

# The HeartBeat

Olympia Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

DECEMBER 1993/JANUARY 1994

## COURAGE TO COME OUT

*Olympia P-FLAG's October meeting was held on the 10th, just before National Coming Out Day. A young woman who attended that day for the first time found new courage to distribute the following notice to some 45 colleagues in her Washington State office the next day.*

by Joan Marie



This is really hard for me, this National Day of being "out". Being out means not hiding something about yourself. For me, that means being certain everyone knows I am a lesbian.

It all started as far back as I can remember. I had to accept myself being different from anyone else I knew about. I thought I was all alone. After some miserable experiments, I found the idea of marrying a man as repulsive and unnatural as you might find same-gender marriage. Really!

What is important now is that I am different, and I am right here, working and living beside you.

I am your co-worker, your neighbor, your friend. I am somebody's dearest child, and granddaughter. I am many times a favorite auntie, a shy niece, a noisy cousin, a scrappy sister. I have family and friends and faith. I am just like you.

When you have an idea about or hear what others perceive as gay, remember me.

I am not asking you to do anything about me being different, except - - remember me.

A HIT!!!

GUESS WHO'S

COMING TO DINNER

by Evonne Hedgepeth

The November education program, Betty Beeman's scripted role-play entitled, "Guess Who's Coming to Thanksgiving Dinner," apparently struck a responsive chord among the participants at the November 14th support meeting. The role play depicted a telephone conversation between a gay son and his mother about an upcoming family gathering and addressed such issues as whether his partner would be invited or welcome, how to deal with unaware or even hostile family members, and sleeping arrangements.

Judging from the lively discussion that followed the role play, the topic had great relevance for many of the participants, including a young gay couple who recently had to come out to their parents and were anticipating the upcoming holiday with some anxiety.

Another local P-FLAG chapter (Spokane) liked our November program title so much that they borrowed it and designed a similar program for their own group. We hope they had as much success as we did!

The December 12th program on Holiday Celebrations and New Traditions was facilitated by Judy Graham. The group generated ways of letting go of old family traditions that may be based on illusions and replacing them with new ones that acknowledge reality and support all family members and their loved ones.

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

### January 9:

**"Civil Rights:**

**What 1994 May Bring"**  
**Guest speaker from Hands-Off Washington will update the group on upcoming advocacy issues and how we can help.**

### February 13:

**"Not All Parents Are Straight"**

**Video excerpts and a panel discussion with parents who are lesbian, gay or bisexual.**

### March 13:

**"Young GLB\* People Speak"**


**Members of Stonewall Youth, a local organization for GLB people under 21, will share their perspectives on growing up gay.**

(\*GLB = Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual)

INSIDE..... BOARD ELECTION RESULTS (PAGE 2)  
CIVIL RIGHTS NEWS (PAGE 3)

## Editorial

## P-FLAG SALUTES COURAGEOUS STAND BY CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN PASTOR

 The Olympia P-FLAG Chapter applauds the courageous stand of a conservative Christian pastor from Tumwater. He noted a recent national poll which found that "Fundamentalist Christians" are among the most feared groups in America. In response he wrote:

"It is possible for us to be 'right' on moral issues and yet to be wrong in our attitudes and thus to create fear and ultimately hatred."

With those words, the Rev. Paul Thompson, pastor of the Christian Fellowship Center, Tumwater, WA, made a positive witness against the rhetoric being expressed by some conservative Christians. His words appeared in his "Pastor's Perspective" column on November 20 in the Daily Olympian.

"There are certainly times when we must stand up and let it be known what we are against," the pastor declared. And he continued, "It seems to me that Jesus spent the better part of his ministry telling people what he was for," and offering, "a positive, genuine alternative to those who were weary of the empty, superficial, and corrupt society."

Pastor Thompson seemed to be warning against those with a gospel of hostility when he quoted Jesus as saying, "You know the scripture, but God's Word does not dwell in you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts." (John 5:38,42)

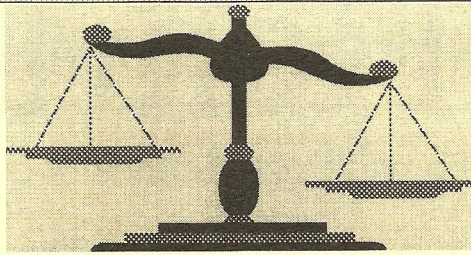
He concluded that being "right" on the issues may be very different from exhibiting a Christian-like attitude and genuine love.

Whatever the pastor may feel personally about homosexuality or other social issues, we applaud the charity so apparent in his faith.

### P-FLAG BOARD ELECTED

Seven dedicated individuals were elected to serve on the Olympia Chapter Board of Directors at the November 14 meeting. They will direct the business and activities of Olympia P-FLAG for the coming year. The board meets monthly and would welcome any ideas for activities in which the group should be involved. The board members are as follows:

Betty Beeman: Co-President  
Paul Beeman: Co-President  
Kathryn Ford: Co-Scribe/Youth Liaison  
Evonne Hedgepeth: Education Chair  
Ron Hertel: Support Chair  
Andy McMillan: Treasurer/ Advocacy Chair  
Stella Warner: Co-Scribe/  
Aids Network Liaison



### P-FLAG FILES AMICUS BRIEF IN CHILD CUSTODY CASE

by Evonne Hedgepeth



National P-FLAG has filed an amicus curiae ("friend of the court") brief on behalf of Sharon Bottoms, the Virginia lesbian who recently lost custody of her toddler son to her mother. An Olympia parent of gay children submitted testimony to be included in the brief, which challenges the faulty basis for the custody decision.

In a highly publicized court decision, the judge accepted the grandmother's claim that her daughter was an unfit parent simply by virtue of her sexual orientation. The judge also ruled that Sharon's partner of many years could have no further contact with the boy, despite her parental relationship with him.

The brief filed by P-FLAG provides evidence to challenge the judge's assertion that gay, lesbian or bisexual individuals do not make good parents. Betty Beeman, along with a number of parents nationwide, submitted an affidavit describing the positive experience of her two grandchildren parented by her lesbian daughter and her partner. She also provided a recent review of research literature on gay parenting, conducted by Dr. Charlotte Patterson of the University of Virginia, which reports that no significant differences have been found between children who have been raised by gay versus straight parents.

### The HeartBeat.....

co-edited by

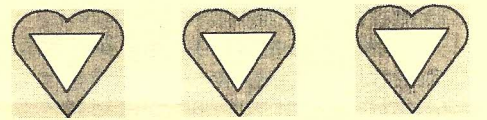
Kim Knutson & Bob Mitchell

.....is a bi-monthly publication  
.....welcomes articles from you (which should be submitted by the 15th of the month preceding each publication. Mail to the PFLAG P.O. Box - ATTN: Editor.)  
.....reserves the right to choose articles at the Editor's discretion.

## GROUPS AVAILABLE FOR OLYMPIA YOUTH

**Stonewall Youth** is a small peer support group of young people, all under the age of 21, who are discovering or have discovered themselves to be homosexual. The monthly meetings provide information, support and advocacy for youth who have questions and concerns about their sexual orientation. For information about meetings, call 705-2738.

**Peer Group for Straight Children of Gay/Lesbian Parents** has formed for children under the age of 21. Most of the participants are in high school. For information, call 754-1556 or send a letter to Planned Parenthood Education, 312 E. Fourth Avenue, Olympia, WA 98501, Attn: Erin. They will provide you with information regarding meeting times and location.



### FUNDRAISER NEWS

#### BUTTONS, BUTTONS, BUTTONS

We are still selling P-FLAG and other gay-friendly buttons at local stores, such as The Bookmark, Rainy Day Records, and Four Seasons Books, and have already sold many. Get yours at one of these locations, or call Andy McMillan at 352-9980 for more information!

#### SPRING FUNDRAISER

Please start saving all of your household items for spring sale!! As our local P-FLAG services increase, including publication and distribution of this newsletter, our costs increase as well. Therefore, your contributions, whether in the form of personal donations or ideas for other fundraisers, are always welcome and appreciated.

**ADVOCACY NOTES.....**

by Andy McMillan



**Anti-Gay Initiatives**

We expect at least two initiatives to be filed for placement on the November ballot. The Citizen's Alliance of Washington (CAW) is a Vancouver-based group that is an offshoot of Lon Mabon's Oregon Citizen's Alliance. They are expected to file an initiative similar to one that passed in Colorado last year. Another organization, the Washington Public Affairs Council, is a more "moderate" group, based in Tacoma. They, too, have indicated that they intend to file an initiative in January.

To place an initiative on the November ballot, an organization must gather roughly 200,000 signatures by June. P-FLAG will be working closely with Hands Off Washington to try to prevent these groups from obtaining the necessary signatures. If you are interested in finding out more about how you can help stop these initiatives, contact Andy McMillan at 352-9980.

**Legislation**

Last spring, two bills dealing with gay/lesbian/bisexual (GLB) issues were introduced in the state legislature. A bill which extended hate crime protection to GLBs (House Bill 1569) passed the House and Senate and was signed into law. Another bill (HB 1443) prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation in housing, employment, and accommodations passed the House of Representatives in 1993 but died in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. We will be working again in the 1994 session with Rep. Cal Anderson and others to get this important legislation passed. If you want to help with this effort, contact The P-FLAG helpline at 866-0511.

**TEN SIMPLE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

1. Become a member of P-FLAG and join with thousands of people from all walks of life, working to end discrimination against lesbians and gays.
2. Teach your children that being gay or lesbian is simply another means of expressing love.
3. If one of your family is gay or lesbian, be sure to let them know you love them just the way they are.
4. Don't tell anti-gay jokes. You just perpetuate the stereotypes about gays and lesbians.
5. Read our P-FLAG literature and find out more about what it is really like to be a lesbian or gay in our society.
6. Be open with others about having lesbian or gay friends or family. Secrecy breeds shame.
7. If you overhear someone making an anti-gay comment, let them know you don't agree or approve.
8. Write congress to protest any anti-gay legislation as you become aware of it.
9. Encourage open and honest discussion of gay and lesbian issues in your home, workplace and church.
10. Stand with those who believe that discrimination against anyone is a crime against humanity - - TAKE A STAND WITH P-FLAG.



in a world that's trying its hardest  
 night and day  
 to make you everybody else  
 means to fight the hardest battle  
 any human being can fight  
 and never stop fighting  
 - e.e. cummings



**Reorganization of National P-FLAG Strengthens Chapters**



At its recent annual meeting, the National P-FLAG organization shifted from a loose federation of local chapters to a nation-wide membership organization. According to Betty and Paul Beeman, who attended the session, "the move will strengthen our Olympia chapter." Several steps were approved, including the following:

- The new organizational name is "Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays." Bisexuals and transgendered people are expressly included in the scope of the organization, though not identified in the name. The new inclusion of *Families* in the name is an affirmation of the organization's commitment to "family values."
- A unified organizational year for all chapters is now Oct. 1 - Sept. 30. We have adopted that as our year, and dues for the year are now payable.
- All local membership dues will include a \$5.00 membership payment to the National P-FLAG organization.
- Our local board now recommends annual dues of \$25 for an individual member and \$40 per household, with \$5 of each amount going to National P-FLAG and the remainder going to the local chapter. Additional gifts and monthly commitments will be invited. Full membership is also assured for those unable to pay the regular dues.
- Every paid local member will soon receive

the quarterly "P-FLAGpole" newspaper from the national office. Each member, if they choose, will be allowed to make three exclusions with their national membership, identified as follows:

- Code 1: Don't share my name with any other local chapter or group.
- Code 7: Don't solicit me for additional gifts for National P-FLAG
- Code-12: Don't send me the quarterly P-FLAGpole newspaper.

These options will be presented to each member at the next several local meetings. - New bylaws will unify all chapters and allow all to be included under the National P-FLAG's designation as an IRS-authorized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization., making all contributions tax-deductible.

**National P-FLAG in Top Four GLB Advocates**



The national P-FLAG is now the fourth largest organization in the nation advocating on behalf of gay and lesbian rights.

Largest is the Human Rights Campaign, a national group with a \$5.5 million annual budget. Next comes the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, with a \$3.3 million budget. Third is the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund at \$1.7 million.

Finally, comes National P-FLAG, with a modest \$900,000 annual budget.

## Membership Application

- New  
 Renewal  
 Change of Address  
 Please contact me for volunteer opportunities  
 Individual membership (\$25.00)  
 Household membership (\$40.00)  
 Student/Senior/Low-income membership (\$15.00)  
 Don't share my name with any other local chapter or group.  
 Don't solicit me for additional gifts for National P-FLAG.  
 Don't send me the quarterly P-FLAGpole newspaper.
- payment attached  
 payment on the way

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE AND MAIL TO:

Olympia P-FLAG, P.O. Box 6123, Olympia, WA 98502

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

\*\*\*\*\*DECEMBER\*\*\*\*

**Friday, December 24**

Christmas Eve candlelight service at 7:00 p.m. at the Metropolitan Community Church, located at 207 N. Washington, Olympia. Call 352-8157 for more information.

**Saturday, December 25**

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

**Friday, December 31**

Third annual New Years Eve AIDS

Benefit, put on by People Who Care. Art auction, 7:00 p.m., dancing and live music, 9:00 p.m.-3:00 a.m. Admission is \$5.00. Call 866-6431 for more information.

\*\*\*\*\*JANUARY\*\*\*\*

**Saturday, January 1**

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

**Sunday, January 9**

Olympia P-FLAG members meeting.

**Tuesday, January 22**

Hands Off Washington general membership meeting, 7:00 p.m., United Churches. Call 786-6608 for more information.

**RELATED MEETINGS /EVENTS**

**Tuesdays**

*Nightscene*, Gay and Lesbian talk show, TCTV, Channel 31, 12:30a.m.-1:00 a.m.

**Wednesdays**

Stonewall Youth. Call 705-2738 for more information

**Thursdays**

HIV Aids Support Group, 7:00-8:30 p.m. Call 786-5581, ext. 6971 for more info.

**Fridays**

*This Way Out*, KAOS, 89.3 FM, National GLB newsmagazine, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

### OLYMPIA P-FLAG meets...

at 2:00 p.m. on the second Sunday of each month in the Parlor of the First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way, S.E., (at Boundary Street), Olympia, WA. It's handicap-accessible.

Directions: From Sylvester Park in downtown Olympia, go 12 blocks east on Legion Way. Park in back and enter at office door.

**CALL the P-FLAG HELPLINE:**

(206)866-0511

or **WRITE: OLYMPIA P-FLAG**

P.O. BOX 6123  
OLYMPIA, WA 98502