



# HeartBeat

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays



PFLAG Olympia, Washington

Issue 80 March-April 2007

## Open the Box by Trusten Hart

Imagine with me a scene where a lover brings a gift in a box. The relationship is progressing but the girl is uncertain how far she wants it to go. She wouldn't describe her behavior as "waiting for a better offer" but she is stalling.

So, when the box is delivered she is challenged. Frankly she doesn't want to open the box. She is afraid that she will be pressed to make a decision which would either terminate the relationship or let it rise to a higher level.

She takes the box in her hands and pauses. The giver of the gift and the audience, if there is one, are almost shouting: "Open the box." Still she stalls. But every moment she stalls the truth is more obvious. She doesn't want to be forced to make that important decision. She realizes that a failure to declare her state of feelings is unfair. One might say she wants to have her cake and eat it too.

Now expand that to a wider range of situations. How many times does life present us with a choice we are trying to escape? Are we holding the box when for fairness we should go ahead and open it?

I have noted that social custom encourages us to pretend. We decline invitations to reveal our true feelings. We rule out religious and political expressions as anti-social. We tolerate excessive greed and selfishness in the name of politeness. We lend our support to unacceptable practices because we too are waiting for a better offer. We want to take positions that do not cost us in a loss of friendship or simply in comfort.

We would do well to examine these practices. We are withholding our true feelings and paying the price. We sense that our friends might not really know us and we do not really know them. Could it be that we need to be brave enough to Open The Box?

*Trusten Hart is Jeff Loyer's father-in-law.*

## On Equality ... and where are the Ts? by Richelle Lanning

Hello once again. This time around I have two things on my mind to put in words.

The first thing is the equality rally. I am all for equality. There just doesn't seem to be large numbers demanding theirs. I expected a jammed room for the discussion on the rally and was amazed to see so few. I took time off from work and saw very few faces. We need to start getting the masses out there. Only in numbers will we be strong enough to win what we have been denied. Get off the sidelines and get your friends and families out there. It is that important.

Next on my list is where are all the T's. We are part of the community and are not very

visible right now. I have seen things going backwards for us and do not believe that it is happening. We as the Transgender, to include the Gender Queer, need to start showing up in large numbers to show our support and to have our needs be heard. Out there somewhere are many post-op men and ladies who should be taking a stand with those still on the journey to being whole. Lets show we are here and we demand our rights too.

That should do for now. Let us all show the world what beauty and talent they are ignoring.

## 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 4/15/2007**

Mail submissions to:

**HeartBeat**

**P.O. Box 12732**

**Olympia, WA 98508-2732**

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



### ▼ SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2-4:30 PM

**Video and discussion: *We Are GLBT***  
"Best video in recent memory." says Beth Reis of the Safe Schools Coalition about this 40-minute documentary on youth in foster care and other out of home settings. It was created for the Children's Administration of Washington State DSHS by Dr. Evonne Hedgepeth, co-founder of PFLAG-Olympia and a nationally recognized expert on GLBT issues (see [www.lifespaneducation.com](http://www.lifespaneducation.com)). It includes moving interviews with youth, foster parents and experts on LGBTQ youth in foster care. A must see. Bring your hanky.

### ▼ SUNDAY, APRIL 8, 2-4:30 PM

**A panel on hate crimes** — Law enforcement representatives from Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater and Thurston county will join with us for a discussion on the Washington State malicious harassment law and anti-GLBTQ hate crimes.

### 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)

## COLORS IN THE RAINBOW:

# RACE, CULTURE, AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION ~ PART 3 OF A 6 PART SERIES: ASIAN CULTURE

BY STEPHEN M. WHITE, PSY.D.

As is the case with *Hispanic* and *Latino*, the term *Asian* refers to many different countries and cultures. There are some elements that many of these cultures share, including an emphasis on tradition and authority, respect for elders and a hierarchical family structure, and the concept of "face," or maintaining ones dignity in public.

Some of these elements make it difficult for gay children to come out to their parents, and for parents to acknowledge that their child is gay. The importance of tradition means that parents are invested in the idea that their child will have a heterosexual marriage and have children. The 1993 film "The Wedding Banquet" illustrates this point well, as the Taiwanese protagonist's parents doggedly arrange dating services for him, unaware that he is gay. Letting go of this dream can be a very difficult process for parents.

The emphasis on respect for

elders can also make it exceedingly difficult for gay Asian children to come out to their parents. Regardless of race, children want to maintain a good relationship with their parents and fear disappointing them.

This is one of the most frightening aspects of the coming out process for many children. Children in Asian families may fear that the revelation of their sexual orientation will be seen as a sign of disrespect.

Even worse than a private injury to parents could be causing the parents to "lose face" in public. The taboo against homosexuality is strong in most Asian communities, making the fear that the parents would lose face a realistic one.

Other factors that may make the coming out process more difficult for gay Asians include multi-generational issues and inter-racial relationships. First-generation parents may have

orientation into a cohesive identity within the larger culture. Relatively small numbers in the population make the task of finding a partner complicated for gay Asians. Different social groups have formed to address this situation, working to facilitate relationships between Asians and non-Asians, including the Long Yang Club and International Friendship Alliance/Asians & Friends.

Despite the cultural factors that make it difficult for gay Asian to come out, these individuals are slowly becoming more visible. Japan's first openly gay politician, Kanako Otsuji, was elected in 2003 as a prefectural assemblywoman from Osaka, and the same year Aya Kamikawa, the first open transsexual in public office, was elected as a member of the Setagaya ward assembly in Tokyo.

One of the most visible gay Asian entertainers is George Takei, the Japanese-American famous for portraying Mr. Sulu in the Star Trek television series and films. Takei came out in October, 2005. Another highly visible actor is B.D. Wong, a Chinese-American actor who has appeared in many films including "The Freshman," "Father of the Bride," and more recently the "Law and Order: SVU" television series. In 2003 Hong Suk Chon, a popular actor on South Korean TV, became the first well-known personality to publicly come out. He initially lost

(Continued on page 3)

difficulty understanding various aspects of their children's lives, and learning that a child is gay can be a particularly challenging situation. The children may have their own difficulties, trying to figure out how to integrate race and sexual

### NEW or RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP

Please check the membership types you prefer:

- Individual \$35  
 Household \$50  
 Senior/Student/Low Income \$15
- New  Renewal

Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Add this amount as my tax-exempt gift (thank you!) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**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 newsletter *PFLAGpole* (which is not mailed in an envelope).

I want to be added to the PFLAG-Olympia email alert/announcement list (include your email address.)

DATE: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ PHONE: (\_\_\_\_)\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail with your check to: 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.

## Women "coming out" after 30 a peer-facilitated support group

for women over the age of 30 who are "coming out" or have previously come out as queer, lesbian or bisexual, or who are questioning their orientation.

**Meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month  
from 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm**

**Unity Church of Olympia; 1335 Fern Street SW**

For more information, please contact Carmen  
360-870-8585 ~ carmen333@comcast.net

(Continued from page 2)

work but after the initial shock wore off has begun getting roles again.

Female entertainers include comedian Margaret Cho, a bisexual Korean-American, and Jenny Shimizu, a Japanese-American model and actress most famous for her relationship with Angelina Jolie, with whom she starred in the film "Foxfire."

The most famous Japanese writer to address gay issues was undoubtedly Yukio Mishima. Considered to be "the Japanese Hemingway" by Life magazine, Mishima was a prolific author of over 100 works. His books of most interest to gay audiences include *Confessions of a Mask* (1958) and *Forbidden Colors* (1968). Mishima was closeted during his lifetime, living with a wife and two children.

Heterosexual artists have also been important supporters of gay Asians. Ang Lee, the Taiwanese-American director of "The Wedding Banquet" and "Brokeback Mountain" had the courage to make films that were

risky from both a political and commercial vantage point. In 2004 Yoko Ono took a stand on the issue of gay marriage, re-recording a song she had written with John Lennon, with the new title "Every Man Has a Man Who Loves Him."

Non-fiction works which have examined the intersection between Asian culture and homosexuality have included the 1993 documentary "Cut Sleeve: Lesbians & Gays of Asian/Pacific Ancestry," as well as the books *Asian Homosexuality* edited by Dynes and Donaldson, *Passions of the Cut Sleeve: The Male Homosexual Tradition in China* by Bret Hinsch, *Love of the Samurai: A Thousand Years of Japanese Homosexuality* by Watanabe and Iwata, and *The Dove Coos = Nok Kao Kan: Gay Experiences by the Men of Thailand* edited by Eric G. Allyn.

The taboo attached to homosexuality has created a familiar vicious cycle. The general absence of role models makes it difficult for gay men and women to come out, and their reluctance to come out creates the

absence of these role models.

This cycle may be winding down, as the past few years have seen gay Asians achieve greater visibility than ever, both inside the United States and abroad. The oft-quoted Confucius suggests the way forward: "Respect yourself and others will respect you."

#### Organizations/Resources:

- **International Friendship Alliance/Asians & Friends (Asians/Non-Asians):** [www.intlfriendship.org](http://www.intlfriendship.org)
- **Long Yang Club (Asians/Non-Asians):** [www.longyangclub.org](http://www.longyangclub.org)
- **China Rainbow:** [www.chinarainbow.org](http://www.chinarainbow.org)
- **Gay Asian Pacific Alliance (GAPA):** [www.gapa.org](http://www.gapa.org)
- **Pacific Friends/Long Yang Club:** [www.pacificfriends.org](http://www.pacificfriends.org)
- **UTOPIA (Polynesians):** [www.polyutopia.com](http://www.polyutopia.com)
- **Trikone (South Asians):** [www.trikone.org](http://www.trikone.org)

Copyright © 2006 Stephen M. White

## A NOTE FROM PREZ by Jeff Loyer

I thought I'd put out my first note as PFLAG-Olympia president. It's a great honor, and I'd like to thank you all for this opportunity. I hope I can live up to the high standards of the folks before me!

I'm especially thrilled to hold the position at this point in history - recent Washington State legislation is groundbreaking, and it looks like more is on the way. I believe PFLAG-Olympia must continue to play a key part in getting laws on the books to protect ourselves and loved ones. Here's what I think some of our unique abilities are:

- Attending public events: we live at the State's capitol, and can attend when others would be challenged to
- Testimony at public hearings - I think representatives are especially receptive to parents' and young peoples' calls for action. Being close to the capitol helps here, also!
- Garnishing support through our alert list - getting folks to contact their representative regarding pending legislation
- Energetic, passionate people, with powerful stories and messages to share.

I really want to challenge PFLAG-Olympia folks to take advantage of our locale, with access to public officials that others don't have. Please monitor the alert list (send e-mail to [newsletter@pflag-olympia.org](mailto:newsletter@pflag-olympia.org) if you're not already getting alerts), and SHOW UP when we have an opportunity to be seen and heard. Lots of people means more coverage in the media - and that's an important piece of getting legislation through.

Also, if you haven't contacted your representatives to let them know where you stand on GLBTQ-friendly legislation, it's time! Get their name at <http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature/> and send them a note. A short note from a constituent can be a powerful influence.

Along the same lines, I think we need to push for stronger enforcement of anti-bullying policies. I still hear that homophobic slurs are common in our high schools. We'll be posting any upcoming events related to this on the alert list, and we need people to SHOW UP, especially if you are a parent or student of the target school or school district. Numbers count! (Okay - that's a weird saying, but I like it)

I think that in the next couple of years the issue will be "coming to a head", with lots of attention paid to Marriage Equality and GLBTQ anti-discrimination protection. It's going to be exciting, and a period to look back on as historic! PFLAG is going to be a key part in that history, and I look forward to working with the wonderful folks in our great chapter.

Thanks again for this opportunity to play a part in history. It's going to be an exciting term!

### PFLAG-Olympia Alert

**PFLAG-Olympia Alert** is an email service of PFLAG-Olympia designed to inform members of upcoming events, programs, and more. Email updates are sent out prior to each of our the regular second Sunday meetings and whenever something comes up that we think our members and friends need to know about. You can subscribe to the alert by sending an email to our newsletter editor at [newsletter@pflag-olympia.org](mailto:newsletter@pflag-olympia.org) — put "Subscribe PLAG-Olympia Alert" in the subject line.

## 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.

## Day of Silence® ~ April 18<sup>th</sup>

by Judy Hoff, Sr. Coordinator, Safe Schools ~ PFLAG National

The Day of Silence is an annual event held to commemorate and protest anti-LGBT bullying, harassment and discrimination in schools.

Students and teachers nationwide will observe the day in silence to echo the silence that LGBT and ally students face everyday. In its 11th year, the Day of Silence® is one of the largest student-led actions in the country. Founded in 1996, the Day of Silence® has become the largest single student-led action towards creating safer schools for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. From the first-ever Day of Silence® at the University of Virginia in 1996, to the organizing efforts in over 1,900 middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities across the country in 2002, its textured history reflects its diversity in both numbers and reach. In last year's Day of Silence®, more than 450,000 students at nearly 4,000 K-12 schools, colleges and universities participated in events.

Visit <http://www.dayofsilence.org/content/getinvolved.html> to sign up for the Day of Silence.

For more information about the Day of Silence® visit <http://www.dayofsilence.org>.

“We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color.” ~ Maya Angelou



# 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 (except in August when we have our annual picnic at a local park.) 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>

## BUY PFLAG-OLYMPIA GEAR



**t-shirts ~ sweat shirts  
coffee mugs and more**

**Buy yours now on the web at**

**[http://www.cafeshops.com/pflag\\_oly](http://www.cafeshops.com/pflag_oly)**