



Being a “PARTNER” for Equality

by Jeff Loyer

Wondering what YOU, as a straight ally, can do to help marriage equality along? I just came across something simple that might have profound effects.

Rather than referring to your spouse as “my wife,” “my husband” or “my spouse,” use the term “my partner,” “significant other” or some other generic, ambiguous term. Based on my personal experience, it has some powerful effects:

- It removes the inherent superiority from my “marriage.” I know I’ve used the term with pride, indicating that Betsy and I made a sacred commitment, and have stuck to that. But now, I think using that term automatically belittles other relationships that are just as wonderful, even though the term “marriage” doesn’t apply. Referring to Betsy as my “partner of several years” allows me to celebrate our journey together without demeaning others’ relationships.
- It removes any assumptions about my partner’s gender, making same-sex relationships less unusual.
- I think it’s also a nicer term. Betsy could be my wife, but we could still have a terrible relationship. I think “partner” fits better.
- Maybe someone will ask you why you use the term, and open up a dialogue about marriage equality.

I think you’ll find that it’s not as easy as it appears, however. For me, the term “wife” is entrenched. But, I also really liked it when I’ve heard it used. And, I think that using the term now helps open the door for the future, when there are far fewer assumptions about the gender of spouses.



▼ SUNDAY, JULY 12, 2-4:30 PM

Suicide Prevention with GLBTQ Youth

— This special workshop on suicide prevention with GLBTQ youth will be presented by Heather Carter, MA. She is the GLBTQ Project Coordinator for **Youth Suicide Prevention Program**, a Washington State program. <http://www.yspp.org/> This program will last an extra half hour, and so it will begin at 3 pm. Topics to be covered include:

- Increased knowledge about the risk and protective factors
- Heightened awareness of the warning signs for clinical depression & suicide
- Enhanced ability to differentiate suicidal attempts and self-harm
- Knowing the steps for intervening
- Increased recognition of resources for GLBTQ youth

▼ SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 1-5 PM

Annual Picnic — Our annual picnic takes place in Priest Point Park in Kitchen #3 on the water side of the park starting at 1 p.m. (notice that’s an hour earlier than our usual meeting time). It’s a pot-luck meal. The PFLAG board provides the essentials — burgers, buns, hot dogs, soda. Bring side dishes or desserts if you can. Directions are available on the PFLAG-Olympia website at www.pflag-olympia.org.



DECLINE₂SIGN REFERENDUM 71

The Washington State Legislature passed a bill giving same sex couples the same rights as heterosexual couples — popularly called the Everything but Marriage Act. The governor signed it, and then the right wing immediately started circulating a petition, Referendum 71, to overturn the new bill and take away the rights GLBTQ people have finally been given.

Now Equal Rights Washington and others are backing “Decline to Sign,” a move to prevent them from getting the required 120,000 votes by the July 25 deadline.

Many of our state PFLAG chapters have signed on as supporting groups, but the chapters are not donating money. Instead, our state group is asking people who support marriage equality to donate as individuals.

PFLAG members are also being asked to send family photos, reach out to local faith and political leaders, and to write letters to the editor.

If Referendum 71 gets on the November ballot, the question on the ballot will be: “Should this bill be approved or rejected?” which could be confusing. In order to keep the law protecting families in place, you would need to **VOTE TO APPROVE**. For further information go to: <http://washingtonfamiliesstandingtogether.com/> and http://eqfed.org/campaign/DeclineToSignPet_7

Writers Wanted

We need writers for our newsletter and blog. If you would like to write on GLBTQ issues, local or national news, or review books or movies, this is an opportunity to voice your opinion. If you want to write for us, send a note to newsletter@pflag-olympia.org

“Too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.” - John F. Kennedy

Are you online?

Subscribe to the PFLAG-Olympia Alert list!

The PFLAG-Olympia Alert is a one-way announcement e-mail listserv designed to inform our members and friends of upcoming events, programs, and more. Email updates are sent out prior to each of our the regular meetings and whenever something comes up that we think that our list subscribers might want to know about. To subscribe, go online to:

<http://lists.pflag-olympia.org/listinfo.cgi/alert-pflag-olympia.org>

... and check out our blog! You could be a contributor! You can subscribe! <http://pflagolympiawa.blogspot.com/>

Mark your calendars
Sunday Aug. 9 from 1-5 p.m.
PFLAG Picnic at
Priest Point Park



S.O.S: Survivors of Suicide

by Eleanor Ann van Noppen

SOS groups provide support for anyone who has lost a loved one to suicide. Based on guidelines by the American Association of Suicidology, the groups are self-help and peer led. They also work to prevent suicide. The Olympia contact is Janis: 360-866-2509. They meet every third Tuesday from 7:30-9 p.m. at Westwood Baptist Church, room E-10. Call Janis if you need directions.

There is an Auburn and Tacoma group. There is also a Spanish speaking contact person, José, in the Seattle area: 206-228-7413. You may email: support@auburnsos.com. Website: www.auburnsos.com.

If you are in CRISIS call 1-800-suicide (1-800-784-2433).

This group helped my daughter and me after my son died inside Western State Hospital, in 1993.



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

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PFLAG

Olympia, Washington

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, phone numbers are on our website.

Email: info@pflag-olympia.org

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

Blog: <http://pflagolympiawa.blogspot.com/>