having lived among the British for half my life, I slip too easily into being unconscious of the little differences--milk delivered to the front door in glass pint bottles, filled clotheslines, airing cupboards, totally-talk radio, house names, public footpaths, geysers (for hot water), the language.

Looking around for things to write home about sort of tunes me back in. I look at the ads as if they were Jewel-Osco flyers and crack up over "Do-Do for congestion and catarrh" or "Mr Brain's Faggots--A great meal all 'round!" (A faggot, by the way, is a ball of ground pig pieces rolled in crumbs and fried.)

It's the differences that make labels, right? Here, no matter how hard I try and before I even open my mouth, I'm "A Foreigner." I remember being in a program at my girls' school in England when I was 13. I thought no one would know I was different because we were all in uniforms--white shirt, green tie, blazer, skirt, knickers (cotton drawers), white socks. "Ah, you are the Ameddican gel," the visiting dignitary said to me. I was wearing penny loafers, long before loafers hit the Brit-shoe-scene.

The other day, I goofed again. I realized by the glances that I was "wearing my label"--I had on ear muffs and carried no shopping bag. Ah well, no problem. I suddenly noticed, in a row of brownstone houses, one proudly sporting the name "Mount Olives." I'm sorry, but that name just hit my funny spot. I giggled, and I could almost feel my label being changed from "Foreigner" to "Crazy Foreigner."

I love reading house names over here. Last year M. and I stayed in a Bed & Breakfast place called "Barf" which is rather an unfortunate name for a place that serves food, yes? It turned out the Barf is a phonic rendering of the northern surname "Barugh," and the owner was very proud of the association and antiquity.

I shouldn't laugh, anyway. My house here in Wales in Ael-y-Bryn, which means "bump on a hillside." The name comes with the house, a pairing sometimes hundreds of years old. In the past one's address had no numbers--"Caltotts, Broad Street, Chipping Sodbury" or "The Manor, Hoarwithy." Although this is still the case in some villages and older parts of towns, the system is obviously a postman's nightmare and has yielded to the modern numbers game.

Probably my biggest pastime and pleasure here is the radio. Do any of you remember when American radio offered excitement like

"Who knows what evil lurks in the minds of men? Only THE SHADOW knows--heh, heh, heh, heh, heh" and soaps like "Folger's coffee, mountain grown, brings you the transcribed adventures of JUDY AND JANE"? In that little box by my bed I have three wave-lengths and umpteen stations full of drama, documentaries, analyses, how-to/where-to/why-to, serials, interviews, etc., etc. hallelujah! Mind you, I'm having to do more dial-hopping since the General Election was called for April 9. Before the announcement on March 10, news of the American primaries and British political squabbling used up more than their fair share, in my opinion. Now that the campaigns are ON, it's sometimes hard to find a program that admits it's fiction.

I'm trying to listen to enough to stay informed, thinking that maybe I'll do my Conscientious World Citizen bit and vote here in April and in OK in November. In both cases mine will probably be a protest vote--I protest that life is never as beautiful as politician insist they can make it.

Basically, it's a two-horse field here: the conservatives (or Tories) under John Major and the Labor [Labour] Party led by Neil Kinnock are polling around 40% each. The final result may depend on a deal with the Liberal Democrats and Paddy Ashdown, polling around 14%. The Liberals got into hot water a while back when the Press revealed that Paddy had an affair with his secretary five years ago. Of course, comparisons between Ashdown and Clinton flew around. I thought the differences were interesting--the respective responses in effect were:

PADDY ASHDOWN--Yep, I done it; told my wife; put it behind us; next question?

BILL CLINTON--Nope, not me; wife agrees; what evidence?

In trying to escape politics, I've found a fantastic station; "Fem Radio, FM." The bad news is that the station is so far away that I can't catch it unless I dangle myself from the attic window holding a coat hanger. The good news is that EveryWoman's Radio is attracting so much interest that many of their broadcasts are being repeated on national stations. Maybe I'll be able to hear enough to tell you about some FemDiff, next month.

Hey...don't forget the empties!

WOMEN'S FRIENDSHIPS - A BOOK REVIEW

by Jo Soske

Susan Koppleman has done it again. Her latest book *Women's Friendships* is a collection of brilliant and beautiful short stories on the all-too-often-ignored subject of women's relationships with one another. It includes stories written from 1846 to 1991. The representation of authors and perspectives is brilliant. It includes such writers as Edith Wharton, Alice Childress, Paula Gunn Allen, and Leslea Newman. The headnotes are done by a variety of feminist scholars including our own Abigail Keegan. In addition to being a rich and diverse literary collection, the book contains an introduction and conclusion which every woman should treat herself to the pleasure of reading. Susan Koppleman paints a warm and enduring picture with words. Such a picture could only spring from the heart of a woman who loves women.

Women's Friendships was published by the University of Oklahoma Press in both hard cover and soft cover. It can be ordered by Herland. Every woman who has ever had a friend, hopes to have one, or plans to be one should consider this book a must.

MOTHER'S DAY RALLY FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

A coalition of concerned groups is sponsoring a March for the Children on May 10, 1992, followed by a Lobby Day on May 11. They are calling for legislation to protect children and the rights to which they are entitled under the Constitution of the USA. There are thousands of sexual abuse cases going on all over this country, where judges ordered children to visit and even live with their abusers.

The Rally will take place on the U.S. Capitol steps in Washington DC from 1 - 3 pm, May 10. For more information contact Kitty Kruse, (310) 354-7396.

The Coalition is also asking people to support a Bill of Rights for Child Victims of Sexual Abuse. The National Petition for Sexually Abused Children's Rights will be presented to the U.S. Congress during the Mother's Day Rally for Children's Rights; May 10/11, 1992. If you would like to be included on this petition, you can come in to Herland to sign, or sign and send in the short form below to Herland, 2312 NW 39th, OKC 73112.

A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR CHILD VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

1. TRAINED JUDGES AND MASTERS: Each child victim would be entitled to have his or her case heard by a judge trained and educated about child development and the full effects of child sexual abuse. This includes Family, Juvenile and Criminal Courts.

2. TRAINED GUARDIAN AD LITEMS - BOTH LAY AND LAWYER: Each child victim should be entitled to a lay GAL who would be that child's guardian angel advocate and oversee the work of the system including the lawyer GAL representing the child. The lawyer GAL should be trained and educated, and limited in their work to being only a child advocate, not representing the parents or other adult offenders.

3. CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES SEPARATED FROM DIVORCE COURT: Each child victim should be entitled to have legal matters pertaining to their protection heard by a different judge than the one hearing the divorce case. The child will not be a pawn in a property dispute.

4. HOLDING ADULTS ACCOUNTABLE: Each child victim should have the legal right to hold any adult accountable for abusing them, participating in that abuse or for not protecting them from further abuse. This includes the legal right to file lawsuits against doctors, lawyer, GALs, and any other child protective service or government agency.

5. BURDEN OF PROOF REGARDING VISITATION SHIFTS TO ABUSER: Once abuse has been demonstrated to the degree to warrant protection, the abuser should assume the burden of proof necessary to show that visitation would be good for the child, as opposed to the current system in which the protecting parent must show that visitation with the abuser would be bad for the child.

6. THE RIGHT TO CONFRONT THEIR ABUSER BUT WITH PROTECTION: Each child victim should have the right to testify with permission from their therapist, so they can feel empowered to confront their abuser with the truth of the assault. However, the Courts, prosecutors, and GALs will be innovative via the use of TV and media technology to protect the child from further abuse and threats within the courtroom.

7. THE SAME EXPECTATION OF ADULT VICTIMS TO HAVE LAWBREAKER PUNISHED: Child victims should have the same rights of adult victims to have lawbreakers punished, and not to have their sentences be less because the victim was a child or a family member.

8. COMPETENT EVALUATION AND TESTIMONY: Child victims should be entitled to examination by doctors and experts who have extensive experience in child development and child sexual abuse issues.

9. CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS FOR EACH CHILD: Children should have the same legal and constitutional rights that adults have.

NATIONAL PETITION FOR SEXUALLY ABUSED CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

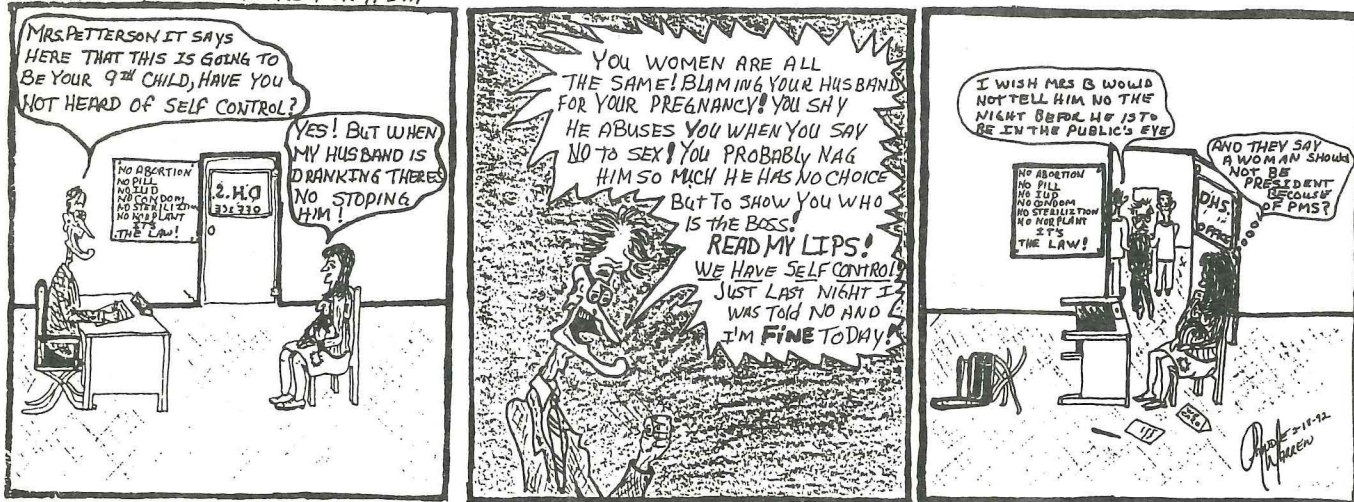
I support the Bill of Rights for child Victims of Sexual Abuse.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

THE PRESIDENT VOLUNTEERS FOR A DAY



Many thanks to the women (& 2 puppies, May & Zev), who helped at the "newsletter party" putting our March newsletter together for mailing: Charlotte, Ginger, Karen, Kathy, Ketta, Linda, Margaret, Michelle, Mary, Pat & Pat, Peggy, Rhonda, Rita and Shirley. We figure it takes fifteen to twenty woman-hours for these mailings, so this one not only was fun as usual but went quickly, too.

Our newsletter party in April, preparing the May issue for mailing, will be Tuesday, April 28, 1992, at Herland, beginning at 6:00 p.m. Hope to see you there.

Vegetarians of OKC, a group committed to promoting vegetarianism in the community, are planning a Vegetarian Camp-Out for April 24 - 26 at Red Rock Canyon. There will be workshops including Rappelling, Gardening, Cooking Classes, Hiking and more; plus of course lots of good food, fun and friendship. For more information call LaDonna at 558-6191 (digital pager).

Earth Day in the Park, Saturday, April 18, from 1 - 5 p.m., in Will Rogers Park Amphitheater. Live music, healthy foods, booths, tables, etc. Bring your frisbees, etc.

QUOTABLE... A male survivor of rape had the following to say in an article in the Spring '92 issue of On The Issues, a magazine available for reading at Herland: "...while many women and some men are victimized by rape, all women are oppressed by it, and any victimization of women occurs in a context of oppression most men simply do not understand. Rape for men is usually a bizarre, outrageous tear in the fabric of reality. For women, rape is often a confirmation of relative powerlessness, of men's contempt for women, and its trauma is reinforced every day in a thousand obvious and subtle ways." Sometimes when we get so tired speaking out for ourselves, it is nice to have someone else do it for us; thanks.

The 14th National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference and 10th Annual AIDS Forum will be held July 8-12, 1992 in Los Angeles. The health conference features a full-day institute on lesbian health and a 2 1/2 hour update on "Lesbians and Cancer". For registration information and a program brochure contact Daniel E. Reichard at 202-994-4285.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: Wanted for anthology. **FROM WEDDED WIFE TO LESBIAN LIFE:** Stories of Formerly Married Lesbians. Looking for writing which contrasts the experience of living within the tradition of heterosexual marriage to that of living outside of convention, as a lesbian. Will accept personal narratives, short autobiographical fiction, and some poetry. Contributions encouraged from both established and first-time writers. Before-and-after photos also sought. Send with S.A.S.E. to: Deborah Abbott/Ellen Farmer, editors; 1515 Capitola Road, Suite E, Santa Cruz, CA 95062. (Correspondence also welcome). Deadline: July 15, 1992.

Herland Spring Retreat

May 15 - 17, 1992

Robber's Cave State Park

Single Person's Annual Income
 under \$ 6,500
 \$ 6,500-\$13,250
 \$13,250-\$19,500
 over \$19,500

Retreat Pre-registration fee
 \$15
 \$25
 \$35
 \$40

Household Annual Income (2 or more persons)
 under \$13,300
 \$13,300-\$18,000
 \$18,000-\$26,000
 over \$26,000

Please choose the registration fee most appropriate for you based on these suggested income guidelines. Complete and return the pre-registration form to Herland, 2312 N.W. 39th, Oklahoma City, OK 73112.

HSR SPRING RETREAT REGISTRATION

NAME: _____ **PHONE:** _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **STATE:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

Registration fee enclosed: \$15 \$25 \$35 \$40

I'm enclosing an additional \$ _____ to provide retreat scholarships.

I need a scholarship to attend.

I would like to ride with someone.

I can help provide rides to the retreat.

Return to:
HERLAND
 2312 N.W. 39th
 Oklahoma City, OK 73112