

The HERLAND VOICE

December, 1993

CIVIL RIGHTS COALITION OPPOSES PROPOSED MAPS SALES TAX

A coalition of civil rights groups has united in opposition to the Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) sales tax proposal scheduled for the general election on December 14 in Oklahoma City. The coalition participants include the NAACP, Simply Equal, the Urban League, the Oklahoma Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, the Baptist Ministers Association, Interdenominational Ministers Alliance, Concerned Clergy for Spiritual Renewal, the Coalition of Concerned Businesses and the Coalition of Civic Leaders (CCL) with its 30+ member organizations.

All coalition participants have endorsed a four point resolution calling on the City Council to take positive steps to increase the inclusion of minorities in Oklahoma City. The resolution called for a guarantee that minority contractors would have the opportunity to participate in MAPS projects; extension of transportation links to Northeast Oklahoma City; funding for economic development in Northeast Oklahoma City and passage of the human rights ordinance as recommended by the Oklahoma City Human Rights Commission.

The Urban League was the first to announce that their support of the MAPS sales tax proposal was contingent on these actions by the City Council. Leonard Benton, President of the Urban League of Oklahoma City, quoted in the Daily Oklahoman said, "Our board was very, very strong in its opinion that as our city looks at some very

ambitious projects to improve our infrastructure, we have an equal responsibility to ... ensure for all of our citizens their basic human rights."

The proposal to be voted on December 14 would impose a one-cent sales tax over a five-year period to finance downtown development. With the proposed increase, Oklahoma City's sales tax would be 8.375¢ per dollar. The MAPS plan includes a new downtown baseball stadium, a sports arena, a river canal through Bricktown, and a light rail transportation link from west Oklahoma City to downtown. The plan also includes a new Metropolitan learning center and improvements to the Civic Center.

The human rights ordinance demanded by this coalition of civil rights groups was recommended by the Oklahoma City Human Rights Commission on November 9. As proposed, it would address discrimination based on religion, race, ethnicity, national origin, family status, disability, sexual orientation, and age. The ordinance prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodation. The Human Rights Commission would have the authority to investigate and to attempt to resolve complaints of discrimination. If complaints cannot be resolved, the Human Rights Commission can refer a case for prosecution.

Oklahoma City voters will vote on The MAPS sales tax on December 14.

Position Statement on the Metropolitan Area Projects

Simply Equal of Oklahoma City and the Oklahoma Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus voted to conditionally endorse the \$238 million Metropolitan Area Projects proposal scheduled for the December 14 election. The conditions of support are:

1. A minority participation plan be approved relative to business and job opportunities.
2. The City Council support the funding of an Economic Planning and Development plan within the Northeast Quadrant.
3. A transportation link for the Northeast Quadrant be included in the proposed project.
4. The City Council pass a human rights ordinance amending Chapter 25 of the Oklahoma City Municipal Code. The Oklahoma City Human Rights Commission recommends adoption of this ordinance which prohibits discrimination based on age, disability, sexual orientation, and familial status, in addition to race, religion, color, creed, sex, ancestry, or national origin.

Simply Equal and OGLPC have agreed that these four conditions are inseparable.

ST. SYBIL

Sybil Ludington, Matron Saint of the forgotten woman, and hero of the American Revolution, occasionally holds forth in this space.

Dear St. Sybil,

I'm a gay woman, and pretty closeted; very few people know I'm gay - and they don't need to. I don't have any problems with discrimination in any area of my life; I'll admit I might have problems on the job if I were to come out, but why should I? As my sister said when I told her about being gay, "Why tell me that? I don't want to know about your sex life!"

So, I've got to tell you that I really don't appreciate all the noise and fuss Herland and Simply Equal and all those other groups are kicking up. Gays are just like everybody else outside the bedroom, and as long as we act like everyone else, we'll be treated that way.

Yours for peace and quiet, and could you help us reacquire it here on earth, please?

Patience

Dear Patience,

Everything's fine, is it? Are you quite sure? Honey, I don't think so. I see you at home with your lover, Hope, dancing to the Miss Brown To You tape and looking so happy. So how come you two never join the hetero couples whirling about the dance floor at VZD's and other clubs? The fact is that dancing in public with your sweetie is a heterosexist privilege denied to lesbians and gays, and this is so taken for granted that the pain of it hardly gets noticed after awhile -but it's not fun, it's not fair, it's not right. It's discrimination and a pain.

And tell me, Patience, have you decided yet whether you are going to the Christmas party at work this year? If you are, are you taking Hope? People will talk if you do, won't they? It's heterosexist privilege, to take a lover places. It's giving in to discrimination, to leave her at home or to stay home yourself; and damaging to your soul every moment you spend worrying about it.

Is Hope going home with you for the holidays? Are you maybe going to alternate holidays at her family's house and your family's, like regular married folks? Or invite them all to your house to celebrate your new family? I hope so, but if you do or if you don't, every minute worrying about this is damaging to you and should be unnecessary. And, if you do spend time with your extended families, will you be comfortable and loving with Hope, or act more or less as if she is your roommate you're living with until a good man comes along...

Now, Patience, if you read this column very often, you know that I positively love to dance; you might want to hedge your bets, but it is my belief that dancing is quite possibly the purpose of life; Anyway, while to me not being able to dance with your lover in public is the worst thing about homophobia, discrimination and discriminatory laws, I know that some people give a higher priority to other matters - economic, for instance; which leads to the question, are you aware that if you and Hope filed a joint tax return you would jointly save big bucks, hundreds or even thousands of dollars? A nice piece of change, for sure. But you can't do it, of course, because of

discriminatory laws. I'm not even going to go into the need for living wills, durable powers of attorney, health care proxies, and all of the other legal protection gay people need that is automatically conferred on a heterosexual couple.

I'm certain that you know that if you could put Hope and her two children on your insurance at work her health insurance would cost about half of what she's paying now. But your boss wouldn't do it, would he, even if you asked - indeed, he might even decide he didn't need your radical lesbian self working for them anymore; and if he decided that, there would be nothing you could do about it.

Patience, I sympathize with your concern about things like that. Don't think that I or anyone else blames you for not coming out at work, or wherever; I do wonder, though, why you don't feel more eager to support people who are out there risking their jobs and livelihoods; who are sacrificing their free time and disposable income to make coming out everywhere easier for everyone.

My great friend Oscar Wilde, Patron Saint of the Flamboyant and Outrageous, wants me to be sure to add that there are a great many lesbians and gays who cannot stay in the closet and "pass"; and what about them? Should they be forced to try to fit a mold that was never meant to contain them, or should they be free to celebrate themselves and their lives as they are? The barn yard rooster may look disapprovingly at the peacock, but Oscar and I say hooray for that bawdy, gaudy, beautiful bird.

Remember, my dear, you'll have plenty of peace & quiet in due time; life is for living as happily and noisily and freely as possible.

Take care and take courage,
Sybil

□

QUEER CONSORTIUM ANNOUNCES SECOND ART EXHIBITION

The Queer Consortium, a collective of Oklahoma lesbian and gay artists, announces its second art exhibit titled, "Queers Unbound: Celebrating Our Culture." The exhibition will be held at the Triangle Association, 2136 N.W. 39th Street in Oklahoma City.

In observance of AIDS Awareness Day, the show will begin on December 1 with all art draped in black. An opening reception for the show is scheduled for December 11 at 8 p.m., and the art will be unveiled at that time. The exhibition is scheduled to run through January 28, 1994.

The show will include the work of Shar Johnson, Diana Faulkner, Tommy Thomas, Keith Porter, Clif Trowbridge, all of Oklahoma City; Diane Duffer, Gerald David, Ken Carlyle, of Norman; Larry Harriman of Tulsa; and Joe Rackley of Stillwater. □

Rebecca R. Cohn, Ph.D. Clinical Psychology

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MAPS AND HUMAN RIGHTS: AN EDITORIAL

by Pat Reaves

Supporters of the Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) sales tax proposal are asking us to believe in the future and vote for an increase in the Oklahoma City sales tax. How can we believe in a future that excludes so many of the people of Oklahoma City?

The bright future of our city depends on the participation of all of us. An unprecedented coalition has come together to demand that the City Council take positive steps to include all the people of Oklahoma City. This coalition is asking the City Council to guarantee the opportunity to participate in MAPS projects for minority contractors, extension of transportation links to Northeast Oklahoma City, funding for economic development in Northeast Oklahoma City and passage of the human rights ordinance recommended by the Oklahoma City Human Rights Commission.

It's no accident that MAPS, acclaimed as the way to a bright future, ignores Northeast Oklahoma city. Mayor Norick asks minority contractors to trust promises they will be included in the projects even though a long string of similar promises have been broken -- the construction of the new jail is just one example. From the segregated lunch counters to the segregated neighborhood schools of today, Oklahoma City has a long tradition of discrimination against African-Americans, Latinos and Latinas, Native Americans and other people of color. MAPS simply continues that tradition.

The human rights ordinance that Mayor Norick and the City Council are refusing addresses discrimination based on religion, race, religion, color, national origin, family status, disability, sexual orientation, and age. It allows the Human Rights Commission to attempt to resolve complaints of discrimination based on any of these characteristics. If complaints cannot be resolved, the Human Rights Commission can refer a case for prosecution.

Mayor Norick and the City Council are asking the people of Oklahoma City to pay for projects that will profit only a few of the rich and powerful. I say it's time to say no. NO -- we will not pay with our sales taxes for projects that exclude many of the people of Oklahoma City. NO -- we will not vote for a tax to support a city that refuses the most basic of human rights protection for its citizens.

We may not have the money and power of Mr. Gaylord and his cronies but, so far, we still have the power of a democracy -- the ballot. Be assured, we will use our ballots to say we will not pay the bills of a government which does not respect all of its citizens. We will vote NO on the MAPS sales tax and we will continue to encourage other voters until the City Council takes action to include and protect the civil rights of all the people of Oklahoma City.

If the City Council really wants a bright future for all the people of Oklahoma City, they will guarantee inclusion in MAPS for all parts of the city and they will protect the civil

rights of the people of Oklahoma City by passing the proposed human rights ordinance.

Until they take action for a bright future that includes all Oklahoma Citizens, I'm voting NO on the MAP sales tax. Supporters of the sales tax are hoping for a light voter turnout. Join me at the polls on December 14 to send a clear message to the City Council. □

FEDERAL COURT PUTS CINCINNATI ANTI-GAY INITIATIVE ON HOLD

(CINCINNATI, OHIO, November 16, 1993) Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund today obtained an order from an Ohio federal court to block an anti-gay amendment to Cincinnati's charter passed by the city's voters on November 2nd. In the absence of his injunction, the charter amendment, which threatened to prevent Cincinnati's city council from prohibiting discrimination against lesbians, gay men and bisexuals and repeal existing laws, would have taken effect today.

Beatrice Dohrn, Lambda's Legal Director, noted, "Just as the DC Circuit found in the Steffan ruling announced today, the court recognized that the prejudice of others against lesbians and gay men may not form the basis of law or policy."

Ruling that the amendment appeared to violate the fundamental constitutional rights of the plaintiffs and could cause them irreparable harm if allowed to take effect, Judge Arthur Spiegel issued the preliminary injunction to block the proposed law until a full trial on its merits.

"The court recognized that fundamental civil rights of lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals cannot be voted away by popular election," said Patricia M. Logue, managing Attorney of Lambda's Midwest Regional Office.

"The Cincinnati amendment is blatantly discriminatory and offensive to our constitution. It is part of a city-by-city and state-by-state effort to cut back on civil rights gains and use the power of government to stigmatize lesbian and gay citizens," said Lambda attorney Suzanne B. Goldberg.

Along with Lambda, Cincinnati civil rights attorney Alphonse A. Gerhardstein and the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio are litigating the case.

Founded in 1973, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund is the nation's oldest and largest non-profit legal organization working to advance the legal and civil rights of lesbians, gay men and people with HIV/AIDS. □

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CREATING CHANGE 1993

Washington, D.C. - (November 17) -- More than 1400 people attended the sixth annual Creating Change Conference held in Durham, N.C. November 10 - 14. Activists from 48 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Belgium and Canada gathered at the annual skills-building event sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), which is the largest political conference in the nation's gay, lesbian and bisexual community.

The conference included full-day intensives on topics such as "Fight the Right," Health Care, Southern Organizing, Anti-Violence, Age and Aging, International Organizing, Civil Rights/Privacy, Work/Family, and Youth. Dozens of other skills-building workshops focused on issues such as media, lobbying, fundraising, volunteers, and boards of directors. Prior to the November 12 start of Creating Change, NGLTF sponsored three full-day institutes: the People of Color Organizing Institute, Diversity Training Institute and the Race, Class and Gender Institute.

Related events included a community dance, a sober dance, a people of color dance, "Stand Up for Your Rights" star-studded gala, Adrienne Rich book signing, and a town hall meeting on "Access to Power." An NGLTF membership meeting, open to all, was held on the final day of the conference so that community activists could address praise, criticism and suggestions directly to NGLTF staff and board members.

The room at the "Fight the Right" intensive was overflowing with activists from around the country who wanted to discuss strategies on how to battle anti-gay Far Right initiatives. Activists also filled the schedule of electronic mail and bulletin board training sessions produced by Digital Queers, a nationwide group of lesbian, gay and bisexual computer professionals.

"1993 has been a very difficult year for our movement," said NGLTF Executive Director Peri Jude Radevic, who discussed President Clinton's decision not to repeal the ban on gays in the military and the recent ballot measure defeats in Oregon, Cincinnati, Ohio, Lewiston, Maine, and Portsmouth, New Hampshire. "The good news, however, far outweighs the bad. The visibility we have attained in 1993 is unprecedented. And it is our belief that the key to our future is visibility - as more and more people come out, the true nature of who we are rises above the misleading rhetoric of the religious right, and it becomes clearer and clearer that we are integral, vital participants in this society with much to offer in the struggle to make this a better world."

Conference plenary speakers were Mab Segrest, lesbian author and activist who works for the Urban-Rural Mission of the World Council of Churches; long-time activist Frank Kameny, founder of Mattachine Society in D.C. and of the National Gay Task Force; and Marjorie Hill, former director of the New York City Mayor's Office for the Lesbian and Gay Community.

Segrest, a North Carolina activist, welcomed conference attendees to the South with its "peculiar blend of hospitality and repression." She highlighted the importance of rural

organizing and advocated a "queer socialism" in place of "queer nationalism." Kameny outlined various gay rights victories in the past 30 years and declared that the "gay agenda" is "parity: not more, but not one whit less... Momentary defeats notwithstanding, the tide is with us." Hill urged activists to move beyond the usual movement organizing methods, in which "too often there is no distinction between how we organize and how we throw dinner parties," inviting only those who eat the same foods, know the same culture and have similar backgrounds.

During the course of the weekend, youth activists met and created a set of demands for NGLTF and the movement as a whole. Youth leaders presented the demands during the "Stand Up for Your Rights" gala and at the closing plenary. Demands included youth representation on the NGLTF board; action toward combating youth suicide; a youth steering committee; special programs and outreach for youth in under-represented sectors, such as those who are in foster care, in rural areas, homeless or in juvenile detention; and designated funding for youth and youth-oriented programs. NGLTF Executive Director Peri Jude Radevic met with the youth organizers and agreed to a requested conference call before the end of 1993 to discuss the youth demands and NGLTF implementation. She also agreed to target funds raised during the closing plenary fundraising pitch to youth and campus demands.

In separate actions throughout the year prior to the conference, Radevic held discussions with members of the Old Lesbian Organizing Committee and other old activists on the issue of ageism and inclusion in the work of NGLTF and the Creating Change Conference. Radevic agreed to sponsor an NGLTF staff training on ageism and is discussing production and distribution of joint publications on the issue for use within the community. □

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PICKET FENCES

by Vivien Ng

Once in a while, especially around holidays, when everybody's attention seems to be focused on families, I give in to fantasies about "settling down." Some of my friends have done exactly that, and domesticity has taken firm root even in my favorite comic strip, "Dykes To Watch Out For," when Clarice and Toni recently became proud parents.

A couple of weeks ago, after giving a talk at the University of Georgia, I spent a wonderful weekend with a friend of mine and her partner--and their two adopted daughters--at their 15-acre spread outside Athens. Theirs is a big, airy modern two-story house, set in a wooded lot which provides ample privacy. Although there was a nip in the air, and their outdoor pool was already covered for the winter, I fantasized what it would be like to go skinny-dipping there, with no creatures to scandalize except perhaps the Far Side cows across the field on the other side of the unpaved country road. Earlier that first morning, I woke up to the sound of four tiny feet pattering to just outside my bedroom door, and two cute voices chirping, "Good morning, Vivien!" Their daughters had decided to be my constant companions that day, and they followed me everywhere, even to the bathroom. I had a taste of lesbian domesticity that weekend, and found it fetching.

A week ago, I was in Ames, Iowa on NWSA business, and stayed at the home of two good friends. They live in a huge house with a fenced-in yard, in-ground outdoor pool, hottub, sauna and steambath, the works. My friend from New Jersey was there too for the weekend. Surrounded by all the trappings of comfortable, small town domesticity, I surrendered to the temptation of sedentary life and told my friends that I would like to build a house in the country, start a garden, acquire a tan Labrador, stop crisscrossing the country like a travelling salesman and just settle down. My friends stared at me in disbelief.

I am torn between two selves, and two lifestyles. Even as I write about idyllic life in the country with family in tow, my mind is already on my upcoming trip to New York City, and my body is anticipating the raw, pulsing energy that will no doubt envelope me. Every minute of my four-day visit is accounted for: who to spend time with, which movies to see, museums to visit. And how many books I will allow myself to buy. Oh yes, there will be the CLAGS board meeting, and the opportunity it offers me to be with people truly committed to building lesbian and gay studies. The frenetic pace I set in New York, I fear, is not for the family woman. I feel at home in New York. My family has roots there. The apartment building on Pell Street where my grandfather made his home is still there, so is the building across the street where he had his grocery store. But it is not family ties that bind me to New York. It's the hustle bustle, the museums, the cinemas, the theaters, the bookstores, the universities, the restaurants, that pull me back to New York over and over again. Not to mention the special friends that I have there. I am very much attracted to the urban lifestyle, so much so that I am seriously considering buying a studio apartment on the Upper West Side.

My startled friends in Iowa asked me what I meant by "settling down." It's living in the country, I said. It means living with someone on a full-time basis, I said, with a grimace. My friends laughed and muttered something about hell freezing over. My friends know me real well. I guess this means that there won't be white picket fences in my life for a while--a long while. □

AN EVENING OF PARADISE

November 18, 1993 - The Civic Center Little Theater in downtown Oklahoma City provided an intimate backdrop to a magical concert performance by Cris Williamson and Tret Fure. Seasoned concert goers proclaimed it the best they have ever seen of Cris and Tret. Energized by an enthusiastic audience, Cris and Tret poured their hearts and souls into the music.

Their new album, *Postcards From Paradise* was performed in its entirety and captured the magnificent talent of Cris and Tret, leaving most of the audience thirsting for more. Songs such as *Stones From Helen's Field* and *My Father's Hands* seemed to reflect cherished moments that have afforded them strength and character in life. Combined with their musical talent, Cris and Tret gave a hilarious accounting of their experiences in Russia that left the audience roaring with laughter.

In a moving song recorded by Cris, *In The Best Interest of the Children*, we were all reminded of the purpose of this celebrated event. Cris dedicated this song to two young children who were taken from their mother in April of 1992 because of the mother's sexual orientation.

Performed as a benefit to raise funds to meet the financial needs of families caught in legal action, the concert was a great success. An estimated \$2,300 was raised, including a generous donation by Cris and Tret who turned back a portion of their fee to the Herland Legal Defense Fund.

A more enchanting evening could not have been possible, and we owe our deepest thanks to those responsible for bringing Cris and Tret to Oklahoma City. Elyse and Nancy were superb on sound; Vicki did quite well on the spotlight; Peggy did a wonderful job introducing Cris and Tret. The many ushers were very helpful and who could forget the gracefulness of Zyra Shelley as she soared to *We Can Fly*. A big thank you especially to Wanda, Margaret, Pat and Pat and the whole Herland Legal Defense Fund Committee for their untiring efforts that helped produce Herland's most successful concert to date. Cris and Tret were delighted by the hospitality shown to them and hope to return soon for another "perfect" evening in paradise. □

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JOY HUSKA, D.V.M.

Dykes To Watch Out For

1994 ANNUAL BLACK GAY AND LESBIAN CONFERENCE

The Seventh Annual National Black Gay and Lesbian Conference is slated for February 17-21, 1994 at the Meadowlands Hilton in Secaucus, New Jersey. This year's theme, "Black Gays and Lesbians: From Silence to Celebration. . . Beyond the 28 Days", will celebrate the past contributions Black gays and lesbians have made to the world and the need to focus on the present contributions made on a day-to-day basis beyond the month of February (Black History Month).

The conference draws national and international participants from as far away as South Africa. Workshops and institutes are facilitated by African-American gays and lesbians and members of the transsexual/transgender communities.

Workshop presenters, vendors, and volunteers for the five day event are currently being solicited by the conference. For information contact: The Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum, 1219 South La Brea Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90019 Telephone: (213)964-7820. □



BULLETIN BOARD

Pets are Loving Support, Inc. (PALS) is a newly formed organization dedicated to keeping healthy pets with their HIV+ owners as long as possible by helping pet owners with basic pet care. If you would like to volunteer, donate, or know someone in need of these services, contact Evelyn Wilkins, P.O. Box 780337, OKC 73178 or call (405)946-0087.

Tough Dove Books is looking for submissions for a lesbian adventure anthology. Examples of possible subject matter include: wild women, eccentric characters, sexual exploits, sports, travel, sci-fi, exciting events, women dealing with dangerous situations or surviving crises. They may be accounts of true life experiences or fiction accounts. Previously unpublished writers are encouraged to submit. For information contact: Mikay Heart, POB 1152, Laytonville, CA 95454.

Don't forget Herland as you do your holiday shopping. The bookstore is open every Saturday from 10 AM to 6 PM and Sunday from 1PM to 6PM.

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Subscriptions to The Voice are free upon request.

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December, 1993

December Birthdays:

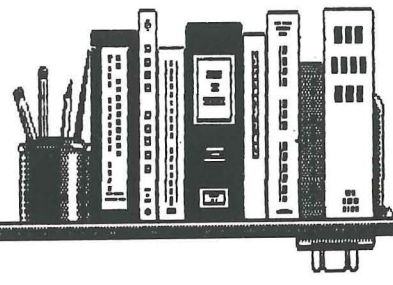
Joan Didion, 12-5-1934; Willa Cather, 12-7-1873-1947
 Clara Barton, 12-25-1821-1912; Margaret Mead, 12-16-1901-1978

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

Doc Herland says: Remember the many who came before us, who gave their life work and even their lives for the right to vote. Remember Susan B. Anthony as they led her away handcuffed for daring to vote. Go to the polls on December 14 and cast your VOTE! Win or lose, make your voice heard!

			1 WORLD AIDS DAY	2 Ellen Orleans at OU, 7:30 pm Meachem Auditorium, OU Memorial Union	3 CoDA, 7 pm	4 Ellen Orleans book signing & informal reading from "Can't Keep A Straight Face" - 3 pm, Herland
5	6 Herland Legal Defense Fund Meeting 6:30 pm	7	8	9  HAPPY HANUKKAH	10 CoDA, 7 pm	11 Art Show Reception 8 pm Triangle Association 2136 NW 39th
12	13	14 OKC Elections Today: First Class Citizens VOTE! * Simply Equal 7pm, Herland	15	16	17 CoDA, 7 pm	18 PEGGY JOHNSON at the Grateful Bean 10th & Walker 9 pm
19  BOARD MEETING 4:30	20	21	22	23	24	25  MERRY CHRISTMAS
26 KWANZAA begins	27	28 Simply Equal 7 pm Herland	29	30	31 Herland's New Years Eve Party, 7 - 10 * PEGGY JOHNSON at Opening Night -----)	< NEW YEAR'S EVE: PEGGY JOHNSON at the Stage Center Carousel Theatre 400 W. Sheridan 7 and 9 p.m. >

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