



# Oregon Central Coast Chapter

September 2010

## Take Action!

Keep supporting The Home Depot against The American Family Association's protests. Now the AFA is riled because "homosexuality . . . receives financial backing by the company [for] The Home Depot Pride (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender) employee group." Also (shock!) The Home Depot provides health insurance for LGBTs and partners and for sex-change operations. AFA's website for a boycott is back up. (It doesn't allow positive comments.) You can call your local Home Depot and the national office to express your appreciation at supporting children at these events (1-800-466-3337).

Raymond Chase, a gay 19-year-old college student, reportedly hanged himself in his residence hall room on September 29, 2010, on the campus of Johnson & Wales in Providence (RI). This loss follows the tragedy of Tyler Clementi, an 18-year-old Rutgers University freshman and talented violinist, who jumped to his death from the George Washington Bridge after his roommate and another classmate allegedly used a webcam to secretly broadcast his dorm room intimate encounters with another man.

At least three other teenagers killed themselves in September because of their classmates' tormenting: 13-year-old Seth Walsh, Tehachapi (CA); 13-year-old Asher Brown, Cypress (TX), and 15-year-old Billy Lucas Greensberg, (IN).

A new resource, "It Gets Better Project," offers feedback/mentoring to young people from adults who have gone through challenging experiences because of their gender identity. On this YouTube channel LGBT people from around the world contribute their stories about how being LGBT gets better and easier. The message to young teens is that it really does get better, and suicide is not the answer. <http://www.youtube.com/itgetsbetterproject>

Thanks to PFLAG members for passing along this message. Other sources for help are on page 6.

Jeanne St.John, Chair  
Deb Lyman, Secretary  
Jill Baker, Treasurer  
Nel Ward, Newsletter  
Editor  
(nelcward@charter.net)

Contact: PO Box 2172,  
Newport, OR 97365  
(541)265-7194

Parents, Families and  
Friends of Lesbians  
and Gays promotes  
the health and well-  
being of gay, lesbian,  
bisexual, and trans-  
gendered persons,  
their families, and  
their friends through

SUPPORT to cope  
with an adverse  
society

EDUCATION to  
enlighten an ill-  
informed public

ADVOCACY to end  
discrimination and  
secure equal civil  
rights.

# Church Members Develop Proposed Welcome Statement

*Acceptance by Congregation Would Result  
in the Designation of Reconciling in Christ*

## Proposed Statement of Welcome

**We at Atonement Lutheran Church reach out with the good news of God's love through Jesus Christ. As Christ's ministry includes everyone, we too welcome persons of any ethnicity, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, marital status, age, economic situation, and physical or mental ability. We celebrate the gifts each one brings to the life and ministry of this community of faith.**

Thanks to a dedicated group of people led by Kris Foley and Carol Baker and mentored by Gretchen Brauer-Rieke, the above proposed statement for the Newport Atonement Lutheran Church will be presented to the congregation for approval this fall.

Lutherans Concerned/North America (LC/NA), a group working for full inclusion of LGBT people in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), encourages individual congregations to create a statement of full welcome that explicitly includes those who are LGBT. Thus in mid-2009 the local church council approved the process for working toward the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) designation that would result from such a statement.

Leading up to the final vote, the Newport Atonement Lutheran Church has provided a series of informational events with speakers who discuss such issues as the high rates of suicide among LGBTQ youth.

If the proposed Welcome statement is accepted by the congregation, the church will provide publicity about the statement. Full acceptance of the RIC would include such changes as church announcements of LGBT anniversaries, information about this acceptance posted on the local and LC/NA websites, and informational stickers posted in the church's window.

Different reasons have led these three women to work on this project. Kris looks upon her involvement as a chance to give back

to the faith community and help people. Carol's interest goes back to her inability to accept her son's sexual orientation because of her traditional culture. After his death in 1990, she moved toward an acceptance of LGBT people and wanted to make a positive difference in others' lives. As the wife of the Bishop of the Oregon Synod, Gretchen became involved in the Portland Chapter of LC/NA.

The goal of RIC is to create a safe space for LGBT people to find a spiritual community, that it is not a secret that LGBT people are included. It is an explicit welcome.



Above left: Gretchen Brauer-Rieke; above right: Kris Foley; right: Carol Baker

Gretchen said that there is a need to recognize and reduce some people's fear of LGBT people. "We're out of the past and moving forward," she continued. "Don't give up on the church. Come and help us teach people so that we can walk our talk."

[PFLAG commends these people for the work that they do.—Nel Ward]

# *Politics on Our Side*

**A state appeals court in Florida has declared unconstitutional a 33-year-old state law that prohibited gay people from adopting children.** The unanimous decision by three judges on Florida's Third District Court of Appeal—Republican appointees—found “no rational basis” to the state's approach of banning adoption by gay men and lesbians while allowing them to be foster parents. The court said it violated the State Constitution's equal protection clause.

Sen. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) has introduced a **comprehensive immigration reform bill that includes a provision to extend family-based immigration for same-sex couples.** If passed, the Uniting American Families Act would help some of the estimated 24,000 gay and lesbian couples in the U.S. that include at least one foreign partner by establishing their rights to bring their foreign partners to the U.S. Under the current system, straight couples can petition for their foreign-born husbands or wives to move to the U.S. as legal residents, but gay and lesbians are denied the same ability even if states allow their marriages.

**A Christian “charity” called the Hawaii Family Forum which helped lead the fight against civil unions owes the government \$20,741 in taxes** for “excessive lobbying,” says the IRS. The nonprofit group reported spending \$125,695 on lobbying last year, a huge jump over the zero dollars it said it spent on lobbying in 2008. The change in taxes comes after at least two complaints were filed with the Internal Revenue Service about the forum's extensive political activities.

The Thomas More Law Center, founded by Tom Monaghan of Domino's Pizza fame, filed a federal lawsuit in early 2010 on behalf of Gary Glenn, president of the American Family Association, and other Michigan religious leaders that claims the

Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, passed in 2009, violated their religious freedom and freedom of speech rights. In *Glenn v. Holder*, U.S. District Judge Thomas L. Ludington of the Eastern District of Michigan **dismissed their claims that the act would prevent them from practicing their religion.** The plaintiffs plan to appeal.

**Tim Rayndal, the former president of a local chapter of the Big Sky Tea Party Association (Montana) was removed from his position** after a post he made on his Facebook profile that implied he condones violence against homosexuals. Roger Nummerdor, a board member of the group, said Rayndal is no longer welcome in the party. The chairman of the Big Sky Tea Party Association disagrees, reporting that Rayndal is still a member of the party despite his online comments about gays. Chairman Jim Walker said that the state board met to confirm Rayndal's removal from his leadership post, but a lengthier process is required to strip membership. Walker says the board may not revisit the issue because of the objections from other Tea Party members.

**U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon has called on countries to abolish laws that discriminate against gays and lesbians.** The U.N. Secretary-General says cultural concerns cannot justify discriminating against people because of their sexual orientation.

The Netherlands is the first country in the world to grant same-sex marriages and allow gay and lesbian couples to adopt children. Now **the Dutch are introducing same-sex couples into the nation's schoolbooks.** “Two fathers go out to buy a guinea pig that costs 17.95 euros in the pet shop. The shop owner gives them a discount of 20 per cent. How much must Jan's fathers pay?” (Kids still have to solve the math problem.)

A new book by the "gay-brain" scientist Simon LeVay, *Gay, Straight, and the Reason Why: The Science of Sexual Orientation*, **puts to rest the old "chosen lifestyle" theory of homosexuality.** Link: [http://www.amazon.com/Gay-Straight-Reason-Why-Orientation/dp/0199737673/ref=cm\\_cr\\_dp\\_orig\\_subj](http://www.amazon.com/Gay-Straight-Reason-Why-Orientation/dp/0199737673/ref=cm_cr_dp_orig_subj)

**The number of gay and bisexual characters on scripted broadcast network TV has risen** slightly this season to 23 out of a total of nearly 600 roles, according to the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. The 3.9 percent is up over 30 percent from last year's 3 percent.

Delaware Senatorial candidate Christine O'Donnell, who is virulently anti-gay, has a **lesbian sister** who lives with her partner. Despite their disagreements (Christine called homosexuality an "identity disorder"), the sister states on her Facebook page that she loves Christine very much.

Archie Comics, 69 years old, added its **first gay character** on September 1—Kevin Keller, the hunky gay blonde with a V-neck and perfectly coiffed hair. Kevin first appeared in *Veronica* #202 when he found a polite way to turn down Veronica's persistent come-ons.

## *'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Policy Crumbling*

The White House assured gay rights groups in late September that the Justice Department's decision to object to immediately ending the military's ban on openly gay service members in no way diminishes President Obama's goal of ending the "don't ask, don't tell" law.

White House Deputy Chief of Staff Jim Messina assured students at the University of Montana that the gay ban will be struck down soon. Gay rights activists consider his comments very important because he brokered the deal in May that inserted repeal of DADT into the House and Senate versions of the Defense bill.

The U.S. House of Representatives voted in May to repeal the 17-year-old ban on gay/lesbian military members openly serving. Gay-rights activists are urging supporters to call Senators to move the policy repeal ahead.

U.S. District Judge Virginia Phillips has granted an injunction to stop the U.S. military's ban on openly gay and lesbian service members on the basis that it is unconstitutional. The lawsuit was brought in 2004 by the Log Cabin Republicans who said that more than 13,500 service members have been fired since 1994. Attorney Dan Woods contended that the "don't ask, don't tell" policy violates gay/lesbian military members' rights to free speech, due process, and open association.

Government lawyers have opposed her ruling. This filing "clearly shows why Congress must act to end this misguided policy," White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said in a statement.

Another federal judge ruled that a decorated flight nurse discharged from the Air Force for being gay should be given her job back as soon as possible in the latest legal setback to the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

The decision by U.S. District Judge Ronald Leighton to reinstate Major Margaret Witt came at the same time that Senate Republicans blocked an effort to lift the ban through a filibuster that allows 40 percent of the Senators to stop a vote. Leighton is now the second federal judge this month to deem the policy unconstitutional.

Maj. Margaret Witt was suspended in 2004 and subsequently discharged under the "don't ask, don't tell" policy after the Air Force learned she had been in a long-term relationship with a civilian woman. She sued to get her job back.

After the second legal victory, gay rights advocates say that if the government must justify each firing under "don't ask," it will mean a slow death for the policy even if an outright repeal is not endorsed by Congress or the courts.



## Sources of Help and Volunteer Opportunities

Places youth can find help:

The Trevor Project (866 4U TREVOR or 488-7386) is a 24-hour national help line for gay and questioning teens. [thetrevorproject.org](http://thetrevorproject.org).

Angels and Doves is a nationwide anti-bullying nonprofit organization. [AngelsandDoves.com](http://AngelsandDoves.com).

The National Center for Bullying Prevention promotes awareness and teaches effective ways to respond to bullying. [Pacer.org/bullying](http://Pacer.org/bullying).

The Matthew Shepard Foundation runs Matthew's Place, an online community and resource center for

LGBTQ youth. [matthews-place.com](http://matthews-place.com)

GLSEN is a great organization working to eradicate bullying and bias in schools. [glsen.org](http://glsen.org)

STOMP Out Bullying is focused on reducing bullying and cyberbullying. [stompoutbullying.com](http://stompoutbullying.com)

---

### *Michigan Assistant AG Libels UM Body President*

When Andrew Shirvell, an assistant attorney general in Michigan, created a blog aimed at harassing Chris Armstrong, the first openly gay student body president of the University of Michigan, the state's Attorney General, Mike Cox, defended Shirvell's right to publish the blog in his free time although he called Shirvell a "bully." On his blog, "Chris Armstrong Watch," Shirvell called Armstrong "Satan's representative" on the student assembly, posted pictures of him defaced with swastikas, and used other libelous defamation of Armstrong. After Cox read the blog in its entirety, he said that Shirvell will be the subject of a disciplinary hearing at an undetermined future date. The blog has since been shut down, and Shirvell has reportedly taken a voluntary leave of absence.

Armstrong is seeking a personal protection order against Shirvell, who has picketed locations frequented by Armstrong, including his residence and Ann Arbor bars. Diane Brown, a spokeswoman for campus police, confirmed Shirvell is subject to an ongoing investigation of "harassing or stalking" and banned from campus. Shirvell was read a trespass warning on Sept. 14 that bars him from setting foot on campus, Brown said. Shirvell is appealing the order, but no hearing date has been set.

Larry Dubin, a professor at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law, said he doubts that Shirvell can effectively perform his job representing the public when he's forcefully expressed his "biblical" views condemning homosexuality as the work of the devil.

<http://detroitnews.com/article/20101001/METRO/10010422/1409/metro/Assistant-AG-takes-leave-amid-gay-bashing-controversy#ixzz11K5Ib33D>

---

### **Creator Talks about "It Gets Better Project"**

Dan Savage, the creator of "It Gets Better Project," has suggestions for adults making videos to help LGBTQ youth. Many of the early videos they received were about problems the subjects suffered during their young years, Savage says. "It would be great to see more videos that give gay young people a picture of the lives they could make for themselves if they just hang in there. LGBT kids who don't know any LGBT adults need to see—with their own eyes—that gay adults lead happy and rewarding lives. So if you decide to make a video—and I hope that you do—don't just share your pain. Share your joy. Give 'em hope. Save a life. [www.youtube.com/itgetsbetterproject](http://www.youtube.com/itgetsbetterproject)."

He also suggests two other sources: the amazing and deeply moving "I'm from Driftwood" ([www.imfromdriftwood.com](http://www.imfromdriftwood.com)) that documents "true stories by gay people all over" and the archive of YouTube videos from LGBT teenagers talking about their own coming-out experiences at [www.tinyurl.com/2fuwffh](http://www.tinyurl.com/2fuwffh).

## ***Local PFLAG Commemorates LGBT History, Coming Out***

October is LGBT History Month, Coming Out Day (Oct. 11) and the twelfth anniversary of the death of Matthew Shepard (Oct. 12). Our Coming Out Party is the theme of the October 13 PFLAG meeting in recognition of International Coming Out Day on Oct. 11.

Coming Out Day was founded in 1988, one year after the march of over 500,000 people on Washington for Lesbian & Gay Rights. Everyone is encouraged to wear gay pride symbols including the pink triangle (gay men), black triangle (lesbians), Greek letter lambda, and rainbow jewelry or clothing.

*Save the evening of November 7 for a special movie showing at the Newport Atonement Church. More about that in the November issue.*

## ***Celebrate GLBT History Month***

Equality Forum is celebrating the fifth anniversary of GLBT History Month by creating commemorative resources including graphically designed lists of the 155 GLBT History Month Icons from 2006 to 2010 and a special edition 5th Anniversary Poster.

Beginning October 1, 2010, a GLBT Icon is presented daily, with a video, bio, bibliography, downloadable images, and other resources—all free. The 124 Icons with resources for 2006-2009 and a 2.5-minute overview video showcasing all 31 of the 2010 GLBT Icons are available at [www.glbthistorymonth.com](http://www.glbthistorymonth.com).

The 31 Icon videos can be embedded without charge on Web sites, blogs, or social networking pages by following the instructions on the site. Once embedded, the video player will automatically update the daily Icon video.

## **OCC PFLAG Calendar: October—GLBT History Month**

October 8-9: Southern Oregon Pride, Ashland

October 9: Newport Saturday Market

October 11: International Coming Out Day

October 12: Twelfth anniversary of Matthew Shepard's death

October 13, 7:00 pm: PFLAG—St. Stephen's, 9<sup>th</sup> & Hurbert, Newport

October 20, 12:00-1:00 pm: LGBT Task Force Meeting—LCHHS Building, 36 Nye St., Newport

**November 2: Ballots Are Due! Your vote will make a difference in everyone's life.**

November 7, 7:00 pm: Showing of *Out in the Silence* with directors on tour of Oregon, Newport Atonement Lutheran Church

November 10, 7:00 pm: PFLAG Meeting—St. Stephen's, 9<sup>th</sup> & Hurbert, Newport

November 17, 12:00-1:00 pm: LGBT Task Force Meeting—LCHHS Building, 36 Nye St., Newport

**The Coastal AIDS Network\*** has the following monthly activities:

**Second Tuesday**, 7:00 pm: "Movie Night," St. James Episcopal Church, 2490 NE Hwy 101, Lincoln City

**Third Tuesday**, 7:00 pm: "Pizza Night," either Newport, Waldport, or Lincoln City

**Fourth Tuesday**, 7:00 pm: "Men's Pot Luck and Game Night," St. James Episcopal Church, 2490 NE Hwy 101, Lincoln City

We also try to have pizza in Tillamook or Pacific City. For more information email Dan, [coastalaid-network@gmail.com](mailto:coastalaid-network@gmail.com) or leave a message for him at (541)994-5597.

\*CAN activities are open to everyone, regardless of HIV status or sexual orientation. The only event limited to men is the potluck night, but occasionally we bend that rule for special events.

**CLASS Women's Potlucks:** Call Jeannette at 867-6993.

## Join PFLAG!

YES! I support the mission of PFLAG. Enclosed is my membership fee.\*

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual or Household (\$30)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Student/Limited Income (\$20)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Includes membership in National PFLAG with affiliates in over 365 worldwide communities.

Make check payable and mail to:

Oregon Central Coast PFLAG  
PO Box 2172  
Newport, OR 97365

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

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

PFLAG is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and has no political or religious affiliations.



**Oregon Central Coast PFLAG**  
**P.O. Box 2172**  
**Newport, Oregon 97365**