

## The Big Voice

**Steve Schalchlin—back from the brink and alive in Olympia!**

by Alec Clayton

Our program May 10th will feature Steve Schalchlin. That evening Steve will perform at Capital Playhouse as a fundraiser concert for PFLAG-Olympia.



Steve is a singer/songwriter and composer of two hit Off-Broadway musicals. He wrote the cult Off-Broadway rock gospel musical, “The Last Session,” which garnered Best Musical nominations from the New York Drama League and New York Outer Critics Circle. He is the recipient of the GLAAD Media Award and two PFLAG-LA Oscar Wilde Awards.

Over a decade ago when he was dying of AIDS, Steve wrote songs about his experience with the disease. Many of the songs were outrageously funny. His life partner, Jim Brochu, wrote a play based on Steve’s songs, and thus their first musical, “The Last Session” was born. In story and song it tells the tale of Gideon, a former gospel singer who crossed over to become a Pop

star. Gideon is dying of AIDS, and he clashes in a recording studio with a fundamentalist Christian singer who adores him but doesn’t know he is gay. Jim described it as “the funniest play about suicide you’ll ever see.”

Just about the time the play opened Steve started on new drugs that brought him back from the brink of death. Today he still has to live with horrible side effects (which he sings about in a hilarious song that parodies military music and equates death by “Friendly Fire” with the side effects of AIDS medications). Now he and his partner have also written and performed a successful autobiographical play titled “The Big Voice,” based on their experiences growing up as the son of a Missionary Baptist preacher (Steve) and a Catholic with aspirations to become either The Pope — or a musical diva a la Ethel Merman (Jim).

**May 10 at 7 p.m. Steve will perform a special Mothers Day benefit concert for PFLAG at Capital Playhouse in Olympia**, with special guest appearance by Jeff Kingsbury, who is gracefully donating his theater for the event.

**Tickets are \$20. The box office is open Tuesday through Friday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call (360) 943-2744.** There are only 125 seats and we expect tickets to sell out quickly, so get yours right away.

**Steve will also be our guest and program at the May PFLAG meeting** and will play the piano, sing and tell stories in a preview for the concert that evening.

Find out more information about Steve Schalchlin in his bio at <http://www.pflag-olympia.org/SteveSchalchlin-Biography-04-17-09.pdf> and his blog: <http://bonusroundblog.blogspot.com/>



### ▼ SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2-4:30 PM

#### Steve Schalchlin

Singer, songwriter, storyteller and award-winning lyricist Steve Schalchlin will entertain us with stories and songs about living and almost dying with AIDS, growing up gay and Missionary Baptist in Texas and more. It’s a warm-up to his benefit concert for us at Capital Playhouse at 7 PM that evening. *See article to the left.*

### ▼ SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 2-4:30 PM

#### Intersex '09

Many children (~0.1%) are born as “intersex” – a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. In the past, the doctor might make a decision to surgically “correct” the child, sometimes without informing the parents. Learn how doctors are dealing with this today, with representatives from the intersex and medical communities.

### ▼ SUNDAY, JULY 12, 2-4:30 PM

#### Youth Suicide Prevention

A training with Heather Carter, MA, GLBTQ Project Coordinator from the Youth Suicide Prevention Program in Seattle. *See article on page 2.*

### ▼ SUNDAY, AUG. 9, 1-4:30 PM

#### Annual Picnic

Pot luck picnic in Priest Point Park. More information to follow at upcoming meetings and in our July-August newsletter

# Join us for PRIDE!

Capital City Pride is scheduled for June 20 and 21, with the parade from the Capitol Campus to Sylvester Park at noon Sunday, June 21 and activities in the Park to follow. Join us early Sunday for PFLAG PANCAKES IN THE PARK FOR PRIDE before the parade. As always, we will have a table in the park and sell bumper stickers and buttons and give away pamphlets, etc., and lots and lots of You're Loved by PFLAG stickers. We want to have a large contingent of members marching in the parade behind our banner. Be there! Show your pride.

## Suicide Prevention with GLBTQ Youth: The Facts

by Heather Carter, MA

GLBTQ Project Coordinator, Youth Suicide Prevention Program

### Why Do We Need Training on Suicide Prevention with GLBTQ Youth?

An increased number of risk factors and typically fewer protective factors place our gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning youth at higher risk for suicide and self-harm.

This workshop will address the particular issues that put these youth face that increase their risk. The importance of protective factors will also be discussed. There is a strong focus on what we can do to increase support for GLBTQ youth, I look at for areas for this: families, individuals, service providers, and schools.

Schools can be an unsafe environment for GLBTQ youth. In a national study conducted in 2007 by GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) on school climate they found the following: 86.2% of GLBT students reported being verbally harassed, 44.1% reported being physically harassed, and 60.8% of GLBT students reported that they felt unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation.

Research is clear: an increase in support for GLBTQ youth reduces their risk of suicide.

It is our hope that those who work with, care for, and/or live amongst GLBTQ identified youth will be better able to provide the needed support to these youth using the tools provided in this workshop.

### What to expect from a workshop on suicide prevention with GLBTQ youth?

- ▼ Increased knowledge about the risk and protective factors of particular concern for GLBTQ youth
- ▼ Education about how to increase support for these youth
- ▼ Heightened awareness of the warning signs for clinical depression & suicide
- ▼ Enhanced ability to differentiate suicidal attempts and self-harm
- ▼ Know the steps for intervening
- ▼ Increased recognition of resources for GLBTQ youth

## BOOK REVIEW

### Dignity, Dogmatism and Same Sex Relationships by Gilbert Rossing

Reviewed by Alec Clayton

Gilbert Rossing, known to local PFLAG members as Gib, has recently published a fascinating book titled Dignity, Dogmatism and Sam Sex Relationships (subtitled What Science and Scripture Teach us). This long title clearly maps out what the book is about.

Gib is a retired Lutheran minister who with his wife, Beth, has two gay sons and two straight daughters. When their sons came out, the Rossings had the experience shared by many PFLAG parents of learning about GLBTQ issues. As a scholar and theologian, Gib found himself struggling to understand apparent contradictions between what the Bible said about homosexuality — and more specifically the common ways many people interpreted scripture — and what his heart and scientific studies told him. In his book, he carefully examines these issues from both theological and scientific viewpoints and illustrates his commentary with personal narrative.

The facts are interesting, well researched and clearly presented, but they make for somewhat dry and academic reading. The dryness, however, is alleviated by the personal narrative.

We have two copies of this book in the PFLAG library (although as of this writing they are both checked out). They are also available at Orca Books and online at amazon.com (or Google Dignity-Dogmatism).

**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 6/15/09**

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

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

## 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.

# People are changing

by Virgil Clarkson

This article is written for those who may be awakening from an extended sleep. Judicially, legislatively and voluntarily people's perception and attitudes are changing almost on a daily basis in regards to the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members of the population. To specify: The states of Vermont, Iowa, Hawaii, California, and now New York are (or have) considered their positions in regard to some of their citizens. It is merely the states' perception that "each" citizen should be treated equally regardless.

This having been said and trying not to celebrate too much with minor changes, we must not forget how things were and still are not withstanding these minor gains.

To remind us of the extent of how things were, I wish to re-introduce to you my son. My son did not come out until he was 18 years old. Therefore I was not conscious of the problems he faced as a student at his high school(s) in Olympia Washington.

## Chad Clarkson's Story at Olympia High School, Class of 1987

Going to Olympia High School in the eighties, and being a black and gay person definitely presented a few challenges. I was fortunate however, due to the fact that I was well liked and eventually became the Sophomore Class President. I like to think that I did an excellent job hiding it. Maybe some of my friends back then may disagree, but they never let me know it.

Because I knew many of these people as far back as kindergarten, I did my best to be sure they wouldn't catch on.

I had a girlfriend my sophomore year, and dated many girls. Eventually this was all going to end.

In the summer of 1985, my mother and I moved. In my mind this was the opportunity to "come out". I changed schools and that opened the door to my new life. I didn't have to cope with the challenges of being a black student in Olympia, now I had to face the challenges of being gay. Coming out to friends was the easy part. Coming out to my family was more difficult for me to say than it was for them to accept. For that, I was extremely fortunate and remain grateful.

My personal challenges back then at Olympia High School, regarding my sexual orientation, have always kept me on guard. The fear that I would lose my friends, as well as considering my status in my class, it would be nearly scandalous.

Now that I have lived through all of that, there's neither fear nor any secrecy from those who I love. Now I'm honored to be able to share this story with you, and hope you all understand that it's a much more tolerable society today that it was 25years ago. There's still progress that must be made, but now it's your turn make it happen.

Thank you, Chad S. Clarkson

In most cases the climate and atmosphere at the high schools in Olympia WA has not changed much in the last twenty five (25) years. This should not deter us from constantly trying to improve. The quality of interest, students and the learning curve of our schools administrator(s) in bringing about change ....slowly.

One day, in the not too distance future all people will be treated the same and all will be welcome, regardless of their station in life, color, origin, or sexual orientation. Let us all be aware and diligent to answer *we are helping and not hindering.*

**NEW or RENEWAL PFLAG 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

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Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Add this amount as my tax-exempt gift \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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 CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

I want Olympia's bi-monthly newsletter *HeartBeat* (which is mailed in an envelope with no identified return address).  
 I want to be added to the PFLAG-Olympia email alert list.

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

# ...AND I PLAYED JOHN LENNON'S PIANO!

It happened in Olympia!

THE TRUE LIFE STORIES AND SONGS OF  
**STEVE SCHALCHLIN**  
AWARD-WINNING COMPOSER SINGER

A MOTHER'S DAY BENEFIT  
CONCERT FOR PFLAG-OLYMPIA

FEATURING SELECTIONS FROM HIS SONG CYCLE FOR PEACE  
**NEW WORLD WAKING**  
RECENTLY DEBUTED BY THE SAN FRANCISCO GAY MEN'S CHORUS

AND FROM HIS HIT OFF-BROADWAY MUSICALS

**THE LAST SESSION**

GLAAD MEDIA AWARD WINNER  
LA DRAMA CRITICS CIRCLE  
NY DRAMA LEAGUE NOMINATION  
**BEST MUSICAL**  
PFLAG-LA OSCAR WILDE AWARD

**THE BIG VOICE:  
GOD OR MERMAN?**

GLAAD MEDIA AWARD NOMINEE  
LA OVATION AWARD  
LA DRAMA CRITICS CIRCLE  
**BEST MUSICAL**  
PFLAG-LA OSCAR WILDE AWARD

**SUNDAY  
MAY 10  
2009**

with special guest  
**JEFF KINGSBURY**



**CAPITAL PLAYHOUSE**  
612 4th Ave E, OLYMPIA, WA



**7:00 PM**

**360-943-2744**

**\$ 20.00**