



# Heart Beat

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays



PFLAG Olympia, Washington

Issue 63 May-June 2004

responsibility

P.A.T.R.I.O.T.I.S.M

EQUAL RIGHTS

## American "Soldiers"

RELIGION  
second-class

By Barb Klein

Pride festivities are approaching quickly this year, and my mind is struggling with progression and regression our country has gone through (regarding glbt issues) over the past few years. With 9/11 already almost three years past, an undeclared war still raging in Iraq, and American citizens dying daily for someone's so-called freedom, we fight our battles every day here at home. We fight for the right to adopt children. We fight for the right to marry legally. We fight for our children, gay and straight, to be safe in our schools and on the streets. We even fight for the right to die as openly gay and lesbian soldiers in our own country's military. Meanwhile, the so-called religious and the so-called patriotic fight to keep us quiet, to keep us hidden, and to make sure our lives are "morally" and legally second-class to theirs, all in the name of religion and patriotism.

A song came out some months ago, which really brought this dichotomy to the surface for me. The song is called "An American Soldier" by Toby Keith. It is a wonderful piece about pride and duty from an average man.

"I'm just trying to be a father  
Raise a daughter and a son  
Be a lover to their mother  
Everything to everyone

As I listened to the song, I felt I could relate to the sentiment being expressed as another human being just trying to make the best of life for myself and those I love... I found this ironic, considering the song was about the military, of which I would never, even in perfect health, be allowed into because of my avowed lesbianism. Still, the song caught in my heart and head. He sings of responsibility for our future, of his obligation to work, sometimes through the night, strong and solid, regardless of the lack of comfort, pay, or safety.

"And I will always do my duty  
no matter what the price  
I've counted up the cost, I know the  
sacrifice

(Continued on page 3)



▼ SUNDAY, MAY 9, 2-4:30 PM

### Gays in the Media Part II

Our previous discussion on gays in the media was such a success (and we barely had time to watch a few clips and talk about them) that everybody agreed we should do it again. At our May meeting we will continue the discussion, with video clips. And this time we'll concentrate on lesbians on TV.

▼ SUNDAY, JUNE 13, 2-4:30 PM

### Networking with Pride

We will invite be representatives from other organizations in the community to come to the June meeting and talk to us about how we can all work better together for the good of all our families and friends.

### PFLAG-Olympia meeting format

2:00-2:30 p.m.	Introductions
2:30-2:40 p.m.	Announcements
2:40-3:15 p.m.	Support
3:15-3:30 p.m.	Social time/snacks
3:30-4:30 p.m.	Program (see above)

### 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.



# **PFLAG**

Olympia, Washington

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

**MEETS** at 2PM on the second Sunday of each month at First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE, 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 the lot at 5th Avenue and Boundary and enter through the glass doors.

.....  
*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](mailto:info@pflag-olympia.org)  
Website: <http://www.pflag-olympia.org>

## Capital City Pride Parade and Rally

The 2004 Capital City Pride parade and rally will be from noon to 5 p.m. on June 19.

Marchers will gather at the fountain on the State Capital campus from 11 to 11:45 a.m. and march down Capitol Way beginning at noon.

The Pride Festival in Sylvester Park at the corner of Capitol Boulevard and Legion Way will be from 12:30 to 5 p.m.

PFLAG will have an information tent and table at the festival where we will sell buttons and bumper stickers. We strongly encourage all PFLAG members to attend the march and festival. Lets make our support for our glbt friends and family very visible.



# Capital City Pride 2004

## Other Pride events

There will be many other exciting events in conjunction with Pride that had not been planned at the time this newsletter went to the printer. For updates on related events visit the PFLAG-Olympia Web site at <http://pflag-olympia.org/> or the Rainbow Center Web site at <http://www.rainbowcenteroly.org/ccp/>

Tacoma's 2004 Pride celebration will be on July 10 at Wright Park in Tacoma. For details on participating in this year's event, contact Jason Kjellesvik at (253) 381-9669 or send an email to [outintheparkwa@hotmail.com](mailto:outintheparkwa@hotmail.com).

Seattle's Pride Parade will be June 27 starting at 11 a.m. at the corner of Broadway and Pike Street, followed by festivities in Volunteer Park.

### 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.

**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 6/15/2004**

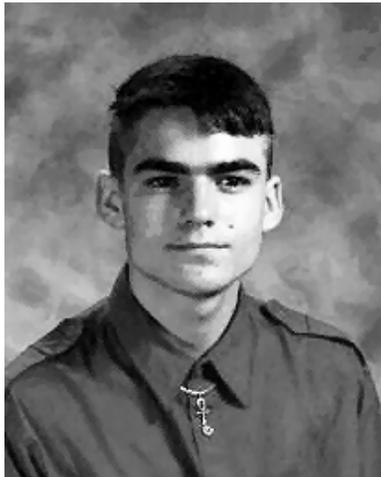
Mail submissions to:  
**HeartBeat**  
**P.O. Box 12732**  
**Olympia, WA 98508-2732**

Or email to: [newsletter@pflag-olympia.org](mailto:newsletter@pflag-olympia.org)

# Father and Son

By Alec Clayton

*Note: This is an edited version of an article posted on my Web site. The original can be found on the Web at <http://www.alecclayton.com/fatherandson.html>*



Our son Bill came out as bisexual when he was 14. He came out first to my wife, Gabi. He said, "Mom, I am bisexual."

Gabi said, "So is your father."

She knew that I was bisexual. A few close friends knew. But I sure as hell had not announced it to the world in general. It took me about 30 years to admit it to myself.

Bill was a lot more courageous. Even though he knew we were accepting and open-minded; even though he knew we loved him unconditionally; even though our best friend, who was also our housemate, was a lesbian — he could not be sure of our reaction. He said he was afraid we would disown him or stop loving him. Although everything he knew about us told him we were not like that, there was that lingering doubt. It took a lot of guts for a 14-year-old kid to face that.

And then that wonderful brave young man was beaten to unconsciousness because of some other kids' reaction to his honesty and openness about his sexual orientation. After the assault Anna Schlecht organized a rally to show support for Bill and his friends, and to give the community a place to speak out against hate. At the rally, a school board member quoted the lyrics of a

*(Continued on page 4)*

# American "Soldiers"

*(Continued from page 1)*

Oh, and I don't want to die for you  
but if dyin's asked of me  
I'll bare that cross with honor  
'cause freedom don't come free

And he declares his pride for being a part of an elite group of men and women:

"I'm an American soldier, an American  
beside my brothers and my sisters  
I will proudly take a stand  
when liberty's in jeopardy  
I will always do what's right  
I'm out here on the front line  
Sleep in peace tonight

Three lines hit me. "Beside my brothers and my sisters." Remember, it wasn't so long ago, women were not allowed to serve. We were deemed too weak. It wasn't so long ago, we weren't even considered smart enough.

"When liberty's in jeopardy, I will always do what's right." My skepticism roared on that one. Who's "right" was he talking about? I know our military and our government rarely do what I would think was "right." As far back as history can recall, soldiers have done abominable things. That is what they are trained for. Then I thought about people like my cousin, who was a Green Beret. He was proud of what he accomplished, and truly tried to live up to the ideal. I know I would do the same if I ever had gone into the military. There are those out there who genuinely want to do there best, and always do the "right" thing.

Then was the line, "'Cause freedom don't come free." I heard that in the context of the song and thought bitterly, what freedom? I don't have the freedoms the soldier has, nor do I believe our military would grant me such freedoms... But I had forgotten already, freedom isn't free. I need to fight for it, too. If I can't fight for a country which is trying to basically write me out of the constitution, then perhaps I can stand up and fight for my right and the rights of others to be re-included in that same constitution.

As Capital City Pride approaches, I am thinking about how far we have come, and how far we have yet to go. I don't know what the next few months and years will bring, but I am trying to be hopeful. We need each other, and we need to be out, out as friends, out as family, out as supporters and please, oh please, out as gay, lesbian, queer, straight, trans-gendered, two-spirit, bisexual, similar and different people... we need each other to say, "beside my brothers and my sisters I will proudly take a stand."

I'm out here on the front line...  
American soldier, I'm an American...

## Congratulations

**PFLAG-Olympia extends congratulations to all of the gay and lesbian couples who have recently been married and to all who plan to be married soon.**

**And to those who have chosen not to marry now — who are fighting for equal marriage rights in the courts first — we want you to know that you have our support.**



## Lesbian Literature

The Lesbian Book Group at Barnes & Noble in Olympia explores all sorts of literature by and about lesbians. They meet every third Thursday at 7 p.m. To find out what books or authors will be on the agenda next, call 534-0388.

*(Father and Son Continued from page 3)*

song from "South Pacific":

*You've got to be taught to hate and fear, you've got to be taught from year to year, it's got to be drummed in your dear little ear. You've got to be carefully taught.*

*You've got to be taught to be afraid of people whose eyes are oddly made, and people whose skin is a different shade. You've got to be carefully taught.*

*You've got to be taught before it's too late, before you are six or seven or eight, to hate all the people your relatives hate.*

*You've got to be carefully taught! You've got to be taught to hate and fear, you've got to be taught from year to year, it's got to be drummed in your dear little ear. You've got to be carefully taught.*

Bill stood on the podium with his friends and said:

"In all likelihood, my friends Sam and Jenny will never have to tolerate this — or never have to endure this type of hate crime or any other type in their lives — and I hope that's true. But as an openly bisexual person in Olympia, I'm probably — or may be — the victim of this sort of thing again."

I tried to speak, but I was so emotionally overwhelmed that all I could do was blubber. I thanked the crowd for their show of support and apologized for not being able to speak. I left the podium in tears.

Bill seemed uplifted immediately after the rally, but it was not long before he sank into a severe depression. He told us he was suicidal and needed help. We put him in a hospital in Seattle. His doctors said his depression had nothing to do with his sexual orientation or with the fact that he had been beaten. They said he needed his mother to back off, and he needed me to play a larger role in his life. They were playing into the classic myth that homosexuality is "caused" by a domineering mother and an absent father. That was pure bunk and we knew it. But we were so desperate to see him get better that we were willing to follow some of the doctors recommendations.

When Bill was released from the hospital, I took him to the Seattle Art Museum. There was a Jackson Pollock painting in the museum, and Bill had said Pollock was one of his favorite artists. He was one of my favorites, too, and it gave me a wonderful feeling that day to be able to share the Pollock painting with Bill. I had no idea it would

be one of the last joyful moments we would share.

Shortly after that, Bill took his own life. I came home from work and found him unconscious on the kitchen floor. We rushed him to the hospital, but it was too late. He never regained consciousness.

Father's Day was just around the corner. Paul Beeman invited me to speak at the PFLAG Father's Day meeting. Gabi and I had never before attended a PFLAG meeting. We thought it was just a support group for parents who were having a hard time accepting their gay or lesbian children, and that had never been us. Anyway, we went. That was in 1995, and we haven't stopped going since. Not only did we need support then, but we discovered that PFLAG was more than a support group. We found that it was a place for activists too. In PFLAG we found a new family.

It has been almost a decade now since Bill's death and since Gabi and I first started attending PFLAG meetings. In those years we have often been thanked by people in the glbt community for our involvement. But it is we who owe them thanks. It has been that involvement and the support of this community that has kept us going.

I get sick of listening to straight people complain about, "Well, hey, we don't have a heterosexual-pride day, why do you need a gay-pride day?" I remember when I was a kid I'd always ask my mom: "Why don't we have a Kid's Day? We have a Mother's Day and a Father's Day, but why don't we have a Kid's Day?" My mom would always say, "Every day is Kid's Day." To all those heterosexuals that bitch about gay pride, I say the same thing: Every day is heterosexual-pride day! Can't you people enjoy your banquet and not piss on those of us enjoying our crumbs over here in the corner?

— Rob Nash

## Let them know where the money comes from - and support PFLAG!

You can order beautiful PFLAG checks in rainbow colors, checkbook covers and return address labels from Message!Products in Minnesota. 10% of your purchase comes back to PFLAG National.

To see the items and order on-line, go to <http://www.messageproducts.com/> And click on "Social Organizations."

Or order by phone:  
1-800-243-2565.

## BUY PFLAG-OLYMPIA GEAR

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

t-shirts ~ sweat shirts  
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BBQ aprons ~ tile coasters  
canvas tote bags ~ boxer shorts

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