



Heart + Beat

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays



PFLAG Olympia, Washington

Issue 59 Sept.-Oct. 2003

Pieces of Identity

by Evelyn Hinken

I think it's fair to say that I drifted into my lesbian identity. It wasn't a sudden clarity that made me sit up and take notice. There wasn't a lot of angst about my feelings. I recognized that my deep emotional connections were with girls and then women. Boys, and then men, were just people I dated. Because it was the thing to do. Then an evening out with a gal friend turned into a date, and she turned into my girlfriend and the rest, as they say, is history.

Imagine my surprise when I started sharing the joy of my newly identified self and not receiving words of encouragement. I heard things like "It's just a phase you're going through." "You'll be fine once you get married." A host of similar comments and fewer "friends" returning my calls made me realize that the joy and discovery of a new aspect of my being created fear and loathing in others.

I now had a 'secret'. Which totally went against my nature of being open honest, up front with my thoughts and feelings.

I went through this process in my late 20s. Imagine the struggle of those in their teens.

Being queer, gay, lesbian, dyke is only a small portion of that which makes me the person I am. Do I strike fear and loathing in your hearts because I am a Democrat? That I have Christian beliefs? That I support animal rights and like to read mysteries?

A Rochester, N.Y., children's museum has a wonderful activity. Paper shapes are cut out to represent heads, bodies, arms, legs. Each shape has a description on it. Gay, straight, Jewish, Christian, happy, sad, schoolteacher, farmer, reader, writer, musician, poet and so on. You select pieces of your identity, put them together and lo and behold, everyone comes together in the shape of a human being.

It is a simple activity but, sadly, not a simple concept. Every step we take, every experience we feel, every day we walk on the planet shapes the person we become. Yet, with all those experiences, every person is still a human being. Do not focus on only a portion of a person's identity. For you will miss the richness that makes them a whole human being.

Yes, I drifted into my lesbian identity, but it took me 50 years on this planet to become the person I am today. And if lesbian is all you see, whoa, are you missing out!



▽ SUNDAY, SEPT. 14, 2-4:30 PM

Networking and Community

Building — Representatives from several glbt-related organizations in the area will join us for a look at how we work together. The plan is to have a fishbowl of people from these different groups talk about what they do, and then talk to each other. We will then open the discussion to others outside the fishbowl.

▽ SUNDAY, OCT. 12, 2-4:30 PM

Legislative Issues

— We have invited legislators from our district as well as others from across the state that support the PFLAG mission. This program will be a working session — an interactive dialog on how we as individuals and as a group can support the issues that will be coming forward in the upcoming legislative session. What are the hot topics? What is in the forefront and what will be saved for another session? What are our major issues?

This program will start at 2 p.m., and our introductions and announcements will happen after the program.

Buy PFLAG-Olympia Gear

with the "Been Out Lately" graphic from our billboard campaign

t-shirts ~ sweat shirts
coffee mugs ~ mouse pads
BBQ aprons ~ tile coasters
canvas tote bags ~ boxer shorts



Buy yours now on the web at
http://www.cafeshops.com/pflag_oly

AIDS WALK 2003

PFLAG-Olympia will be have a team in the 13th Annual Thurston County AIDS Walk. Jeff Loyer and Bekah Cardwell will head up our team. If you'd like to be on the team, email info@pflag-olympia.org or call Bekah at 705-1906.

AIDS Walk will be held
Saturday, Oct. 11 starting at 10 a.m.
at Tumwater Historical Park.
Registration begins at 9 a.m.

Proceeds will benefit
United Communities AIDS Network
For more information
go to www.ucan-wa.org
or phone UCAN at 352-2375



PFLAG

Olympia, Washington

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

MEETS at 2PM on the second Sunday of each month in The Gathering Place parlor of First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE, at Boundary Street, Olympia. It is handicap-accessible.

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 side lot at 5th Avenue and Boundary, and enter upper front door. Meeting place is across the lobby.

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Letters, articles and requests for literature are welcome.

Mailing address:

PO Box 12732; Olympia, WA 98508-2732

*For information or to discuss personal matters with an understanding parent and experienced PFLAG member, CALL the PFLAG-Olympia HELPLINE:
(360) 866-0511*

Email: info@pflag-olympia.org
Website: <http://www.pflag-olympia.org>

Reaching OUT

by Alec Clayton, chapter president

Reaching out to involve the wider community has been a special priority for PFLAG-Olympia since we did our "Have you been OUT lately?" billboard campaign in 2001.

This year we were represented on the planning committee for Capital City Pride, and we served pancakes to the community before the Pride rally in Sylvester Park. We donated books to and have done educational presentations in area schools, including an exciting panel discussion at St. Martin's College. And we had a huge turnout from the wider community for our picnic at Priest Point Park in August.

These efforts will continue with our "Networking and Community Building" program in September. We have also been working on revised by-laws, which we hope will accurately reflect our new, more inclusive outlook. The new by-laws will be presented to the membership at our annual business meeting in November when we elect new board members.

We hope that through these efforts we can get the message across to all in our community that PFLAG is much more than parents. We are here for all gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning and queer people, their families and allies. We want all to feel welcomed, and we want to continue to make strides toward bettering the lives of all.

NEW or RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP

Please check the membership types you prefer:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household \$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Educator \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior/Student/Low Income \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Advocate \$500 |

New Renewal

Active (attend when I can) or Supporting (seldom attend)

Membership \$ _____

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

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP AND GIFT \$ _____

I want Olympia's bi-monthly newsletter *HeartBeat* (which is mailed in an envelope with no identified return address).

I want the national quarterly *PFLAGpole* newspaper (which is not mailed in an envelope).

DATE: _____ PHONE: _____

Signed _____

PRINT NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

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.

The PFLAG Mission

To promote 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.

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

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

Unsolicited articles are welcome and are due by the 15th of even-numbered months. The editors reserve the right to reject or edit material.

The deadline for the next issue is 10/15/2003

Mail submissions to:
HeartBeat
P.O. Box 12732
Olympia, WA 98508-2732
Or email to: newsletter@pflag-olympia.org