

# *To the* HERLAND VOICE

April, 1993

## "WHERE ARE YOU FROM?"

by Vivien Ng

*[Author's Note: April is Asian American Awareness Month (whatever that means). This is my feeble attempt at marking the occasion.]*

My parents settled in Hong Kong when I was still a toddler, thus I was spared the fate of living in Chinatown, NYC. My cousins were not as lucky, but many years had to pass before I realized how fortunate I was to have had the chance to grow up in a place where I did not have to constantly explain my cultural identity.

Not that I thought much about being Chinese. Although I grew up in a bilingual environment, I had always been more fluent in English than Chinese. Thus, while I loved putting my thoughts down in writing--in my journals or short essays--it was always done in English, never Chinese, unless it was a class assignment and then it became pure torture. My grandmother on my mother's side was a devout Buddhist, and would take me along with her to temples and other places of worship, but by and large I did not care much about Chinese culture.

My early disregard for Chinese culture, and my identification with being an expatriate American--after all, our family had lived in the U.S. since the late 19th Century, and Ernest Hemingway was a favorite author of mine until I knew better--left me totally unprepared for life back in the U.S.A., where practically everybody assumed that I was a "foreigner," which, in a sense, I was.

"Where are you from?" At first, I replied gleefully that I was from Hong Kong, because that was the literal truth. Later, I became a bit more elaborate in my response, always taking care to explain that even though I had lived most of my life outside the U.S., I was just as American as the curious inquisitor. This was back in the fall of 1969, when the Vietnam War was still escalating, and even in college towns there were enough rednecks who would like nothing more than to bash a few "gooks" in their own backyard. It was this rude awakening that spurred my interest in Chinese history, and eventually launched me on the path to self discovery.

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***The question, "Where are you from?" is seldom just an innocent query.***

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Twenty-three years later, I still have to explain who I am and where I am from. The question, "Where are you from?" is seldom just an innocent query. The questioner always comes armed with certain assumptions about who you are--that you are foreign, and that you don't belong. One day, about ten years ago, I was admiring a painting of geraniums at the National Gallery in Washington, DC. An elderly woman stood next to me, stared at the picture, then at me, and asked, pointing at the flowers, "How do you say that in your language?" "Geraniums," I said, and moved on to the next painting.

Another time, after I had just given a speech in Tulsa, a woman came up to me and complimented me on my flawless English. When I explained that it was no big deal, because English was after all my first language, she protested, "How come you have such thick accent?" Naturally, my English was "flawless" only as long as I was perceived to be a foreigner. But as an American, I was "flawed."

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***The attitude that informs these seemingly harmless questions accounts for the ugly reality that hate crimes against Asians have been escalating at alarming rates.***

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Why harp on these inconveniences and unpleasanties? The reality is that "Where are you from?" or "Where do you come from?" are never merely inconveniences or unpleasanties. The attitude that informs these seemingly harmless questions accounts for the ugly reality that hate crimes against Asians have been escalating at alarming rates. I read somewhere that it is the fastest growing hate crime in New York City, surpassing in terms of rate of increase even gay bashing.

Mitsuye Yamada was right on the mark when she wrote the essay, "Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster," about what it is like to be Asian American. We have been so invisible, our history of oppression has been so ignored or misunderstood, that a woman was able to say to Yamada after a class on Asian American literature that she had no idea Asians were so angry.

We need to become visible, even if in the short term such visibility may cause us discomfort or incur resentment or suspicion from others. I suppose we need also to be willing to treat every "Where are you from?" as an opportunity to educate the non-Asian American population, however unpleasant this exercise may be.

And, by the way, I am from Seattle. □

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# ST. SYBIL

Dear St. Sybil,

With Valentine's Day coming up and all, would you write an article about falling in love? Thanks.

Love, (ha ha),  
Anna Ternal Romantic

Dear Anna,

I saved your letter for this issue, for a day that somehow seems even more appropriate for lovers - right, April Fools Day. Oh, all right, I suppose I should have run it in March, to fall between the two days. Heaven knows, love comes in all gradations. There's nice comfortable enduring love, sort of like drifting in a sailboat on a quiet spring lake; friendly lust, maybe like windsurfing at Hefner, or parasailing over Acapulco; good healthy might-last-past-the-honeymoon passion, maybe like sailing a schooner around the Greek Islands; and then there's Romantic Love, Scourge of the Innocent, Destroyer of the Pure, Tormentor of the Naive, - which is much like a first-class ticket on the Titanic: dramatic, exciting, elegant and mostly fatal.

Or if you are more comfortable with your analogies on dry land, you might say Romantic Love/Lust is kind of like driving 80 miles an hour in dense fog and frozen rain on I-40 on the outskirts of Amarillo - and the blinder you get, the more you like it. (So the land wasn't dry, so sue me).

The following are the kind of comments you frequently hear from people suffering in the throes of Barbie-Barbie/Barbie-Ken/Ken-Ken Romantic Love:

- "Latex? Who needs latex?"
- "I don't really want to go out and meet: (the President, the Pope, Sting, Barbara Jordan, Whitney Houston); I'd rather stay at home and watch sitcoms and maybe - maybe *she'll* call."
- "It's my fault, I shouldn't have been (too available/too distant; too pushy/too busy; so wanton/so prudish; ad infinitum, ad nauseam)"
- "You are so cruel. You have hurt me so much I want to die. Come back, I can't live without you."
- "Nah, I don't think I have any STD's either."
- "I think it's probably safe this time of the month."
- "If I can just lose ten pounds s/he'll come back."
- "Of course I'll come over (It's only two weeks since I heard from you and three o'clock in the morning). I'll be right there."
- "Oh god, yes, just clear the desk off; the boss won't come in without knocking."
- "Latex? Who needs latex?"

So if ever you hear anything like the above cross your little rosebud lips, Anna, watch out, back off, take stock, take a deep breath, get a grip, pull your socks up, come to yourself, take time out - and take care of yourself. It might make you want to throw up to hear it, but it's true: If you don't take care of yourself, no one else will either.

Fondly,  
Sybil

**Looking for Love?** SFCFF (single fixed calico female feline), SFTFF (single fixed tabby female feline), and SFTMF (single fixed tabby male feline) seek one or more long-term cohabiting relationships. We've grown accustomed to fine music, enjoy but don't require dogs. We are non-smoking and non-drinking health nuts with all our shots. Call our agents, Mary or Roddy, at 528-0020 to arrange a screening visit.

# MAY DAY FUN

**THE GOOD NEWS** is that we're having a dance. The bad news is that you only have a month to decide what to wear!

The May Day Ball begins at 8:00 pm, but you'd better block out that whole first day of May on your calendar: It's a **May Day/Gay Day/Play Day**. Start at 1:00 pm in the west parking lot of Lee Burris's *Habana Inn* with the Gay May Day Festival sponsored by Pride Network Incorporated. The food, amusements, individual artists, king- and queen-contest and community crowd will meld to make a wonderful celebration of Spirit. (Incidentally, you artists who have not yet booked your sales/display space should call Susan or Barbara at 340-3575 because it's not too late to register for a \$10 booth.)

After the Festival closes at 7:00, jump into your manly or womanly (gender optional) party clothes and head for the dance at the First Unitarian Church, 600 NW 13th.

There, at the May Day Ball, you can party and dance from 8:00 pm to Midnight, but this function is not only a trip to the light fantastic. The ticket price of \$5.00 goes to the Herland Legal Defense Fund, and several Community organizations are joining in to make sure you have fun at this fund raiser.

Herland will hold a Celebrity Auction during the ball and you may be lucky enough to acquire a genuine autograph or personal item from one of your he/sheroes. Oklahoma Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus will take photographs and hold a Ball-Royalty contest while Pride Network Inc. runs the hard and soft bars to keep your whistles wet. Speaking of bars, we'd better warn you that you might end up behind them in Oklahoma Gay Rodeo Association's jail.

Are you worried about whether you'll have the strength for all this fun? Don't. MCC Christ the King will be there peddling tasty calories to keep your energy high for the toe-tapping, foot-stomping, and graceful gyrations on the dance floor. DJ Cindy Bookout will make sure that there's some music for all styles of movement.

Most of the proceeds from these activities go to the Legal Defense Fund, thanks to the efforts of the organizations participating...and to YOU, because we need you to make this a successful evening. Mark your calendar, check your wardrobe, and get your tickets at Herland, Lobo (the new bookstore for our community, at 2131 NW 39th), or wherever you see the "May Day Ball tickets for sale" poster.

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# GOOD MORNING, OKLAHOMA!

by Vivien Ng

[Author's note: This is a reprint of an editorial I wrote for a recent issue of the *Oklahoma Women's Network News*.]

I still remember that incident as vividly as though it happened just yesterday. It was a crisp fall day in New York City. I had just purchased a beautiful cashmere coat at Bloomingdale's and was feeling quite good about being able to finally afford one. So I was in high spirits as I walked up Second Avenue to my apartment on 77th St. In New York, I had learned not to make eye contacts with anyone, but I couldn't help staring at this elderly woman who was dressed in a drab blue coat, walking slowly toward me. She stopped suddenly in front of the bagel shop with her feet planted far apart, stared back at me, and defecated standing up, in full public view. I was brought right down to earth.

Two and a half years have passed and I still think about that woman. I still think about the indignity she suffered so publicly. I still feel the anger that surged through my body that afternoon, my anger at our failure to take care of the basic needs of the poor, the sick, and the elderly in our society. Who was this woman? A mother, sister, daughter, neighbor? In my mind she has become an emblem of the social welfare crisis in America. And of the health care crisis as well.

The other day, I read in the *New York Times* that a National Research Council report said that the AIDS epidemic has had little impact on the lives of most Americans because the disease has primarily affected "socially disadvantaged segments" like homosexuals, drug users, the poor and the undereducated. In other words, there exists a disease ghetto of sorts that distorts the public's perception of AIDS, leading to the possibility that AIDS may slip from our collective conscience. Is it really possible that this decade-old epidemic has had little impact on most segments of American society? What does this say about us?

Historian Allan M. Brandt wrote this about the AIDS crisis: "The way a society responds to problems of disease reveals its deepest cultural, social, and moral values. These core values--patterns of judgment about what is good or bad--shape and guide human perception and action. This, we know, has most certainly been the case with AIDS; the epidemic has been shaped not only by powerful biological forces, but by behavioral, social, and cultural factors as well." What does our indifference (if not callousness) toward AIDS say about us as a society?

My first conscious encounter with a person with AIDS was in October 1987, when I went to Washington, DC to participate in the march for lesbian and gay rights and to witness the unfolding of the Names Project quilt. He was a frail young man, sitting in a wheelchair, his right hand clutching tightly that of his lover. All of a sudden, he suffered a seizure and was rushed off to a nearby hospital. In that instant, I confronted the human face of AIDS. Later that day, as I walked by row after row of quilt panels, each sewn with love and sorrow, I wept for that young man who had touched my life ever so fleetingly.

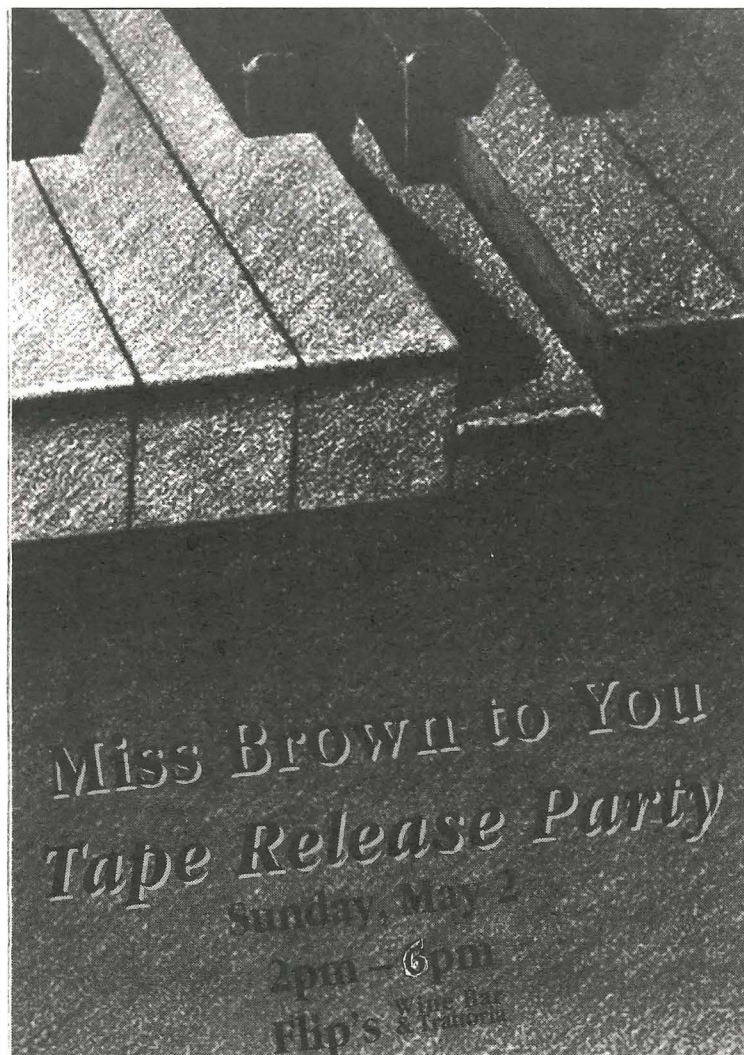
Five and a half years have passed and I still think about that young man. I still think about the dignity he tried so hard to maintain, until his body betrayed him. I remember the sadness that overwhelmed me that morning, certain in the knowledge that this young man would never have the chance to grow old. I still feel the anger that surged through my body that day, my anger at the inadequate and homophobic response of the Reagan Administration to this catastrophic public health crisis.

But there is no need to dwell on the past. As poet Maya Angelou so eloquently put it on Inauguration Day:

*Lift up your eyes upon  
This day breaking for you.  
Give birth again  
To the dream. . . .*

*Here, on the pulse of this new day  
You may have the grace to look up and out  
And into your sister's eyes, and into  
Your brother's face, your country  
And say simply  
Very simply  
With hope --  
Good morning.*

Good morning, Oklahoma! Let us not allow this day to slip away from us again. □



# THE HYSTERECTOMY EPIDEMIC

by Deborah Fox

When I first moved to Oklahoma, one of the things that stood out to me was the number of women who had had or were scheduled to have a hysterectomy. Most of the women I was meeting had a hysterectomy and the greater my circle of acquaintances, the more hysterectomies I heard about. I began to wonder about Oklahoma's water or some other unseen toxicity. I was horrified by some of the attitudes some of the women had about being "free" from menstruality. Clearly this stemmed from being conditioned to hate their body by misogynistic ideology. I also had reason to suspect that for some women, hysterectomy was a form of birth control. (Is this due to fundamentalist christian anti-birthcontrol dogma?) It was scary. I wanted to clutch my uterus and ovaries and run! It seemed like a Hitchcock horror story or something out of the *Stepford Wives*.

So I did some research and this is what I found: Southern states have a higher percentage of hysterectomies, Northeastern states have the lowest. This may be due to differing medical schools of thought; one is conservative, which proposes to try every available treatment as opposed to jumping into surgical procedures, the other is liberal, and proposes to surgically remove any sick part of the body or *potentially* sick part of the body.

"To legitimate this form [hysterectomy] of castration, well-known gynecologists resort to describing the uterus by such expressions as 'a possible breeding ground for cancer' and as 'a potentially lethal organ'. In this rapist society, which grants the hysterical hysterectomy advocates license to practice medicine, we must ask just *who* are the possessors of 'potentially lethal organs', both biological and technological? Under the tutelage of this system, doctors frequently bully women into believing that they 'need' a hysterectomy, failing to tell their patients that the death rate for hysterectomy itself...is, in fact *higher* than the death rate for uterine/cervical cancer" (Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*).

"One of the earliest uses of the developing field of gynecology was the overt social control of women through surgical removal of various of her sexual organs - the clitoris, its foreskin, or the ovaries" (Marilyn French, *Beyond Power*).

"You need a hysterectomy." At current hysterectomy rates, one in three American women reading this sentence will hear those four words from her doctor before she turns sixty. Some hysterectomies (those to treat cancer, for example) are unquestionably necessary. But *nearly 90% of these operations* are performed to 'cure' benign diseases - such as fibroids or ovarian cysts - which can often be treated with less radical surgery or no surgery at all. Hysterectomy is the second most common major surgery in this country (the most common is birth by Caesarian section). While half of all women who have hysterectomies don't suffer complications, half do - and every year 1 in 1,000 patients (or 600 women) die due to complications following the operation. After having hysterectomies, 33% to 46% of women in one study had difficulty becoming sexually aroused or reaching orgasm. Premenopausal women face nearly triple the risk of heart disease after hysterectomy - even if their ovaries aren't removed (some doctors suspect the uterine hormone prostacyclin guards young women against heart problems). If hysterectomy rates were as low in the U.S. as in Denmark and the United Kingdom, American gynecologists would collectively lose at least \$1.05 billion annually. That's an income loss of \$32,530 a year for each ob/gyn in the U.S." (Donna Jackson, *How To Make The World A Better Place For Women*).

When doctors poke, prod and cut into our bodies the biological integrity of our body is violated and this can create illnesses we otherwise would not get. Ivan Illich discusses "iatrogenesis" -

damage caused by the medical system itself - and defines three types: Damage done by doctors in the course of treatment; the medically created adulation of doctors, seen as authoritative and all-knowing, which results in patients' addiction to medical care as a solution for all problems; and the destruction of patients' autonomy as a result of the structure of the medical relationship" (French).

"Through the years [past] patriarchal medicine evolved into a tradition obsessed with disease, not healing, with the doctor's training and accomplishments, not the healee's experience and wisdom. The change [from Healer to doctor] was particularly disastrous for women. Called allopathic medicine (meaning treatment opposing, *allo*, the suffering, *pathos*), its 'heroic' treatments of drugs or surgery assaulted the delicate balance of the female body, rather than catalyzed its natural tendency to heal itself. In keeping with patriarchal politics, the new medicine viewed the female body and its processes as sick, dirty, and in need of alteration. Moreover, it excluded women, the original and perhaps most natural healers of all [witches], from contributing to the healing arts." (Chellis Glendinning, *The Healing Powers of Women, The Politics of Women's Spirituality*, ed. C. Spretnak).

A few of the women I've met who've had a hysterectomy had them because of endometriosis. "Almost 20% of hysterectomies are performed to treat endometriosis. But, say some doctors, even this major operation *is not a certain* solution to the condition, because a small piece of the ovary can remain in the body, generating estrogen. What's more, *post-hysterectomy estrogen replacement therapy can bring back endometriosis*, especially in severe cases" (Denise Foley & Eileen Nechas, *Women's Encyclopedia of Health and Emotional Healing*).

"...the current escalation of murderous gynecological surgery (and of chemotherapy and psychotherapy) is no chronological coincidence. There is every reason to see the mutilation and destruction of women by doctors specializing in unnecessary radical mastectomies and hysterectomies, carcinogenic hormone therapy, psychosurgery, spirit-killing psychiatry and other forms of psychotherapy as directly related to the rise of radical feminism in the twentieth century" (Daly).

Surgery in my opinion, is mostly ghoulish a la Jack the Ripper. And *who* benefits the most from the costly and dangerous radical surgery-hysterectomy/castration?

For more information contact: HERS (Hysterectomy Education Resources and Services) Foundation, 422 Bryn Mawr Ave., Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004; (215) 667-7757. □

## "YOU NEED A HYSTERECTOMY", HE SAID

by MOC

"How are you feeling?" he murmured.

"A little better, I guess," she answered.

"Did you get to that party last night?"

The doctor's part of the conversation was muffled, as his head was between my knees. The nurse I could hear more clearly. She stood by his side as handmaiden, supplying swabs and slides and the copper coil which was going to be my new IUD. It would not have been a particularly fun time even if I had had all of the doctor's attention.

After doing a Pap smear he began to insert the coil. The shot relaxing my cervix had not completely taken effect, and at a stab of sudden pain I sucked air through my clenched teeth, with a hissing sound of distress. He cast a brief glance at my face before resuming his work and his sweet talk with the nurse.



# April, 1993



...It's a great month for music...Check it out...

Doc Herland wants to remind you to Spring Forward into Daylight Savings Time on Sunday, April 4th ( otherwise you might be an hour late to the Karen Williams Concert; so do it!)

**Sunday      Monday      Tuesday      Wednesday      Thursday      Friday      Saturday**

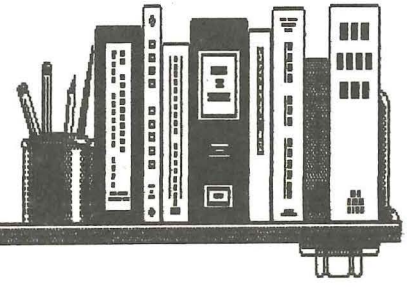
Silent Vigil for peace in Central America. On the steps of the Federal Building, NW 4th & Robinson, OKC; each Wednesday at Noon.

Mark your Calendar now for the Oklahoma City Chapter Meeting of SIMPLY EQUAL, Tuesday, May 4, 7 p.m., at Testing The Limits on 39th Street in the City.

				1	2	3
					CoDA, 7 pm	Peace House Celebration 6:30 pm Mayflower Congrega. Church
4 KAREN WILLIAMS in Concert 2 pm Civic Center Little Theatre	5	6	7	8	9 MISS BROWN TO YOU at Liberty D's in Norman 10pm - 2am * CoDA, 7 pm	10
11	12 MISS BROWN TO YOU at VZD's. 8:45 pm ♪	13	14 MISS BROWN TO YOU at VZD's again 8:45 pm ♪	15 MARY REYNOLDS at the OK Historical Society 7:30 pm ♪	16 CoDA, 7 pm * Games Night at Herland 8:15 pm - ?	17 Michael Elwood & Beth Gallger at the Hotel Bohemia 8 pm ♪
18 HSR Board Meeting, 4:30 * EARTH DAY Will Rogers Park - hear Peggy Johnson & Miss Brown ♪	19	20	21	22 PEGGY JOHNSON at the Arts Festival ♪	23 MISS BROWN at the Arts Festival 7 pm * CoDA, 7 pm ♪	24 PEGGY JOHNSON at the ARTS Festival ♪
25 Lesian, Gay & Bi March on Washington ALSO in OKC at the State Capitol	26	27	28	29	30 CoDA, 7 pm	

Birthdays: Maya Angelou, born April 4, 1928. A. Phillip Randolph, Pioneering Labor and Civil Rights Leader, April 15, 1889 - 1979. Mary Wollstonecraft, early feminist, author of Vindication of the Rights of Women; April 27, 1759 - 1797; and Coretta Scott King, Civil Rights Leader and martyr's widow, born April 27, 1927.

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More from a desire to insert a larger portion of myself into the proceedings than merely my passive private parts, than from a real intention to have my tubes tied, I remarked, "I think next time I will have a tubal ligation."

Success. He looked at me again, and actually spoke to me. He said, "Huh! You don't need your tubes tied; you need a hysterectomy."

I hadn't thought I could feel much worse, but I suddenly did. A hysterectomy!

"Why?" I asked.

"You have a fibroid tumor," said he.

Now this I already knew. Before leaving California a couple of years before, when I had my last pap and my old IUD inserted, my long-time gynecologist had told me that I had a fibroid tumor. It was, he had said, quite small; about the size of a LeSueur tiny pea; nothing to worry about unless it got a lot bigger. Fibroids, he said, become malignant less than 1% of the time, and usually go away at menopause.

So my next question for this new doctor was, logically, "How big is it?"

"Big enough."

"What does that mean? How big?"

In a wonderfully passive/aggressive manner he several more times declined to give me a description of the size of this dreadful fibroid tumor that was going to require surgery. Heroic and not-entirely polite measures were obviously going to be necessary to elicit an answer, so I asked: "Is it bigger than a breadbox?"

He gave me the look a father would give an overly-persistent, totally aggravating child one step from being cut out of the will, and said, "It's the size of a plum."

Well. A plum sounds like a pretty good-sized fruit to be carrying around in the pelvic area; and hugely much bigger than a 'petit pois.' This was unsettling news indeed.

As I dressed and paid my bill (where I noted sourly that the receptionist had erased my name from the "Responsible Party" slot on my patient-information form and replaced it with my husband's - something we had had words about when I had signed in), I pondered what to do.

It was not a difficult decision, actually, considering the source: Get a second opinion.

Which, to make a long story short (too late, I know), I did a week later. And learned, from a different doctor, that the offending fibroid tumor was still the size of a little pea; it was my *uterus* which was the size of a plum - just the right size for a healthy had-one-kid uterus. The first doctor, the slimy low-life, had lied, but in a manner that he could refute if he were called on it - he had just answered a different question, he could say. The fact is he had intended to deceive, which means he lied; and I might well have risked anaesthesia and surgery, and weeks if not months recovering and not being up to par, and lots of money, while he lolled around the Bahamas at my expense; had I had not been such an opinionated voracious reader, such a suspicious, nasty kick-butt feminist bitch. Thank goodness and the goddess I am. □

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JOY HUSKA, D.V.M

## HEARING EXAMINES LACK OF GENDER EQUITY IN INTERCOLLEGIATE SPORTS

Despite the passage 20 years ago of Title IX of the Education Act of 1972, the federal statute prohibiting sex discrimination in education, there is strong evidence that outright discrimination against women athletes continues to be a fact of life in our nation's universities, according to recent studies and testimony this week before a congressional committee.

A study conducted by the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Gender Equity Task Force revealed significant discrepancies in intercollegiate athletics. For example, women receive only 24 percent of an institution's athletic operating dollars, less than 18 percent of its recruiting money and 30 percent of its scholarship money, approximately \$179 million dollars less each year than men receive. A preliminary report from the NCAA Gender Equity Task Force is expected in early June.

Deeply concerned by higher education's failure to comply with Title IX, Rep. Cardiss Collins, Chairwoman of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Competitiveness, called a hearing on February 17--the subcommittee's first of the 103rd Congress and its second in less than 14 months on the subject. "Men continue to dominate all areas of collegiate sports. Twenty years is too long to wait for enforcement of a law passed by Congress. It's clear that neither the NCAA nor colleges are going to do the right thing anytime soon," explained Rep. Collins.

Chairwoman Collins echoed the concerns she voiced last year at an April 9 hearing where she made suggestions on how the NCAA could increase compliance with Title IX. Recently, the NCAA adopted one of Rep. Collins' suggestions, in making gender equity criteria part of the NCAA certification program. However, she made quite clear at the February 17 hearing that many more steps need to be taken before the NCAA realizes congressional intent.

On the same day of the hearing, Chairwoman Collins introduced H.R. 921, the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act, legislation designed to increase compliance with Title IX. Modeled after the Student Right to Know Act, H.R. 921 requires all institutions of higher education receiving federal funds to disclose expenditures on all athletic programs, participation rates, and sports offered to men and women.

According to Donna Lopiano, Executive Director of the Women's Sports Foundation, H.R. 921 is an essential step towards gender equity in athletics. In her testimony she noted that when students and parents are better educated on Title IX requirements and know to what extent an institution is committed to its obligations, public pressure will be generated to increase Title IX compliance.

Baylor University Athletic Director Grant Teaff expressed concern that compliance with Title IX will weaken men's athletic programs, particularly football. Mr. Teaff's concern echoes that of many coaches and athletic directors in the NCAA. Although the intent of Title IX is not to destroy existing programs in order to build new ones, many members of the subcommittee agreed that redistribution of funds will be necessary in order to achieve gender equity. However, as Rep. Collins explained, no one "wants to eliminate opportunities for men to play sports, including football; we just want to increase the chances for women to compete."

*Reprinted from Update on Women and Family Issues in Congress, Volume 13, No. 2, March 5, 1993. Update is a publication of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, a bipartisan organization of Members of Congress.* □

## IN REVIEW

A recent *Voice* list of suggested readings included the anthology edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color* (Kitchen Table Press, 1983). This book is made up of essays, letters, memoirs, interviews and poems by radical women of color, including Audre Lorde and Chrystos. In it Cherrie Moraga says, "What each of us needs to do about what we don't know is go looking for it." For this reviewer, it was a powerful beginning in my readings on women of color.

Judith Moschkovich reminds us that it "is not the duty of the oppressed to educate the oppressor." Being a member of two oppressed groups does not exempt me from receiving white privilege; thus I cannot know what it is like for a woman of color. This book allows me a glimpse of my own racism. Lest I forget, Barbara Smith reminds me by saying, "There is no such thing as non-racist. Sometimes it is a simple as who you can laugh with, who you can cry with and who you can share meals with and whose face you can touch. There are bunches of white women for whom these things that I've mentioned are unknown experiences with women of color."

So far, the book sounds like an uncomfortable series of diatribes, doesn't it? Admittedly, it was something I could only read a little at a time, as it brought up so many feelings: sadness, guilt, frustration, anger, admiration, compassion, love and more.

The writers are very open in allowing the readers into their lives and hearts...it is very moving and personal, with very little being simply theory or rhetoric. *Bridge* graphically illustrates that the personal is political. Each author shares the gifts of growth and love with the reader. It is the sort of book to which one will return, reading it again with new meaning.

If you have spring fever and you'd like to sink your teeth into a novel, try *The Gilda Stories* by Jewell Gomez. This book won a well-deserved Lambda award last year, but even so I was not sure I wanted to read a book about Lesbian vampires. Ms. Gomez's literary reputation and a few of her short stories I'd read luckily led me to risk it. This epic covering 200 years in the life of a Lesbian vampire, who began life as a slave girl in the American South, is concisely and lyrically written. I found it nearly impossible to put down, but for those who prefer short stories each chapter could be read as a discrete unit. This novel is a unique, moving, fascinating story of love and life.

P.S. Both of these books were purchased at Herland and are usually in stock there. □

## AT&T LEAGUE CONFERENCE

On May 19-22, 1993 the Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay United Employees at AT&T (LEAGUE) will hold their second annual conference in Washington, DC. Approximately 200 AT&T employees are expected to attend. Among the scheduled speakers are Linda Villarosa, Senior Editor of *Essence* Magazine and Brian McNaught, nationally recognized educator on lesbian and gay workplace issues. Workshop leaders include Rabbi David Horowitz of Akron, Ohio, Polly Laurelchild of Lotus Corporation, and Ann Northrop, board member of the Gay Games..

For more information on this event, please contact John Klenert at 301-608-4594. If you would like more information about LEAGUE, contact Arturo Nava at (508) 960-1378 or Kathleen Dermody at (908) 658-6013. □

Beyond Vanilla: Safer S&M for Lesbians will be presented by Artemis Silverowl, NLA co-chair for Dallas, at 2 P.M., April 18 at Testing the Limits, 2136 N.W. 39th, OKC. A \$10 is requested. This workshop is for women only.

## SIMPLY EQUAL

The introduction of legislative proposals to amend the Oklahoma Constitution to prohibit state laws or local ordinances protecting the civil rights of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals prompted the organization of Simply Equal to defeat HJR1005 and HJR1021. Simply Equal developed quickly as a movement of gays/lesbians/bisexuals and our friends with unprecedented cooperative effort across the state.

Now that those resolutions are dead for the 1993 legislative session, Simply Equal has continued to develop as a state-wide organization of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and our friends with the mission of ending discrimination against lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. Local chapters have been formed in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Norman. These chapters work cooperatively to address state-wide issues important to the gay/lesbian/bisexual community as well as independently on local issues.

For information about Simply Equal in Oklahoma City call the Simply Equal Information Line at 672-8852 and enter code 1111. Information about Simply Equal in Norman is available from Helen at 321-8148 and in Tulsa by calling Ruben at (918)583-4463. If you would like to know how to start a Simply Equal chapter in your own area, any of the chapters will be happy to help you. □

## ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

The U.S. government regularly imposes smaller fines against polluters in minority communities than in white areas, according to a *National Law Journal* analysis of federal environmental enforcement.

The study found that penalties across the spectrum of air, water and hazardous-waste pollution laws were 46 percent higher in white communities than in minority areas. The study included virtually all enforcement cases on the federal Environmental Protection Agency's docket from 1985 through March, 1991.

For hazardous-waste violations alone, the average fine under the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act was \$335,566 in areas populated mostly by white, \$55,318 for mostly minority areas. The study also said the government typically takes longer to address hazards in minority communities and often accepts solutions that are less stringent than those recommended by the scientific community.

Civil-rights advocates and environmental groups have argued that minority communities too often are seen as dumping grounds for waste sites and polluting industries that are unwelcome in more politically-connected neighborhoods.

info from *On The Issues*, Spring 1993. □

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Subscriptions to *The Voice* are free upon request.

*The Voice* is printed on recycled paper.



## FIGHT THE RIGHT CONFERENCE

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGTLF) held its first "Fight the Right" Conference in Denver, Colorado on March 13 and 14 with over 200 activists from Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho, Florida and Oklahoma attending. Oklahoma was represented by Pat Reaves of Oklahoma City and Rick Phillips of Tulsa.

The conference was organized in response to the increasing attacks on the civil rights of lesbians/gays/bisexuals by the religious right. The agenda included information about the right wing and their tactics and tools for building movements to withstand their attacks.

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### *The religious right is a permanent counter-insurgency in the United States*

The religious right is a permanent counter-insurgency in the United States, according to Scot Nakagawa of NGLTF. The current movement has roots in the Goldwater and Wallace presidential campaigns. Sexism and racism are primary motivators for the right wing. The most significant strength of the right is their grassroots rural base -- the Concerned Women of America have many more members than the National Organization for Women. Michael Hudson of People for the American Way commented that the right wing movement has become much more sophisticated and is very successful at using issues that scares mainstream America. The lesbian/gay issue is a tool for them which is effective in raising money and support.

Suzanne Goldberg of the Lambda Legal Defense Fund emphasized the need to be clear that the right wing is amending the Constitution to limit civil rights. Civil rights guaranteed to all U.S. citizens and non-citizens with legal status include the right to equal protection under the law - no group can receive different treatment under the law. Constitutional amendments like those in Colorado attack the right to equal protection under the law. There is no legal concept of "special rights."

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### *"The religious right is unified by its racism, sexism, and homophobia and we on the left are divided by ours."*

Attacks on civil rights by the right have fallen most often into underorganized communities where the movement is fragmented, according to Suzanne Pharr of the Women's Project. She challenged participants to build inclusive movements for social justice so attacks don't happen in a context without a movement. She cited Oklahoma and the development of Simply Equal as an example of movement building. State-wide lesbian/gay organizations which links groups around the state and are linked to national organizations can provide the foundation for this movement. Broad-based coalitions are critical to success. The right has a strategy of accenting division between lesbian/gays and people of color. The lack of working in connection with other groups presents this opportunity for them. "The religious right is unified by its racism, sexism, and homophobia and we on the left are divided by ours." Suzanne emphasized the current opportunity for movement building. "It is a gift. Everybody is talking about homosexuality. Now that we are being talked about we have the best opportunity to come out. The 90's are the time for progressives in this country" □

## SIGN THE MARCH BANNER

Can't go to Washington for The March? Well, you can send a message with Herland. We have created a special banner to send your message on. SOONER OUT, SOONER FREE, is the headline of the banner we are going to carry down Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues, with names of as many of our Oklahoma friends as we can gather on it. Look for the banner at Herland every weekend, and around Oklahoma City - at the Porthole, Coyote Club, and many other locations. We're asking for donations, what you can afford, which will help cover the cost of the Herland Caravan. We plan to do Whatever It Takes to get our beautiful banner on national television, so come sign it, and then look for it on the coverage of the greatest March on Washington ever. SOONER OUT, SOONER PROUD, SOONER FREE. □

### Resolution Passed Unanimously By the Board of Directors of The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) February 20, 1993.

WHEREAS, the NAACP has historically supported efforts to eliminate unfair discrimination and to protect the civil rights and human rights of individuals; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Americans are denied opportunities enjoyed by other Americans because they are homosexual or because they are presumed to be homosexual; and

WHEREAS, lesbian and gay Americans seek protections from discrimination in the military and seek equal opportunities in the areas of employment, housing and access to public services; and

WHEREAS, there will be a national demonstration this year to support the principle that Americans can work and live together despite their differences, including difference as to sexual orientation;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the NAACP supports the efforts to end discrimination against gay men and lesbian Americans in areas of American life where all Americans deserve equal protection and equal opportunity under the law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NAACP supports the elimination of the requirement that homosexuals declare their sexual preference on forms required for serving in the military; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the NAACP endorses and will participate in the upcoming national demonstration for equal and civil rights for all citizens regardless of sexual orientation. □

#### In Memorial

*The fear that one day I would come home and not find you here to greet me has become reality.*

*I know it was time for you to go. Your little broken body just couldn't keep up with your undaunted spirit. I'll miss you.*

*Few spirits gave and received as much love as surrounded you. You evoked a need in people to be worthy of your trust.*

*You left behind many gifts. Through you I re-examined my need for companions, friends, contact. You taught me patience. You taught me through your many falls to always relax and no fall will devastate -- to trust.*

*You taught me that being a survivor isn't hard -- that there is joy all around and if you can't see it, then use your ears and nose. Live fully!*

*Thank you.*

*Good bye Baby Girl  
? --February 27, 1993*

# BULLETIN BOARD

The Peace House will celebrate its 12th Anniversary on Saturday, April 3 with a Vegetarian Lasagna supper and drawing for a mountain bike and other items at the Mayflower Congregational Church, 3901 NW 63rd at 6:30 P.M. The recommended donation for Adults is \$6 in advance and \$7 at the door and \$2 for children. It includes supper and one drawing ticket. Call 524-5577 for reservations.

The OU School of Public Health Native American Student Association is hosting a one day seminar, April 14, on HIV/AIDS: The Emerging Social Crisis Among Native Americans. The seminar including lunch is free however registration is required. To register call Wanda at the Social & Behavioral Sciences Department of the School of Public Health at 217-2017.

Canadians are pushing to make their country the first in the world to grant refugee status to abused women. Opposition MP's and feminist groups in Canada say the maltreatment of women as a matter of cultural practice is identical to political persecution. Immigration Minister Bernard Valcourt has promised new guidelines to encompass women whose governments fail to protect them from domestic violence or persecution.

Lesbian only counseling group- Wednesday evenings. Contact: Jo L. Soske, M.Ed., MHR, NCADC, NCC at 364-5708.

Correction The February issue of *The Voice* listed the price of the *Facilitator's Handbook on Confronting Ageism, Consciousness Raising for Lesbian 60 and Over* incorrectly. The actual price of the handbook is \$15.00 which includes postage. The handbook is available from OLOC, P.O. Box 980422, Houston, TX 77098.

MOMAZONS, a newly formed, national organization for lesbian mothers and lesbians who want children in their lives, produces a bimonthly newsletter and is creating a directory of supportive resources for lesbian mothers. For information write MOMAZONS, P.O. Box 02069, Columbus, Ohio 43202 or call (614)267-0193.

Mo and Michelle of Chickasha are moving to Dallas at the beginning of April, and want to say farewell and thanks for the fun to all their Herland friends. They hope to see you every now and then. If you would like to contact them, call Renee at 366-1138.

Help Wanted: The newsletter committee has identified the following topics to feature in upcoming issues of *The Voice*. Articles, short essays, personal experiences and reflections and other submissions on these topics are invited.

- May - Rape Awareness Month
  - June - Gay Pride
  - July - Patriotism
  - August - Marches on Washington
  - September-Women, work and unions
  - October - Domestic Violence
  - November-Women in Prison
  - December-Women and HIV/AIDS
- Send all submissions to Herland Voice, 2312 N.W. 39th, OKC, OK 73112.

To promote interracial and intercultural understanding, The Southern Poverty Law Center makes available to educators a curriculum package, *America's Civil Rights Movement*, and a semi-annual magazine, *Teaching Tolerance* which offers teachers ideas and strategies. The curriculum package can be received with a request from the school principal. *Teaching Tolerance* is available free to teachers who send a request on school letterhead. Send all requests to Teaching Tolerance, 400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36104.

## RETREAT REGISTRATION

Please choose the registration fee most appropriate for you based on these suggested guidelines.

Single Person's Annual Income	Pre-Registration	Household (2 or more persons) Annual Income
under \$6,500	\$15	under \$13,300
\$6,500 - \$13,250	\$25	\$13,300 - \$18,000
\$13,250 - \$19,500	\$35	\$18,000 - \$26,000
\$19,500 - \$30,000	\$45	\$26,000 - \$50,000
over \$30,000	\$60	over \$50,000

Name \_\_\_\_\_

(If registering for more than one person, please list all names.)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

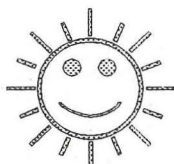
Registration fee enclosed:  \$15  \$25  \$35  \$45  \$60

- I'm bringing \_\_\_\_\_ children.
- I'm bringing \_\_\_\_\_ leashed, well-behaved pets.
- I'm enclosing an additional \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to provide retreat scholarships.
- I need a scholarship to attend. The most I can afford is \_\_\_\_\_
- I would like to ride with someone.  I can help provide rides.

Return to Herland, 2312 N.W. 39, Oklahoma City, OK 73112 by May 15, 1993.  
For information call (405)521-9696



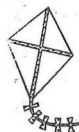
or



Roman Nose State Park  
May 21 - 23



Herland  
Spring  
Retreat



Entertainment  
by  
The Neon Girls

