

# *The* HERLAND VOICE

May, 1992

## A MILLION WOMEN MARCH

By Brenda Sandburg

Nearly a million people, mostly women, marched on Washington April 5 to demand full reproductive rights for all women. It was the most massive pro-choice demonstration ever, and one of the biggest civil rights marches in U.S. history.

The participation of young women was especially noteworthy. They came from communities and campuses across the country, in buses and cars, by the dozens and hundreds. Clearly angry at the threat to their right to control their own bodies, they infused the huge protest with a sense of urgency and militancy.

The lesbian and gay community was also well represented. When a speaker asked lesbians and gay men to identify themselves, a sea of hands was raised.

Although the crowd was predominantly white, there were contingents from communities of color. These included a busload of African American welfare recipients from Michigan and a group of Black and Latino students from York College in Queens, N.Y. The Ladies Garment Workers union sent several buses filled with Black, Latina and Asian women workers.

The National Organization for Women and the National Abortion Rights Action League sponsored the protest, spurred by the intensifying attack on women's rights. Marchers said they were there to let the Bush administration, Congress, the Supreme Court and state legislatures know that women won't go back to fear, humiliation and brutalization. *(continued on page 3) →*

## ON THE ROAD TO WASHINGTON: THE ROLLING RETREAT.

(All praise to Wanda who had the vision and the determination and the fundraising skills to make it a reality.)

Space was **tight** on that little sleeper bus: four people with 24 square feet to share; at night when the top bunk came down, two people got 24 square feet to sleep on; most chose the head-to-toe style popularized in the movie *My Left Foot*. The bottom bunk, familiarly known as the Bunk from Hell or The Pit, had a full three foot vertical clearance. It was without a doubt the most uncomfortable fifty-two hours of my life (twenty-six hours each way).

It was fifty-two of the most enjoyable hours of my life, also. Thinking back on it, I would say it was a little like feasting on Mom's melt-in-your-mouth fudge while getting whipped with a cat-o-nine tails. Whatever, I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

The Bus began its journey in Norman with about a third of us; it picked up five more in a church parking lot in Oklahoma City, and hurried on to Tulsa.

We made another pickup in Tulsa, and with a full bus were really on the way at 10:00 p.m., Friday April 3, 1992. By 10:30 Peggy was singing, and we were all relaxing as best we could.

*...Overheard, Wanda speaking: People have suffered a lot worse than this to do things a lot less important. This is **the** women's issue of the nineties...* *(continued on page 4) →*

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This year the Herland Spring Retreat will feature a performance by singer-songwriter Erica Wheeler. Erica will also collaborate with Oklahoma's own Peggy Johnson to present a song-writing workshop. Other highlights include a Friday evening dance with Cindy Bookout as D.J., open mike, sing-along campfires with Peggy Johnson and friends, a raffle for woman-made crafts, and the famous pot-luck supper.

A wide variety of workshops will provide opportunities for dialogue and education on diverse topics. The park setting offers various recreational activities including hiking, swimming, fossil hunting and more. **Most importantly**, the retreat offers the company of women and plenty of good times.

Registration is on a sliding scale of \$15 -- \$40 and includes a cabin bunk and three meals (Friday P.M., Saturday A.M., and Sunday A.M.). On-site registration will be \$40. Please pre-register by May 10 so we will have an accurate count for meal planning. A registration form can be found on page 8 of this issue of *The Voice*.

For more information, call Herland, (405)521-9696. Messages will be answered daily.

**See you at the Retreat!**



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# St. Sybil

*St. Sybil is an occasional contributor to "The Voice".*

Dear St. Sybil,

I'm sorry, but I'm getting tired of all this talk about abortion rights and reproductive freedom. I don't sleep with men, so why is this my issue, why is "Choice" a lesbian issue?

Sincerely,  
A. Gaye Gal

Dear A.,

Well, why not? Something most pregnant people and most lesbians have in common is being women; and either women control their own bodies, or they don't. If women don't control their own bodies, who does? The government does, or men do which of course leads to the question, what's the diff? Not much, these days.

But obviously gay men aren't women, and reproductive rights is a gay man's issue also (as Act-Up knows; they are always delightfully visible and audible at pro-choice events). Why? Because the issue is one of protecting personal freedom and bodily integrity, setting limits and defining rights. Once government gets control over a person's private life, it nibbles away until the person is consumed. Remember one of the three most common lies in the world is "I'm from the government and I'm here to help you..."

When a woman is in control of her reproductive life, she decides when she will be pregnant, how many children she will have, and when she will have them. When government is in control, government decides when she will be pregnant and how many children she will have. Is the population too small, or not enough little white babies to adopt? Criminalize abortion. Too many babies for the economy to absorb? Mandatory abortion. Too many little black babies? Tie those tubes. Can't assimilate all those pesky Injuns? Sterilize every Native American woman unfortunate enough to be admitted to the hospital for whatever reason.

Those are not imaginary scenarios; they are real, have happened, are happening now. Government is not, let us remember, moral or ethical - it is entirely goal oriented, and it sets its own goals.

So it is not hard to extrapolate from those scenarios to the following: A gay woman and her lover decide to have a child to shower with their love and affection? Huh un, no way, unfit mother, abort that babe - or maybe take it away at birth, if it's healthy and white. Gay mother wants to keep the children she has nurtured and loved all their lives? Huh uh, unfit mother, give them to their Dad. (Happens all too often today). Gay guys want to share their love with a little foster baby? Huh uh, against the law, gays can't be foster parents (currently being considered as law in the Oklahoma lege). Sodomy laws unjust, stupid and out of date? Oh no, we don't think so; let's keep them and go further, making it illegal for hand-genital contact between same-sex partners (Yup, it's true; thank Missouri for that one.)

So there it is, A. The choice issue is a freedom issue, and freedom is especially important to women, to gays, to blacks - to all of those out of power. Remember Pastor Niemoller's famous lines: "In Germany they first came for the communists and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me - and by that time no one was left to speak up."

Yours for speaking up and circling the wagons early,

Fondly,  
Sybil

Dear St. Sybil:

Do you think that gay marriages will ever be legalized? It doesn't seem right that they are not.

Sorrowfully,  
Morgana and Guen

Dear Morgana and Guenivere,

Picture this; when a good friend of mine came through your state in 1968 on her honeymoon, her "mixed-race" marriage was illegal there - in Oklahoma. In 1968. Less than 25 years ago. Can't believe it? Well, you keep giving a little time and energy to gay rights work and before you know it gay marriages will be legal everywhere; and in 25 years it will be just as unimaginable that gay marriages were ever unsanctioned.

Keep the faith,

Love,  
Sybil

## Ann Reed To Appear In Tulsa

Her voice has been described as husky, sultry, dusty, and even creamy-chocolate, but whatever adjective is used, all agree that once heard, Ann Reed's voice keeps bringing you back for more. Ann, a Minnesota native, has made professional music her career for the past 15 years. Her forte is the acoustic magic of the 12 string guitar. Her talents also include the ability to weave humor in and around her music. The end result is a funny, talented, dynamic singer who gives a great concert.

Ann's music is a powerful combination of blues, jazz, folk and pop. She sings of relationships and experiences that capture emotions so close to the soul that listeners completely surrender themselves to it becoming totally involved with the warmth and depth of songs such as "Road of the Heart: or "Every Long Journey". Then Ann pulls the listener into the comic antics that went into the making of some of her jazzy tunes such as her "ecology" song "Styrofoam" about a cockroach family.

Ann will be performing in Tulsa, Saturday, May 30, 1992 at 8:00 P.M. The concert will be held at the University of Tulsa, Kendall Hall/Chapman Theatre. Tickets are \$10.00 in advance, \$12.00 at the door. Advance tickets can be purchased by contacting Step Forward Productions, P.O. Box 700333, Tulsa, OK 74170 or phoning (918) 481-0261.

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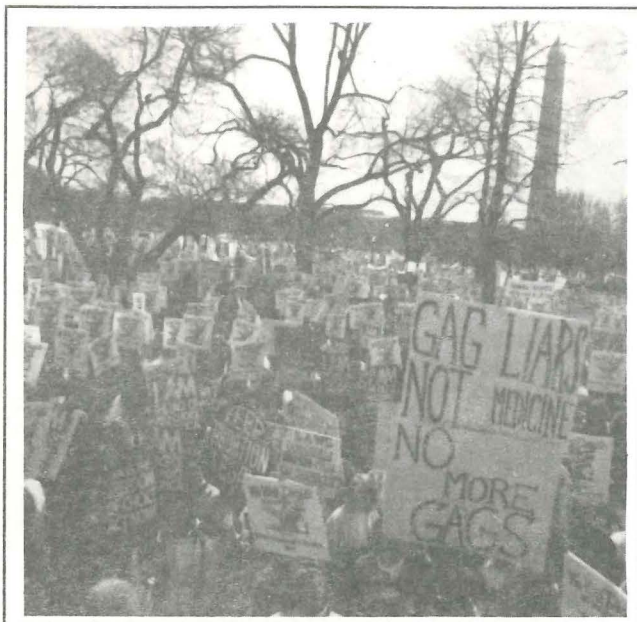
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Marchers Gather

Photo by Peggy J.

## A Million Women March

(continued from page 1)

The action came just as the Supreme Court is about to hear oral arguments on a Pennsylvania law. The case could result in a ruling to overturn the High Court's 1973 decision in *Roe vs. Wade* that established abortion as a "fundamental" constitutional right.

As it is, attacks have already whittled away at the right to choice. Poor women in 30 states are blocked from Medicaid payment for abortion. Abortion services are medically unavailable in 83 percent of U.S. counties. Several states require parental or husband notification. Third World women continue to be subjected to forced sterilization, welfare mothers are losing their state benefits, and lesbians are faced with ongoing violence and discrimination.

### 'We won't go back!'

Over 60 speakers addressed rallies at the beginning and end of the march. They included representatives from women's, students', civil rights, lesbian and gay, and religious groups. Thirty-eight capitalist politicians--members of and candidates for the House and Senate--spoke.

Ginny Montes, NOW national secretary, chaired the rally. NOW President Patricia Ireland and several other officials of the group also spoke.

Other speakers included Marian Kramer of the National Welfare Rights Union; Faye Wattleton and Dr. Kenneth Edelin, former and current presidents of Planned Parenthood; and United Farm Workers Vice President Dolores Huerta.

Also speaking were Leona Smith, president of the National Union of the Homeless; Coalition of Labor Union Women President Joyce Miller; Urvashi Vaid of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force; Tajel Shah, president of the United States Student Association; Rev. Ignacio Castuera; "Thelma and Louise" screenwriter Callie Khouri; and several well-known actors.

Jewell Jackson McCabe of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women addressed the racist assault on reproductive rights. Third World and poor women bear the brunt of restricted access to abortion and other services. In 1969 alone, 75 percent of deaths from illegal abortions were women of color.

Dr. Susan Wicklund was one of several physicians who spoke. After she attended the 1989 pro-choice rally in Washington, Wicklund said, she decided to commit herself to providing services for women. She rearranged her medical practice and now spends every week flying among three rural Midwest states where she is the only doctor performing abortions. Anti-abortion reactionaries have attacked her, harassed her young daughter and threatened their lives. But she said she will never stop providing reproductive medical services to women.

Rev. Jesse Jackson galvanized the crowd with a fiery talk that linked the issue of choice to the struggle against racism, the fight to defend welfare rights and the needs of women workers. He also called on everyone to support the Haitian people and demand an end to deportations of Haitian refugees.

Susan Faludi, author of "Backlash--The Undeclared War Against American Women," vividly described what women endured before 1973. Her mother suffered and survived an illegal abortion. Faludi said her mother finally ended up in a hospital hemorrhaging, went into labor and gave birth to a fetus that had been rotting inside her for six months.

Carol Moseley Braun, an African American running for the Senate from Illinois, also spoke. She upset Democratic incumbent Alan Dixon in the primary last month. If elected she will be the first Black woman to be a member of the Senate. Braun paid tribute to Anita Hill, saying Hill's stand against sexual harassment motivated her to run for the Senate.

Bill Bell Jr. pledged his family's commitment to the struggle. His sister Becky Bell was a teenager who died from a botched abortion last year. Indiana law requires minors to get their parents' permission for an abortion. Because she was afraid to tell her parents she was pregnant, Becky Bell got a back-alley abortion that killed her. The Bells now travel the country warning that parental notification laws kill young women.

### Buffalo, N.Y., next battleground

Many speakers and protesters referred to "Operation Rescue" and its impending assault on women's clinics in Buffalo, N.Y. The upcoming Supreme Court decision in the case of *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania vs. Casey* was also a major focus.

The Supreme Court will hear arguments in the Pennsylvania case on April 22. The case involves a state law that prohibits married women from obtaining an abortion without first notifying the husband, and requires all women to delay having an abortion until 24 hours after receiving an anti-choice lecture.

The day after almost a million people marched for choice, the Bush administration filed a friend-of-the-court brief calling for the court to overturn *Roe vs. Wade*. "In our view, a state's interest in protecting fetal life throughout pregnancy, as a general matter, outweighs a woman's liberty interest in an abortion," read the brief.

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## On the Road to Washington

(continued from page 1)



Luxury Accommodations?

Photo by Pat R.

knew that abortion was the only choice for her at that time. "I always knew", she said, "that it was not a fetus right away." She talked on and on, possibly, we felt, for the first time. She and her husband now have six children between them.

We suggested that it might not be good for her job security to wear the button at work; we called her "sister" and knew it was true; and left Indianapolis at 9:45 sure of our selves and our journey.

Back on the bus Peggy made sure we all knew Holly Near's Mountain Song. We sang it over and over, then we helped Peggy write the T'wanda Blues, and then we wrote a new verse for her song "Time to Do It." We were more than a little fired up and having a ball.

...Some of the women who paved the way for us: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Margaret Sanger, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Lucy Stone, Rosa Parks, Emma Goldman, Del Martin & Phyllis Lyon, Betty Friedan, Shirley Chisholm, Marie Curie...

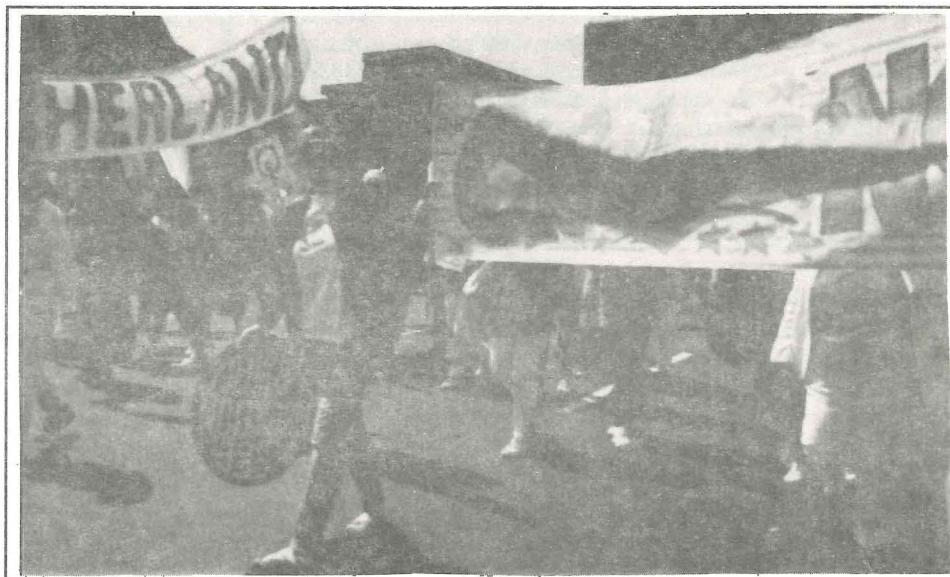
We rolled into Washington and got hopelessly lost around the Pentagon, where we were supposed to park. Most people slept on the bus; a few with family in the area headed off to stay with them. A couple of us Metroed in to DC to have a great shower and spend a wonderful night in a comfortable bed at my brother's.

### THE MARCH

The next morning we hoped to join the Herland and Oklahoma NOW contingent, and positioned ourselves along Pennsylvania Avenue watching the throngs pass by. They passed by, forty to sixty abreast, for more than five hours. There were Dykes for Choice, Act-Up with their whistles, Freaks for Choice, (with shaved heads and pink topnotches, my niece among them), Tired Old Feminists for Choice, dogs (Bitches for Choice?), rollerbladers, wheelchairs, even Republicans for Choice (and yes, their banners were the most elegant and expensive). Occasionally a group would start a weird, high-pitched reverberating kind of keening, as if electricity were surging through them; they would crescendo to a deafening pitch and break into loud applause and laughter. It was an exhilarating, crazy, irresistible sound, and everyone joined in with them.

The crowd was frequently so thick that it was impossible to see to the other side of the street, so from time to time, in hopes of finding our group, I would shout out "Oklahoma?" or "T'wanda?". The crowd loved it, and frequently broke into strains from the song; the folk who had seen or read Fried Green Tomatoes would usually throw a happy fist into the air and shout back, "Yeah, T'wanda!" Once, an attempt to call out "Is the Oklahoma group out there?" came out as "Is Oklahoma?" and the crowd passing by roared; their comment back to me was, basically, "Wow, man, heavy question; Is Oklahoma????"

Even in the immense crowd we managed to find two separate groups from our bus, and two of my nieces; we never found the Herland banner group, who had evidently staked their place at the very front of the march while I was still sawing wood. Oh sloth, oh indolence, oh well. I had a great day checking out all the folks having their own great day.



Oklahoma Marchers

Photo by Pat R.





Oklahomans Wait to Join the March

Photo by Peggy J.

My family got us back to the bus with a good fifteen minutes to spare. Our scheduled departure time was 10 pm, and amazingly, we left on the dot, with everyone safely on board. We all thought Pat Reaves was just too cool for words, sitting around in her dark glasses on the dark bus; but it turned out that she had broken her regular glasses earlier in the day, and that she needed the prescription shades to see anything at all.

I soon learned that it was my turn in the lower bunk, and all I will say about that night from hell is this: if you ever find yourself on a sleeper bus, this is what you say, over and over and over again: I'm not afraid of falling to the floor, I'll take the top bunk. Say it until *you get the top bunk*.

Monday morning was pretty much a blur, and then a wonderful thing happened: Laura had a copy of *Fried Green Tomatoes*, and we persuaded Peggy to read it aloud to us. Oh sweet childhood revisited, hunkered down in that rocking bus, cozy, shoulder to shoulder, feet every which way, transported to magical lands and heroic doings, transported. Peggy read half the book to us, her Georgia accent deepening with every mile; only once was she forced by tears to pass the book to another reader.

Laura and her book were getting off at Tulsa, so we stopped reading shortly before we got there, to give the Tulsa/Enid/Stillwater/Muskogee folk time to look for their things in the incredible messible bus.

As the bus pulled off the highway and began its search through the dark city for the designated dropoff point, another wonderful thing happened. From the front of the bus came the soft strains of The Mountain Song, affirming the trip. We all joined in, singing softly along.

...I have dreamed on this mountain,  
 since first I was my mother's daughter,  
 and you can't just take my dreams away,  
 not with me watching,  
 no you can't just take my dreams away,  
 without me fighting,  
 no you can't just take my dreams away...

## TARGETING THE SENATE, 1992

In the next few months The Voice will bring you profiles of feminist, pro-choice women running for the U.S. Senate. If you are moved to send financial support for any of these women, you might send a donation to the Women's Campaign Fund, 120 Maryland Avenue, NE, Washington, D.C. 20002; or the Emily Fund, 1112 16th Street NW, Suite 750, Washington, DC 20036. "Emily" is an acronym for "Early Money Is Like Yeast", referring to the almost magical effect of abundant money early in a campaign.

### BARBARA BOXER - California:

Remember the \$400 hammers?...the \$7,600 coffee pots?...the waste, the fraud, the procurement ripoffs which plagued the Pentagon in the 1980's?...It was California Congresswoman Barbara Boxer who exposed this fraud to the public and wrote the legislation that reformed the purchasing practices at the U.S. Department of Defense.

Ever since coming to congress in 1983, Barbara Boxer has been rocking the boat; which may be why The Congressional Quarterly named her "One of the Most Effective Freshmen in the House of Representatives."

Last session, this Bay Area Congresswoman introduced the "Boxer Amendment" which provided federal funding for abortion for the victims of rape or incest. Boxer has vowed to pursue this important measure - passed by the House and the Senate, but vetoed by President Bush - until it becomes law.

Boxer is the only woman in a crowded primary field for the seat of retiring Alan Cranston.

### CAROL MOSELY BRAUN - Illinois:

The primary election upset of incumbent U.S. Senator Alan Dixon, D-III, by Carol Moseley Braun, who is expected to win the general election and become the Senate's first Black woman, is widely considered to be the first victory attributable in main to a backlash against a judicial subcommittee member's vote against Anita Hill. The major factor in Braun's victory over the incumbent Dixon is believed to have been Dixon's vote against Anita Hill and for Clarence Thomas in the nomination hearings last fall.

Braun's win is a victory for gays and lesbians too. Gay activists in Chicago say that they expect Braun to be a dynamic and strongly progressive senator, and that during her ten years in the Illinois legislature, Braun was so pro-gay that they rarely had to lobby her. She has promised that she will co-sponsor the federal gay-rights bill her first day in Washington.

Braun faces a Reagan-style Republican in November, and although she is favored to win, she needs large infusions of cash to avoid a dangerously close race. ■

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# Custody Update

As *The Voice* goes to print, the custody case first mentioned in the March, 1992 *Voice* is being heard in district court in Cleveland County.

Contributions to the defense fund to-date have totaled more than \$600. Thanks to Shatzky and C.B. at the Porthole for hosting an open mike which raised over \$200 for the fund.

Your contributions are still needed. Case preparation has been quite expensive with depositions of the parties and expert witness testimony. Please consider sending a donation to Herland c/o Legal Defense Fund, 2312 N.W. 39, Oklahoma City, OK 73112. If this case reaches the Oklahoma Supreme Court, it will set a precedent which affects all lesbian and gay parents in Oklahoma.

## Letters to the Editor

*Friends,*

*The Paula Rae story began in 1984 when Paula started a series of surgeries. The first surgery was a disc replacement in both jaw joints. The second was a total joint replacement also on both sides of her jaw. The third surgery was to replace the nuts and bolts due to irritation of the facial muscles.*

*Eight years went by with constant pain and numerous health problems of unknown origin. Testing for lupus, leukemia, AIDS, rheumatoid arthritis, bone marrow testing, constant blood tests for the anemia, extreme pressure in her head, headaches of unbearable tolerance, and yet, she stood and faced the world.*

*In October, 1992, I took her to another doctor. After being told by so many other physicians that her pain was all in her head: indeed it was. We then found out that her implants had been recalled by the FDA two years before. The materials that the prosthesis had been made out of was not compatible with bone.*

*The material is called proplast. It ejects fibers into the bones and soft tissue and literally eats it. In layman's terms, these fibers eat bone like rust on a car.*

*On November 4, 1991, once again, Paula underwent yet another surgery -- this time to remove the discs and jaw joints. The destruction was devastating. The proplast material and fibers had eaten the bone inside her face. On the left side she has a very small amount of bone left, and on the right side she has none. She now has no jaw joints.*

*If all goes well, she will return to the operating room sometime this May. This reconstruction will utilize her ribs as new jaw joints and the tissue from around her skull as the discs. If, however, the fibers are still present, they will have to just scrape her out again.*

*The company who made these parts has gone totally bankrupt. Paula is under constant medical care and testing and will have to be for the rest of her life. There is no insurance; only a bankrupt company and the next surgery is \$50,000 alone.*

*I'm asking you...those of you who would or could help, please do. Everything will count. Send donations to: Paula Rae Powers, 1123 W. Main St., Jenks, OK 74037.*

*God Bless You,  
Brandy Lee Powers*

*Free to good home: Neutered male, fluffy, black & white cat. Left when former owners moved away. Ginger, 942-5082.*

**PUBLISHED BY:** Herland Sister Resources, Inc., 2312 N.W. 39, Oklahoma City, OK 73112

**NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:** Margaret Cox, Deborah Fox, Pat Reaves

**CIRCULATION:** 950

**ADVERTISING RATES:**  
Business card \$15.00; 1/4 page \$35.00;  
1/2 page 60.00; full page \$100.00

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Subscriptions to *The Voice* are free upon request.

*The Voice* is printed on recycled paper.

## National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference

The impact of age, gender, race and sexual orientation on the delivery of health care will be discussed by Lesbian and Gay care providers at the 14th National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference and 10th Annual AIDS Forum, July 8 - 12, 1992, in Los Angeles.

Ellen F. Ratner, Program Co-Chair, said, "Health care delivery to Lesbians by mainstream providers has always been poor. That's why a major portion of this year's program is devoted to finding out what the Lesbian community needs in terms of health care systems, and we'll look at some model systems that are delivering it." The health conference features a full-day institute on Lesbian health and a 2 1/2 hour update on "Lesbians and Cancer."

"The past 10 years the Gay and Lesbian community has had to rely a great deal on itself to provide care for Gays and Lesbians," said Program Co-Chair Greg P. Thomas, "but with hysteria mounting from situations like the HIV transmission cases in Florida event that resource is being threatened." That issue will be addressed in a session titled, "Crisis Confronting HIV+ Health Care Workers." An AIDS/HIV medical update for physicians and other advanced AIDS care providers also is on the program as well as an "AIDS 101" update for a more general audience.

Ten pre-conference institutes and more than 220 workshops focused on Lesbian and Gay health, mental health, substance abuse and AIDS/HIV will be presented. The health conference is sponsored by the National Lesbian and Gay Health Foundation and the George Washington University Medical Center. For registration information and a program brochure contact Daniel E. Reichard at 202-994-4285. ■

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## A Different View

### JR's Report from "Over There"

The following is a list of 221 differences between my American life and life over here in the United (?) Queendom.

#### 1. A 180° View of "My Part" of North Wales

I never tire of looking out my window: in the right foreground the mountain of The Vardre rises, covered with blackthorn in flower, yellow gorse blooms, verdian grass, off-white sheep, massive stones, and the ruins of Deganwy Castle; to the left and farther away the Conwy Mountains climb through shades of green to brown, bare tops; in front, far away over chimney pots, the Irish Sea gives way to the humped shape of the Isle of Anglesey.

#### 2. High Days and Holy Days

Sure, I missed President's Day. BUT I got in on, for example, the Feast of Saint Dorothy, Patron Saint of gardeners; Pancake Day; Mothering Sunday; my neighbor's 89th birthday; and the General Election (stay tuned for politically incorrect comment).

#### 3. The Radio

There's such a lot going on (with no commercials!) that often I'm listening to one program and taping another. On the day I received my April *Voice*, a gun debate was on "Women's Hour"! I always try to catch that program, which airs every morning M-F with a slightly abridged repeat in the evening. It features information or debate about what is happening with/because of/to women, a short story or serial (Jane Austin's *Northanger Abbey* just ended), and two or three interviews or reviews (such as the recent double appearance of Marilyn French, discussing *The War Against Women*). A few weeks ago, a feature on sexual abuse of children by women followed up with some of the horrified, confessional, or disbelieving listener-response. That broadcast broke through the "taboo barrier."

I don't think the British realize how much they use the media as therapy, a distanced involvement leading to private recognition. Here, although there are branches of AA in larger towns, group therapy such as the various 12-Step programs is just too...overt to catch on.

The important role public radio is able to play is due partly to the size of Britain. It's a country with great geographic, dialectic, cultural, political, socio-economic, etc. variety; but the entire area of England, Scotland, and Wales would fit into one-third of Texas. This gives a "local" flavor to national issues; and when, from time to time, the public is jolted into action, the whole country is involved. I remember this happening in 1987, when Britain discovered child abuse--"discovered" in the sense that, literally overnight, the subject moved from virtually total unspokenness into a piercing outcry. The problem hasn't been "solved" over here, any more or better than in America; but public awareness and the machinery of prevention went from near-zilch to par in a matter of weeks.

Last month I mentioned "Fem Radio FM". I've learned that the 24-hour station was a week-long celebration of women launched on International Women's Day. Response was positive, although occasionally sort of backhanded. One reviewer was amazed that the late-night/early-morning music programs were NOT boring; and several others fastened on the excellence of small technical touches, jingles, and signature tunes. Why was anyone surprised that a station programmed and presented by women and featuring women was of such high quality and interest?!

#### 4. The Gardens

Pictures, songs, poetry, and prose have already glorified these gardens. [One of the language differences is that the word for a Brit's yard is "garden." A "yard" is "an enclosed place," but the

word has negative connotations, traditionally referring to the small area behind the house where the coal shed and clothes line and privy were (are) located.] Life and Emerson have made me a firm believer in Compensation; and, if anything can compensate for British weather, it must be the gardens and (in most places) the year-round blossom and green grass.

They are big on barriers here: walls, fences, and hedges protect the gardens just as the "stiff upper lip" protects emotions. That leads me to the next difference.

#### 5. Subtlety As a Way of Life and Government

I'm not sure I ever understood one of the Election posters. It was a huge thing, a blown up photograph of a battered black box with a slit in the top and "Ballot Box" lettered on the front. At the top was the caption, "IT IS. ARE YOU?"

Am I what? Black? Battered? A box? Subtle, huh?

The British Prime Minister is subtle--almost an understatement as politicians go. He is also a very nice man. That combination worried his campaign organizers--they were a little worried that he wouldn't "come across". When he entered a room the Press would hiss, "Grey Alert!" Even the John Major puppet on the TV program "Spitting Image" was grey--all over.

I'll tell you why John Major won, against the odds and predictions. Grey men are reassuring in a subtle way, but many Brits were fed up enough to risk change and grey might not have held them. HOWEVER, just before the Election, someone hit John Major with an egg. Camera zoomed in on the cut cheek and millions stared at that thin red line of blood--of COLOR. It was like Electric Shock Therapy, and the after-effect was a Conservative victory.

Also in Major's favor was a joke that lodged somewhere in the subtle halls of the British subconscious. On Election Eve, the political-analyst puppet on "Spitting Image" observed, "Never mind Neil Kinnock's political stance. The real question is whether this nation is ready for a Prime Minister with red pubes."

The country chose grey.

#### 6. Subtlety As Response

During the campaign Neil Kennock said that the lack of women in the previous Cabinet showed that John Major wasn't good to women. After his re-election, the Prime Minister hugged his wife in public and put two women in the Cabinet.

*(The Editor has cut the remaining 216 points.)* ■

## OKLAHOMA NOW OFFICER ELECTIONS

The next Oklahoma NOW State Council meeting will be held Saturday, May 23rd, at 11:00 o'clock a.m., at the Tiger Gallery in Muskogee, 2110 E. Shawnee, Muskogee. In addition to a program coordinated by Muskogee NOW and other agenda items, elections to fill the following offices will be held: Coordinator, Vice-Coordinator, Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, and Regional Coordinators. There is no pre-arranged slate; nominations, including self-nominations, will be accepted from the floor. All Oklahoma NOW members in good standing may vote, and all feminists are welcome and invited to attend the meeting. For directions to the Tiger Gallery in Muskogee, call 918/687-7006. ■

*Garage Apartment For Rent. \$150.00 a month; water & garbage paid. 525-8524.*



# Chatterbox

Oklahomans For Choice will meet Saturday, May 9th at 1 P.M. at the First Unitarian Church, 600 N.W. 13, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Writing concerning women's experiences as psychiatric survivors and critical writing on the theories and practices of the psychiatric institution, the concept of "mental illness" and the alternatives is being sought for *Loose Screws in the Mental Institution: Writings of Women Who've Been There*. Submissions may be sent to: Jennie Lind, P.O. Box 6337, Fall River, MA 02724.

The first annual Women's Empowerment Weekend, a celebration of feminist spirituality, will be held in Palm Springs, California, June 12-14. Ruth Rhiannon Barrett, Billie Potts and Jane Goldberg will facilitate a Full Moon ceremony, a medicine wheel ceremony, and workshops on Dianic Witchcraft, healing with herbs, Yoga, Tai Chi, body awareness and spirit guides. Contact Alice Nygard, 619/321-8231.

Compete in the first annual Lesbian Playwriting Competition of lesbian full-length plays, one-acts, and small musicals with all-women roles. Winner receives \$200 and production of the play. Submit script and resume by November 1 to Tiana Lee, Tribad Productions, P.O. Box 1745, Guerneville, CA 95446; or call 707-869-0155 for further information.

"Lesbian Spring Fling Prom", sponsored by "The Lesbian Celebration" of Wichita, Kansas, June 19, 1992, 7 - 12 p.m. at the Century 2 Expo Hall, 225 W. Douglas, Wichita. Tickets are \$6 per person in advance, \$7 at the door. Send for tickets to Orchid Productions, P.O. Box 20284, Wichita Kansas 67208. There will be a live band, "Red Hot"; a cash bar, hors d'oeuvres, door prizes, and a Prom Picture Photographer. Formal dress is **not** required.

WOMONWRITES 1992: The 14th Annual Southeastern Lesbian Writers' Conference, June 3-7 in Central Georgia. Workshops, open readings, affinity groups, discussion and recreation...to inspire and stimulate creativity among Lesbian writers in all stages of development. \$60 (more or less), limited registration. For more information and/or registration, send S.A.S.E. to: Womonwrites 1992, c/o Katy Wildsister, 440 60th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33705.

First person expressions of feelings and memories of experiences of sexual harassment are being sought for *We Believe You, Anita: Women Speak Out About Sexual Harassment*. For information contact Jane Berry Marcellus, 117 E. 2nd St., Tucson, AZ 85705.

## 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