



HeartBeat



PFLAG Olympia, Washington

Issue 127~ Fall 2015

Play *Mama Won't Fly* Spurs PFLAG Community Debate By PFLAG-Olympia Board

Late last year, PFLAG-Olympia's Board decided to take advantage of a local fundraising opportunity. Olympia Little Theater proposed donating the proceeds from one night's performance of an upcoming play to our organization as a show of support. There would be some work required on our part — mainly, marketing the tickets to our members and friends — but the generous proposal seemed to be a big win-win for both non-profit organizations. Actually, more like a lopsided win for PFLAG-Olympia, since we would receive ALL revenue from the ticket sales.

It was a no brainer, but we want to take a moment to explain what happened next as there were some unintended consequences, hurt feelings, and transgender education for our members. The goofball, comedic plot seemed simple and unoffensive at first glance. *Mama Won't Fly!* is billed as a Southern-flavored, road-trip comedy by Mama (Norleen) and her single workaholic daughter (Savannah) who endlessly get on each other's "last nerve." They are traveling west to California for Savannah's brother Walker's wedding, and Mama announces at the last minute that a recent bout of airsickness has her determined to drive, not fly. Another last-minute development is the sudden appearance of Walker's fiancé, Hayley, who has decided that tagging along on the trip would be a great way to bond with her new family. The three ladies careen from one stop to the next, running into bizarre characters such as "Cousin Chicken" and absurd roadside attractions like the "American Museum of Foundation Garments." It's goofy fun.

The twist that caused the strife came at the end of the play and surrounding the gender identity of Spud Farley, Savannah's long lost fiancé who left her without explanation. She is obsessed with getting back in touch with him and takes their road trip on a detour to find him after tracking him down along the way. Mama does not like this idea and begs her to leave well enough alone. We find out towards the end of the play that Spud is a cross dresser, maybe a drag queen (this scene takes place in Vegas), maybe LGBTQ, it's unclear. What made many in our audience that night uncomfortable was the relief and gratefulness of Savannah to her mother for convincing Spud to run away and leave so as not to basically ruin her life.

This precipitated some emotional e-mail discussion in our PFLAG-Olympia community over the following days and weeks. We invited OLT to a meeting to hear some members' concerns. We would like to stress that the folks at OLT were nothing but gracious and generous to PFLAG-Olympia in this brief convergence of two well-meaning non-profit organizations. Our treasury was boosted substantially, thanks to our members and friends who purchased tickets. But, perhaps most importantly, the queasy feelings generated by the off-putting Spud Farley character were converted into a very positive discussion about "cisgender privilege" that occupied the following two

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PFLAG-Olympia meetings are held the 2nd Sunday of each month, 2-4 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE, Olympia. The first hour includes a welcome, introductions, support circles, and snacks. The second hour is our program.

What is happening at upcoming meetings?

Sept. 13 – Fostering Together— Join us and Fostering Together liaison Niki Hatzenbuehler for a conversation on fostering LGBTQ youth.

Oct. 11 – Political Candidate Forum— Candidates for office in the three cities and Thurston County will be invited to present their platforms.

Nov. 8 – Program on Suicide Prevention.

Dec. 13 – Our annual Holiday Party.



Our Mission — PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends through:

- Support to cope with an adverse society,
- Education to enlighten an ill-informed public, and
- Advocacy to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

When to expect your Heart Beat

- December 2015
- March 2016
- June 2016

Have you paid dues or donated to PFLAG-Olympia lately? Contact our treasurer, Larry Kronquist at treasurer@pflag-olympia.org and he can check dues status. Donations are welcome! **Join or donate:** <http://www.pflag-olympia.org/membership.html>

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monthly meetings of PFLAG-Olympia. We got a better perspective of the drag community. Some transgender members got to personally explain why the play was so offensive and talk about gender identity and misconceptions and challenges of being trans vs. cis.

Many of us are still feeling our way around the various issues associated with transgender living, and this experience has helped to put things in better focus as we struggle onward and upward, hopefully. It's a journey and we are all still learning.

HeartBeat is a free publication of the PFLAG chapter in Olympia, Washington, now published quarterly. The editors are Alec & Gabi Clayton.

Come See Us at the Farmers Market

Saturday, Oct. 3 PFLAG-Olympia will once again be tabling at the Farmers Market. Stop by and say hello.

“When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.”

— Henri Nouwen



Subscribe to the PFLAG-Olympia Alert List!

The PFLAG-Olympia Alert is a one-way announcement email listserv designed to inform our members and friends of upcoming events. To subscribe, send your request to be added to newsletter@pflag-olympia.org

Go Paperless!

If you would like to help save us postage and paper, please email newsletter@pflag-olympia.org and ask to be put on our **email-only** Newsletter and Alert list. Thanks!

“Volunteers are not paid - not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.”

— Sherry Anderson

NEW or RENEWAL PFLAG MEMBERSHIP

Please check the membership types you prefer:

- Individual \$35
- Household \$50
- Senior/Student/Low Income \$15
- New
- Supporter \$100
- Educator \$250
- Advocate \$500
- Renewal

Membership \$ _____

Add this amount as my tax-exempt gift \$ _____

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP AND GIFT \$ _____

DATE: _____ PHONE: _____

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PRINT NAME: _____

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- I want Olympia's quarterly newsletter *HeartBeat* print version only.
- I want Olympia's quarterly newsletter *HeartBeat* sent as email only.
- I want Olympia's quarterly newsletter *HeartBeat* both print and email.
- I want to be added to the PFLAG-Olympia email alert list.

PFLAG Olympia, P O Box 12732; Olympia, WA 98508-2732
PFLAG is a tax-exempt non-profit 501(c)(3) organization not affiliated with any political or religious institution.



PFLAG
Olympia, Washington

MEETS at 2PM on the second Sunday of each month at First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE, Olympia. It is handicap-accessible. In August we meet at 1pm for a potluck picnic in a local park.

DIRECTIONS: From Sylvester Park on Capitol Way and Legion Way, go 12 blocks east on Legion Way to Boundary Street. Turn left around the church. Park in the lot at 5th Avenue and Boundary and enter through the glass doors.

Mailing address:
PO Box 12732; Olympia, WA 98508-2732

For more information:
email: info@pflag-olympia.org

Or go to our website:
http://pflag-olympia.org