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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.

Oregon Central Coast Chapter

May 2010

Take Action!

Student Non-Discrimination Act

Although it is illegal for public schools to discriminate against students based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disability, LGBT students have no explicit federal protection. The Student Non-Discrimination Act would change that. Without a federal law, school administrators will continue to decide who to expel or suspend for not fitting in: unchecked discrimination leads to violence and suicide. Write your Congress members today and tell them to pass this law! Go to this website:

<https://secure3.convio.net/hrc/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=789>

Every Child Deserves a Family Act

Representative Pete Stark (D-CA) introduced legislation on October 2009 that would prohibit states and child welfare agencies from restricting adoption or foster care placements based on the sexual orientation or marital status of potential parents. This child welfare bill promotes the best interests of the children in the foster care system by increasing their access to the more than two million additional LGBT people who would consider serving as foster or adoptive parents if existing state laws did not prohibit them from doing so. Urge your Representatives to co-sponsor this vital federal legislation and speak out for human rights.

In her new memoir, former first lady Laura Bush says she asked President George W. Bush not to make "gay marriage" a significant issue in his 2004 campaign. "We have, I reminded him, a number of close friends who are gay or whose children are gay."

Marriage Matters!

Love. Honor. Commitment. Social justice. Equal rights. Civil rights. Separate is not equal. These are some of the reasons that 25 people—gay, lesbian, and straight—gave as reasons for coming to an organizational meeting for the Lincoln County campaign of Marriage Matters.

Reasons tended to be personal: one couple talked about the loss after their brief marriage in Multnomah County was rescinded; another said they had taken marriage for granted until they had a gay son. A gay man described how he lost all his possessions after his partner's parents took everything after his partner's death.

The discussion was upbeat, however, as Thomas Wheatley (above right) from Basic Rights Oregon described ways that people can use their voices to explain the need for the LGBT community to have the right to marry a person of each one's choice.

The issue will not be on the ballot until 2012, but it is important to begin the dialogs now so that a majority of people will support same-sex marriage in Oregon.

Wheatley stressed that the issue is *civil* marriage by the government, not religious marriage. An important tool of the campaign is the information on its website: www.marriagemattersOregon.com.

The site also has over 900 videos from couples, both hetero- and homosexual, about the importance of marriage.

Part of the meeting time was devoted to brainstorming ways of communicating the value of same-sex marriage.

Jeanne St. John led the discussion with Michelle McCoy (left) recording the ideas, including information in the newspaper, at county events, and to groups in the county.

There is great optimism that

Oregon will join the five other states—Iowa, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Vermont—that already give LGBT people this right. The stability provided for couples and their children could only benefit all Oregonians.

The next newsletter will have more information about the campaign. If you would like to volunteer, contact Jeanne St. John (541-265-7194).



Politics on Our Side

Same-sex partners will have hospital visiting rights and may make medical decision on behalf of their partners after a rule change required by President Barack Obama. These rules affect any hospital that participates in Medicare or Medicaid and make clear that designated visitors enjoy visiting privileges no more restrictive than those given immediate family members. Although the White House has ordered the health secretary to issue these new rules, they will take time to draft and put in place.

The Hawaii House approved a civil-unions measure on April 29 by 31-20. The bill, which has already cleared the state Senate by 18-7, would grant unmarried couples, gay or straight, the same benefits as married couples. Gov. Linda Lingle, a Republican who had asked legislators not to focus on the issue this year, now has 45 days to either sign or veto the bill.

An Arkansas law banning gay couples and other unmarried people living together from serving as adoptive or foster parents was struck down by a state judge in mid-April. Arkansas previously refused to allow unmarried couples to adopt or foster any of the 1,600 children on waiting lists, and the state refuses to allow gay couples to marry in the state. Jerry Cox, leader of the Arkansas Family Council which backed the ban and helped defend it in court, said his group will appeal to the Arkansas Supreme Court. The ruling was made by Pulaski County Circuit Judge Chris Piazza, who wrote that the law infringed upon a "fundamental right." The Arkansas Family Council brought the ban to the ballot in 2008 after the Arkansas Supreme Court in 2006 overturned a state agency ban on gays and lesbians serving as foster parents.

The Supreme Court argued a case on April 28 regarding the release of names from a Washington petition that called for a rollback of domestic partnership rights in the state. The justification against the release is that signing a petition for an initiative is the same as voting. The court may rule that the need for public verification of the names on any petition justifies the release of petition names.

Canada has announced that their publicly funded Catholic school system will have to teach their students about same-sex relationships in sex education classes. The curriculum from regular high schools will be imported into Catholic schools.

U.S. District Judge Charles Clevert has **struck down a Wisconsin law that prohibits transgender inmates from receiving taxpayer-funded hormone therapy.**

Key provisions of a possible federal immigration-reform bill may include the language, "It will **eliminate discrimination in the immigration laws** by permitting permanent partners of United States citizens and lawful permanent residents to obtain lawful permanent resident status."

In Virginia same-sex couples will be able to designate their partners as beneficiaries of life insurance payouts under a new law. Virginia Delegate Adam Ebbin, the state's only openly gay legislator, was the measure's chief co-patron in the General Assembly.

The U.S. House will vote on a measure to repeal the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law before the end of 2010, according to the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA).

Lauper's Fund, Website Support LGBT Youth

A gay-rights campaign that features Anna Paquin's declaration that she is bisexual received so much traffic that its web site, wegiveadamn.org, crashed in early April.

The campaign was launched on April 1 (no joke!) by Cyndi Lauper's True Colors Fund.

The web-based initiative hopes to educate for "the advancement of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender equality."

Religious Group Softens Approach toward LGBT

Conservative group Focus on the Family, under its new leader, Jim Daly, has stopped being involved directly in so-called "reparative therapy" (gays can be made straight), as part of a general move away from its most extreme, anti-gay positions.

Although the group is still against marriage equality, Daly said he is "not going to demean human beings" as part of its activism, a shift away from the position of former leader James Dobson.

Fenty Admits Mistake

Washington, D.C., Mayor Adrian Fenty has apologized for his honoring Regina Griggs, executive director of Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays.

Day of Silence about LGBT Bullying

Hundreds of thousands of middle school, high school, and college students across the country took part in the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) 15th annual Day of Silence on April 16 to call for an end to LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) name-calling, bullying, and harassment. Students from more than 6,000 middle and high schools registered as participants in the student-created and student-led event, which originated at the University of Virginia in 1996 and has grown each year, with GLSEN becoming its national sponsor in 2001.

Teresa Atwill, GSA advisor, reported that about 10% of the Newport High students participated and felt it went well. Several of them talked about how stressful it was to have to stay silent. They liked that they ended the day with a countdown and a group yell of "equality." The following "night of noise" included watching *Howl's Moving Castle*, playing "Dance Dance Revolution," and eating.

According to "From Teasing to Torment: School Climate in America," a 2005 Harris Interactive report commissioned by GLSEN, anti-LGBT bullying is commonplace in American schools. Two-thirds of the top reasons students said their peers were bullied at school is due to actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender expression. The top reason was physical appearance.

Three out of five LGBT youth (60.8 percent) felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation, according to GLSEN's 2007 National School Climate Survey of more than 6,000 LGBT students.

U.S. Supreme Court Hears California Case On Rights of Christian Group to Discriminate

The Supreme Court will decide in June on the right of a Christian student group to bar gay members from leadership positions. The Christian Legal Society bars "unrepentant participation in or advocacy of a sexually immoral lifestyle," which it says includes "all acts of sexual conduct outside of God's design for marriage between one man and one woman, which acts include fornication, adultery and homosexual conduct."

A public law school, Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco, part of the University of California, withdrew official recognition from the group after it refused to comply with a school policy that forbids discrimination. Chief Justice John Roberts supports the group's right to discriminate because the groups' position is on the basis of belief and not status.

People Who Make a Difference

Illinois lawmaker **Deborah Mell** rose on the Illinois House floor on April 28 to announce her engagement. Because a 1996 state law specifically defines marriage as applying only to a man and a woman and Illinois doesn't allow civil unions for same-sex couples—recent efforts to begin offering civil unions having fallen short—41-year-old Mell will marry in Iowa. Her announcement was greeted with applause, and several lawmakers rose to congratulate her. Mell (left) and Christin Baker have been together for six years and were engaged two weeks earlier.



Miss Tyra Sanchez became the new queen of the runway on “RuPaul’s Drag Race” on April 26, beating heavy competition from both Raven and Jujubee. In the process she almost hyperventilated. “If I’m performing, I hold my breath,” she said. “My mom’s always saying, ‘Girl, let your breath go!’ At that moment, it was just like, are you serious? ... Is this really true? It was just like, ‘Oh my god, I’m gonna pass out.’” Thankfully, she didn’t.

Gov. Jan Brewer (AZ) cut domestic partner benefits for state employees and their dependents during the last week of April, “to save money.” The action affects roughly 800 employees and saves \$3 out of \$628 million. She said that she believes “God has placed me in this powerful position as Arizona’s governor” to help the state weather its troubles. Brewer has become well-known recently after she signed legislation that mandates police officers to demand paperwork proving U.S. citizenship from anyone reasonably suspected of being an illegal alien. Mexico and El Salvador have issued warnings against traveling in Arizona, and San Francisco has declared a boycott against the state. (Not all people who make a difference benefit the LGBT community!)



Mary Kay Henry, a leader in California’s nurses’ union, is poised to lead the Service Employees International Union. Henry, an out lesbian, would represent more than two million workers in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. She is both the first woman and the first person in the LGBT community to be considered for this position. Henry won support from local presidents representing 60% of the membership. An official vote is set for May 8.

Movie Commemorates Laramie And Gays' Status in the U.S.

"You've got kind of a dykey look to you and we smell you people, the whiff of brimstone," said Fred Phelps, the Kansas Baptist minister who says that God hates homosexuals, when Beverly Seckinger asked him if he thought that he might be wrong about his hate.

This exchange from ten years ago became a scene in Seckinger's documentary, *Laramie Inside Out*, about Laramie, the murder of Mat-

thew Shepard, and the sometimes precarious status of gays in America.

Her film is a tour of her growing-up years in Laramie, a consideration of whether things have changed there, and interviews with older gays, parents, students—and Phelps when he and his disciples demonstrated outside the courthouse where one of the two men accused in the murder was about to go on trial.

Celebrities Donate To Mississippi Prom For Everone

Green Day, former 'N Sync member Lance Bass, and celebrity chef Cat Cora are among those helping to pay for a gay-friendly prom on May 8 in Tupelo, Mississippi. The American Humanist Association is also donating \$20,000 for the event.

The annual prom, organized by the Mississippi Safe Schools Coalition, is open to everyone but geared toward gay students.

Conservatives Discover that Gender-Neutral Marriage Is Not That Bad

Midwest rebel state Iowa marked the one-year anniversary of marriage equality in the state on April 3. Democratic Gov. Chet Culver is one example of the changing attitudes. Prior to the state Supreme Court's ruling, he said he would convene a special session if necessary "to protect marriage between a man and a woman." But after the decision, he voiced his reticence to changing the state constitution. After the year's anniversary Culver told the *Iowa Independent*: "The overwhelming majority of Iowans do not want to amend our constitution in such as a way that's discriminatory. I think that's the bottom line."

Catch 22 May Be Averted with an Amendment to State Initiative

A ballot measure in Washington state that would seek to tax married couples who earn more than \$400,000 a year will hopefully be amended so that same-sex couples in state-recognized domestic partnerships would have the same tax rate. The backers of the revised question, if it is approved by the state, would have to collect more than 240,000 valid signatures by July 2 to make the November ballot. Without this amendment, gay couples would be taxed as individuals despite the new domestic partnership law that grants them the same rights as married couples.

Is She or Isn't She, Air Force Asks about Its Decision to Discharge "Lesbian"

Reversing an earlier decision, the Air Force said Monday that it intends to discharge a lesbian Air Force officer who had remained in the military despite openly declaring her homosexuality. An Air Force general this year had concluded that Lt. Robin R. Chaurasiya, a communications officer, should not be discharged, saying she had declared her sexual orientation for the purpose of avoiding military service. The change came after Chaurasiya talked publicly about the decision not to discharge her. Chaurasiya married her girlfriend in New Hampshire where same-sex marriage is legal, but the Air Force claims that she did it only to be discharged under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" legislation.

Nike Hosts GSA Students

Three Newport High GSA members and Teresa Atwill, their advisor, attended an all-day meeting on April 8 with students and advisors from 30 other high schools in Oregon and southern Washington. The meeting was at the Nike World Headquarters facility in Beaverton.

Presentations made by Nike inspirational speakers focused on the theme of being a change agent. A highlight of the meeting was a panel discussion by three adults about their experiences of finding out about their sexual orientation and how it affected their lives, careers etc. Those attending also toured the Nike facilities and planned GSA events for the coming year.

Followup: Separate, Not Equal

Last month, a federal judge in Mississippi ruled that the school violated Constance McMillen's First Amendment rights when she was not allowed to attend the school prom with her girlfriend. However, the judge was satisfied by the school's promise that Constance would be welcome at a private prom, so he did not force the school to put its own prom back on.

On April 2, Constance went to a private dance that was billed as the school prom. The event was attended by Constance, her date, and five other students while many of the other students went to a parent-sponsored prom to which Constance was not invited. Fred Phelps, of the "hatred is out policy" Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka (KS), also plans to picket Constance's graduation and declare her actions "an abomination."

Constance will be the a Grand Marshall of the New York City gay pride parade on June 27.

OCC PFLAG Calendar:

May 12, 7:00 pm: PFLAG Meeting—St. Stephen's, 9th & Hurbert, Newport

May 15: Newport Saturday Market

May 19, 12:00-1:00 pm: LGBT Task Force Meeting—LCHHS Building, 36 Nye St., Newport

June 9, 7:00 pm: PFLAG Meeting—St. Stephen's, 9th & Hurbert, Newport

June 12: Newport Saturday Market

June 16, 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, coastalaids-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

"People who feel and believe that they are part of a caring community can make better decisions."—Dan Beck

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: _____

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