



Heart Beat

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays



PFLAG Olympia, Washington

Issue 72 Nov.-Dec. 2005

VOICES by Barb Klein

The holidays are coming, and it seems the world has very little to be thankful for. With death and destruction in so many places, and a disparaging government here at home, sometimes it seems to me that no one can forget the "battle lines" and pull together for the greater good. Even the donations to relief begin to look like political moves that in the long run will benefit the oil companies more than anyone.

With that in mind, I turn my thoughts to my brother. He is a very devout and active member of the First United Methodist Church. His involvement includes, but is certainly not limited to, weekly worship, bible study groups, and church-sponsored retreats every month or so. It is a combination worthy of suspicion for a lesbian who has already been "put in her place" by a so-called Christian aunt. But there is no uneasiness here. I know my brother, and his support is inspiring.

He asked me not so long ago to write a letter to a friend of his, another member of the church, who has stood up for his brother many times in the face of opposition, both at church and in other arenas of his life. It made me think of all the people who try to make a difference for the GLBT community. Strangers and friends working together and separately to make a difference. Each of you are a part of that, just like my brother and his friend. I would like to share some of that letter with you here, as an expression of appreciation for all you do.

I am many things. I am a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a friend to some and a stranger to many. I am also a member of the gay community, and for years have felt more and more estranged by my country and my "fellow Americans." Even when I am not in a relationship, as a lesbian I am yet another target for ignorant, fearful people who use morality and "family values," God and country as stakes upon which to burn those of us they do not understand. I do believe that is all it is... fear and ignorance... lack of understanding. Closed parachutes hurling toward the ground, unwilling to open, to accept or even acknowledge that which does not fit into their carefully constructed realities.

Lately, with all the press the gay community has had, the marriage issue most at hand, but also hate crimes bills that are being fought by right wing activists, I feel particularly alone. Most of my friends have partners, wives, spouses, etc... and I can't imagine how having their life partners go unrecognized for decades affects them. Several have gone to Portland, and to Vancouver, BC to be married, only to be told their marriages are not valid. I wonder if I will ever be able to not only be "happily married" to the person of my heart's choosing, but be accepted and respected as a full citizen (afforded not only all the taxes but all the rights!) and member of a loving couple and loving family, by my own country. I have dated, and even been casual friends with women who did not feel comfortable being seen with me in public because someone might "suspect" we were "together." Living with that type of fear in one's own country, state, city, neighborhood, is unacceptable to me, yet it happens every day. How lonely it can be...

This is where people like you make the difference in our lives. Watch a gay-pride parade, and it always seems the most revered regiment is PFLAG. These are people showing their support for their gay sons and daughters, family and friends. I assure you, you'll be hard-pressed to find a dry eye among the crowd whenever PFLAG marches by. I am blessed with a very supportive family, and I always get a lump in my throat.

You may not know how much your quiet (or perhaps not so quiet) witnessing for your brother [sister, son or daughter, friend or family member] means to him, or what it means for the rest of us, gay and straight... When I shared some emails between myself and my "Christian Right" aunt, my ex-husband (another wonderful man in my life) had this to say...

"Only the voice that is heard counts. It does not have to be an angry voice to cause those [who] are prejudiced to take pause and think, only an honest and determined one. Your voice is true, and though it might not change peoples' minds outright, it will put a chink in the old armor, and chink by chink things begin to change."

PFLAG members, in this hard time, we can turn to you, and to people like you, to find hope and decency, to find something for which to be thankful. Thank you, each of you, for being another voice...



▼ SUNDAY, NOV. 13, 2-4:30 PM

Stephanie Coontz

Local author **Stephanie Coontz** will be our guest speaker at the November meeting. Coontz is on the faculty at The Evergreen State College and has published numerous books on marriage, family, including *The Way We Never Were*, *The Way We Really Are*, *The Social Origins of Private Life*, and *American Families, A Multicultural Reader*. Her latest book is *Marriage, A History: From Obedience to Intimacy, or How Love Conquered Marriage*.

▼ SUNDAY, DEC. 11, 2-4:30 PM

Points of Light

This powerful and moving celebration has become a 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. It is our chance to reminisce, reflect, and reconnect with one another.

Annual business meeting and board elections

At the November meeting we always elect new board members and officers. This year there are three nominations up for new Board positions: Carmen Salazar, Darrelyn Kamerman and Beverly Schouviller. Also, current Board member Gib Rossing is up for election for the office of Treasurer.

Leaving the Board are Casey Kilduff, Brianne Pearson, Jeff Loyer, Barb Klein. Evelyn Hinken and Catherine Dawdy. We thank them all for their invaluable service to PFLAG-Olympia.

PFLAG-OLYMPIA GEAR

- t-shirts · sweat shirts
- coffee mugs · mouse pads
- BBQ aprons · coasters
- tote bags · boxer shorts



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

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.

NEW or RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP

Please check the membership types you prefer:

- Individual \$25
- Household \$40
- Senior/Student/Low Income \$15
- Supporter \$100
- Educator \$250
- 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.



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

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 10th of even-numbered months. The editors reserve the right to reject or edit material.

The deadline for the next issue is 1/10/2006

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

Or email to: newsletter@pflag-olympia.org