



HeartBeat

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays



PFLAG Olympia, Washington

Issue 66 Nov.-Dec. 2004

Ruminating on the T in GLBT

By Julianne Wasilausky

I've had occasion to ruminate on why there's a "T" in GLBT. That acronym usually stands for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered in most of the contexts where I read it.

I've talked with some Trans- folks who don't believe that the "T" belongs there. They argue (and rightly) that being a transsexual, or being transgendered, (or trans- anything for that matter) really has to do with gender identity, and not sexual orientation or preference. That is true.

Sexual orientation, and gender identity are two different things, on two different continua. But they're not all *that* different. That they both *seem* to intersect in the area of our sexuality is something that confuses a lot of people. It even confuses GLB and T folks.

The critics I spoke of contend that being lumped in with gay, lesbian, and bisexual folks causes confusion in the public mind about what being transgendered, or transsexual, is. I think we all have talked with people from outside our community who regard T-folk as "some kind of queer" or other.

However, I take a different view. I don't think the "T" should be removed from the GLBT acronym. I think we have a lot of issues in common.

When we're in school, we get shoved, made fun of, spat on, jeered, and shunned by those who should be our "peers." Later in life, we get passed up for promotion, avoided at social functions, or even fired from our jobs, just because of who we are. Sometimes the treatment is subtler. But it's still there.

We face rejection by family, friends, co-workers and associates when we decide to come "out" and share with them that we aren't quite as "normal" as they thought, that we're different in some ways, and that those differences run afoul of some of their most strongly-held social taboos.

We all face a lack of understanding that often manifests itself in fear, mistrust, or blind bigotry on the part of mainstream America. We all face the same kinds of harassment, cruelty, and discrimination.

We need support and encouragement from others like ourselves, who have been through this same kind of mistreatment. We need protection under the laws against the legalized bigotry of discrimination in employment, and in housing. We have to overcome, in one degree or another, those injuries to our self-esteem that come from a lifetime of being regarded by "the majority" as

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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.



▼ SUNDAY, NOV. 14, 2-4:30 PM

Video: "A Boy Named Sue"

We will show the video, "A Boy Named Sue." It's a documentary about a trans man's six-year journey from pre-hormones through surgery.

November is also the time for our annual business meeting when we elect new board members and officers and conduct whatever other business must be brought before the general membership. The business part of the meeting usual takes only a few minutes. More information on the election will be included elsewhere in this newsletter.

▼ SUNDAY, DEC. 12, 2-4:30 PM

Points of Light

Over the past four years this powerful and moving celebration has become our holiday season tradition that many of our members look forward to. A table is filled with candles. As we are moved to do so, we can light a candle and share something about an person or event we are honoring that has been point of light in our lives over the past year.



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)



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.

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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>

The T in GLBT

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second-class, inferior beings. Many times we have to overcome the deeply-ingrained feelings of guilt and shame that cause us to keep our innermost true selves hidden from public view.

We have these things in common, and I think it makes sense that we can seek out one another for comfort, support, and encouragement. I think it makes sense that we band together and march under the same banner to try to win for ourselves the same rights accorded to all the other citizens of our city, state, and nation. Although we are a minority, when we combine to work toward these common goals, we have strength.

I had one transsexual gal tell me that she and I should more properly identify with women's causes, and that we already have protection under the laws. I asked her if she'd ever been fired from her job because she was an M to F transsexual who was just beginning to transition. I asked her if she felt it was morally right for anyone to be fired from their job under those circumstances. Her response was vague, but basically she felt it was justified if the employer felt it might impact his business. I could see that she just plain didn't get it.

Back when my driver's license had just been changed from M to F, and my birth certificate still said M (before my reassignment surgery), I was fired from my job 14 days after sharing with my employer my intention to transition from male to female gender. I was unemployed for 18 months and not hired for positions for which I had overwhelming qualifications. Of course, nobody told me it was because I was transgendered. But even if they had, it wouldn't have been illegal under Washington state law to deny me employment on that basis.

I still feel that this is morally wrong. I still think that nobody should have to fear for their job, or be denied a job opportunity for which they are amply qualified, merely on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

To me it makes sense to work in coalition with others who march under the same banner, to pool our resources and political strength(s), and to achieve ends which mutually benefit all of us. We have a lot more in common than we have differences between us. I'm glad to be one of the T's in GLBT, and I'm glad to do what I can to help us all win the same rights that the rest of society takes for granted.

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.

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 or 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, "Out of Solitude"

New online magazine from the Rainbow Center

By Alec Clayton

The Rainbow Center is starting a new online magazine for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and allied communities of the greater Olympia area called Rainbow Journal Olympia. It will be a monthly publication with articles on a wide range of topics of interest to the glbt community. The premiere issue is slated to be posted Nov. 1st. A Web address for the new magazine has not yet been posted, but interested parties will be able to access it by going to the Rainbow Center Web site at www.rainbowcenteroly.org (also linked from the PFLAG-Olympia Web site).

"This magazine is part of our non-profit service to the glbtq communities of the greater Olympia area," reads an announcement sent out to area organizations from the editorial board. "As a new publication, we anticipate a few bumps as we establish our identity as an online magazine. Your suggestions are as welcome as your potential contributions. We ask your support as readers, contributors and potential sponsors to help to make Rainbow Journal Olympia a significant touchstone for our community."

Content planned for the Rainbow Journal will include:

- ▼ **Calendar** Monthly local events calendar and annual events calendar
- ▼ **News Briefs** Local and State news of interest to the glbtq communities
- ▼ **Building Community** Articles from local organizations that serve the glbtq and allied communities
- ▼ **On the Road to Civil Rights** Local, State & Federal civil rights issues
- ▼ **"On the Couch" Views from Local Therapists** A rotating column by local therapists on topics of interest to glbtq and allied people

- ▼ **Our Families** A rotating column by local writers about glbtq family issues
- ▼ **Features** Articles on topics of interest to glbtq folks
- ▼ **Opinion Page & Letters to the Editor** Editorials about local and national issues

The Rainbow Journal of Olympia is seeking written submissions with subject matter that is of interest to the local gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and allied communities of the greater Olympia area. For writers' guidelines, e-mail The Rainbow Journal at rainbowjournalolympia@hotmail.com

Annual business meeting and election of officers

Every November we elect new board members and officers at our annual business meeting. The business meeting will follow introductions and announcements and will come before our program.

Four board members will be up for re-election. They are:

Alec Clayton, president
David Walddon, vice president
Bekah Cardwell, treasurer
Evelyn Hinken, greeter

Our nominating committee, Barb Klein, Mike Walsh and Tina Roose, has selected three nominees for the board and one previous board member who is eligible to serve a new term. The nominees are:

Gabi Clayton
Beth Rossing
Gib Rossing
Angie Ostrowski

Other members who may want to serve on the board may enter their own names at the time of the election.

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pads
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Buy yours now on the web at

http://www.cafeshops.com/pflag_oly

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 12/15/2004

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

Or email to: newsletter@pflag-olympia.org

Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer

By Julianne Wasilausky

All the while I was growing up, I really identified with Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer.

All of the other reindeer used to laugh and call him names. They wouldn't let poor Rudolph join in any reindeer games. That really rang true in my life.

Like Rudolph who had a shiny red nose that made him distinctively different, I always felt different, and alone. The name-calling and other harassment also were right on the mark.

Of course the rest of the song played to my adolescent fantasy of suddenly being accepted and cheered by my peers for some exceptional ability or other. Unfortunately, that part never seemed to come true. But the thought of maybe being accepted and liked, if I was really really good at something, persisted.

As a transsexual growing up in the wrong body, trying very hard to fit in and be like my peers, I kept my true inner self secret. Those rare times when I'd share my secret, I'd be ridiculed, at best.

When at age 5 I told my mom that I believed I was really a little girl, she just laughed and said that of course that wasn't the case. When my dad would find me doing something he thought wasn't appropriate for little boys, he'd say something like, "Well, maybe we should put dresses on you, then, and make you our little *girl*." Of course, what he was trying to do was to ridicule me in order to get me to feel shame for my behavior. The time I responded back, "OK," it made him so angry, that the abuse he heaped on me made me decide to never do *that* again.

World AIDS Day December 1st, 2004

This article provided by United Communities AIDS Network (UCAN) Olympia, WA
<http://www.ucan-wa.org>

Women, girls, HIV and AIDS is the theme of the 2004 World AIDS Day. Around the world there are many different ways in which HIV and AIDS affect women. Among them are:

Transmission. HIV/AIDS has been thought of in the past as a disease mainly affecting gay men or drug users. In fact, in 2004, most HIV infections come from heterosexual sex. And in heterosexual sex women are more likely to become infected than are men.

Mother to child transmissions of HIV infections accounted for 90 percent of all babies infected in 2003. A drug is cheaply available to greatly reduce the chances of this occurring, but it fails to be provided to many women around the world. HIV can also be transmitted by breast milk, which is easily substituted for artificial alternatives — also often unavailable.

Sexual violence is an issue affecting women everywhere in the world. It can be even more damaging when it involves the transmission, sometimes deliberate, of HIV. A new and alarming phenomenon that has been seen in the past decade is the use of HIV as a weapon of war. In conflict areas such as Rwanda and Kosovo, there have been reports of thousands of women being raped and purposely infected with HIV as part of a campaign of ethnic cleansing.

Discrimination is an issue that has affected women for many decades. It can impact on their job prospects, their economic and social position, their access to healthcare and education. Women who have HIV may experience discrimination on two fronts, and if the healthcare services discriminate against them, their lives can be shortened as a result.

Men are the most common route of HIV transmission to women. In fact, most women infected with HIV have caught the virus from a husband or partner.

In order for HIV to be effectively tackled on an international level, efforts need to be made to:

- ▼ End the discrimination against people with HIV and AIDS.
- ▼ Educate people in safer sex and drug use, using appropriate media.
- ▼ Provide condoms freely to people in the developing world.
- ▼ Provide financial and medical assistance so that people with HIV and AIDS can be treated.

Started in 1988, World AIDS Day is not just about raising money, but it is also about raising awareness, education and fighting prejudice. World AIDS Day is also important in reminding people that HIV has not gone away, and that there are many things still to be done.

UCAN's World AIDS Day Commemoration

Please join United Communities AIDS Network for their World AIDS Day Commemoration at United Churches, 110 11th Ave. E., Olympia on Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2004 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The Sixth Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance November 20, 2004

The Transgender Day of Remembrance was set aside to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. The event is held in November to honor Rita Hester, whose murder in 1998 kicked off the "Remembering Our Dead" web project and a San Francisco candlelight vigil in 1999. Since then, the event has grown to encompass memorials in dozens of cities across the world. <http://www.rememberingourdead.org/day/index.html>