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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

June 2010

Take Action!

A student survey on bullying at South Eugene High School to determine its prevalence and impact with the aim to make changes to curb this practice and improve the social climate overall is a continuation of the pilot project at Churchill High School and Kelly, Spencer Butte, and Roosevelt middle schools last spring.

“We found bullying and harassment is way more common from the point of view of kids than the point of view of adults,” said Bruce Stiller, a school psychologist who coordinates the school district’s positive behavior support program. The most common basis for observed bullying was sexual orientation, according to the survey.

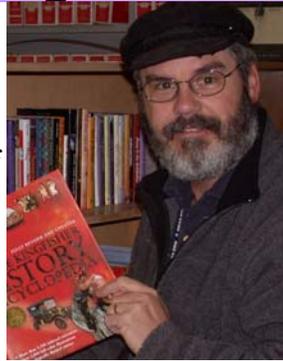
The project was undertaken at the urging of the district’s equity committee. This project would be valuable for other school districts, including the Lincoln County School District.

The LGBT-activist group GetEQUAL plans to take its **protest of ExxonMobil** nationwide in an effort to urge the company to adopt LGBT-friendly workplace policies. Exxon-Mobil is among a handful of major companies to earn a zero rating on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index. Mobil was one of the earliest companies to offer any partnership benefits, but those benefits were rescinded for former Mobil employees. The merged company’s nondiscrimination policies no longer cover LGBT employees. Shell, Chevron and BP each rate 100 percent on the Equality Index spectrum, and ConocoPhillips scores 70 percent.

The House of Representatives has passed an amendment to the military budget that would repeal the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” act of 1993. The bill now goes to the Senate. More information about the wording of the bill is on p. 3.

LCS D Acquires New LGBTQ Books

With help from PFLAG, the Lincoln County School District has been able to add hundreds of books to its collection. Below is the introduction to the project that Doug Hoffman (right), Lincoln County Media Specialist, sent the school libraries:



“Everyday after school many students go home to families that look very different than the traditional nuclear family of earlier eras. It is important that students understand that a family is defined by love for one another regardless if it is a single parent, a guardian, same-sex parents, step-parents, or some other configuration.



Students often feel alienated and concerned that their family may be “different.” Others may bully, name call, and be intolerant because of familial differences.



For these and other reasons, the LCS D Media Services Department has partnered with a local PFLAG Group (Parents and Friends of Lesbian and Gays) to acquire library

books that discuss gender-identity differences and how these affect relationships with family and friends. Through these books—fiction and nonfiction—students have an opportunity to see non-traditional viewpoints, build tolerance, and read about conflicts perhaps not found in other works.

Each title has been favorably reviewed, and many of them have received starred reviews in trade journals. One of the Media Department’s program goals is to provide a comprehensive, balanced collection of print and non-print media; the addition of these items helps accomplish that.”



Hoffman provided books to all K-12 schools in the LCS D. PFLAG appreciates all his work and support.

Liz Fox (below), Newport High School Library Assistant, and Alex Stein, the president of the school Gay-Straight Alliance (kneeling in picture on right next to Jordan Ostrum, next year’s GSA president), arranged an LGBTQ book display. Fox said six of these books were checked out soon after the display was finished.

OCC PFLAG coordinated funding for the Rainbow Books from an Equity Foundation grant (\$450), PFLAG funds (\$300), individual donors (\$200), and publisher contributions (\$700).



Politics on Our Side

Gay rights moved ahead one step on May 27, 2010, when the House of Representatives **approved, 234-194, to repeal the current DADT law** that allows LGBT soldiers to only serve if they hide their gender identity. The passage of this amendment to the defense spending bill reflects 70% of the people in the U.S. who support this repeal. The Senate approved the bill in the Armed Forces Committee with a 16-12 vote and will hopefully vote on it this summer.

The legislation includes a provision ensuring that no change could take effect until the Pentagon completes a study about its impact on troops, due to Congress Dec. 1. It also requires that a policy change would not affect the military's ability to fight wars or recruit soldiers.

Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), whose campaign leader is an openly gay man, has promised to vote against the defense spending bill if the amendment is attached.

The Federal Advisory Committee on Blood Safety and Availability will consider **lifting the 27-year-old ban that prevents homosexuals from donating blood** when they meet June 10 and 11 in Rockville, Maryland. The committee makes recommendations to the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees the FDA.

Calling the science behind the ban "outdated" and based on stereotypes, proponents of the ban being lifted have been publicly urging the federal agency to change its policy. They argue that testing for HIV/AIDS—the original reason behind the ban—has improved greatly since 1983 and that the policy unfairly targets men in homosexual and bisexual relationships.

Last year brought the first federal law with protections for transgender people—the landmark Matthew Shepard and James

Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act—along with scores of state and local ordinances banning discrimination based on gender identity. In February, the U.S. Tax Court ruled that hormone treatments and sex reassignment surgeries are tax-deductible, an important issue for transgender people.

Activists say they have found an ally in President Obama, who has appointed three openly transgender people to his administration—Amanda Simpson at the Commerce Department, Dylan Orr at the Labor Department, and Ejay Jack to the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS.

The biggest battle activists now face in Washington is for inclusion in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, or ENDA, a bill first introduced in 1994 to protect gay and lesbian people from prejudice on the job.

In 2007 the bill was broadened to include protections for workers treated unfairly because of their "gender identity." That phrase would have protected transgender people, including transsexuals, cross-dressers, and others who express themselves in a gender other than the one they were assigned at birth. That provision was stripped from the bill, but lobbyist Mara Keisling is working to get it back into the bill's language.

There is no scheduled time for a vote on ENDA.

The Senate Judiciary Committee recommended the nomination of openly gay Laura Duffy as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of California on May 27, 2010. If confirmed by the full Senate, she would become the second openly lesbian or gay U.S. attorney. Jenny Durkan, the first, was confirmed last September as U.S. attorney for the Western District of Washington. Duffy was nominated on February 24.

And What Will They Do?

Two Dallas (TX) men wed in 2006 in Massachusetts now want to divorce. But they cannot, according to the Texas Attorney General's Office, because Texas does not recognize gay marriage.

A Dallas state district judge granted the two men a divorce in October. Attorney General Greg Abbott is appealing that decision.

PepsiCo Supports PFLAG

Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX) president Greg Quinlan objects to PepsiCo's commitment to diversity and inclusion without imposition of personal judgment, one example being its large donations to PFLAG. [I may have to start drinking Pepsi products!-NW]

Malawi Couple Freed

Steven Monjeza, 26, and Tiwonge Chimbalanga, 20, were released from prison late Saturday, May 29. The Malawi gay couple had been sentenced to 14 years at hard labor because of their relationship.

Malawi President Bingu wa Mutharika pardoned the couple on humanitarian grounds on Saturday after a meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who applauded the move and urged the country to amend "outdated" laws on homosexuality.

And They Wonder Why We Fight for Civil Unions, Marriage Rights!

Clay and Harold, partners for 20 years, who lived in California, made diligent efforts to protect their legal rights with their legal paperwork in place--wills, powers of attorney, and medical directives, all naming each other. Harold was 88 years old and in frail medical condition, but still living at home with Clay, 77, who was in good health.

One evening, Harold fell down the front steps of their home and was taken to the hospital. Based on their medical directives alone, Clay should have been consulted in Harold's care from the first moment. Instead county and health care workers refused to allow Clay to see Harold in the hospital. County officials then separated the couple, placing them in different nursing homes.

Ignoring Clay's significant role in Harold's life, the county continued to treat Harold as if he had no family and went to court seeking the power to make financial decisions on his behalf. They represented to the judge that Clay was merely Harold's "roommate." The court denied their efforts but granted the county limited access to one of Harold's bank accounts to pay for his care.

Without authority and without determining the value of Clay and Harold's possessions accumulated over the course of their 20 years together or making any effort to determine which items belonged to whom, the county took everything Harold and Clay owned and auctioned off all their belongings. Then they removed Clay from his home and confined him to a nursing home against his will, terminating Clay and Harold's lease and surrendering the home they had shared for many years to the landlord.

Three months after he was hospitalized, Harold died in the nursing home without seeing his partner. With the help of a dedicated and persistent court-appointed attorney, Anne Dennis of Santa Rosa, Clay was finally released from the nursing home. He has nothing left from the home he had shared with Harold or the life he was living up until the day that Harold fell because he has been unable to recover any of his property. The only memento Clay has is a photo album that Harold painstakingly put together for Clay during the last three months of his life.

Dennis, along with Stephen O'Neill and Margaret Flynn of Tarkington, O'Neill, Barrack & Chong, now represents Clay in a lawsuit against the county, the auction company, and the nursing home with technical assistance from the National Center for Lesbian Rights. A trial date has been set for July 16, 2010, in the Superior Court for the County of Sonoma.

People Who Make a Difference

Kay Ryan, U.S. poet laureate, is a private person with a public job. She said in an interview with *The Register-Guard* (Eugene, OR) that she was blackmailed into accepting by her dying partner, Carol Adair. Now 64, she has spent most of her career teaching remedial English at a small community college in California. She has never taught poetry but did teach creative writing one semester at San Quentin State prison. Her one-year term as the 16th Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry has expanded into a second year. She and Carol were married in 2007; Carol died on Jan. 7, 2009 after 30 years with Kay.



Iceland, an island nation of 320,000, is the first country to elect a lesbian head of state, **Prime Minister Johanna Sigurardottir**. She has been in a registered partnership with writer/playwright Jonina Leosdottir since 2002. Sigurardottir's administration sent a bill to Parliament in March outlining marriage equality rights. The bill is expected to pass soon and could be in place for same-sex marriages by June 27. The 66-year-old Prime Minister, a former flight attendant, became a member of parliament in 1978. Known as a tough politician and a champion of social causes, she was nicknamed "Saint Johanna" by the public for her advocacy for the elderly, handicapped and disadvantaged. "She is often described as the only politician who really cares about the little guy," wrote Icelandic journalist Iris Erlingsdottir in his blog.

Recently country singer **Chely Wright** openly identified herself as a lesbian and said that nothing in her life has been more magical than the moment she decided to reveal her sexuality. On *Oprah*, her father, Stan Wright, sounded like an ideal PFLAG dad. His final words: "When your child comes out, Do not CLOSE the door, but OPEN your Heart." The interview is in three segments on YouTube:

<http://countryblips.dailyradar.com/video/chely-wright-on-oprah-5-19-10-1/>



Robyn Deane, a transgender woman, is Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell's former brother-in-law. Issuing an executive directive stating sexual orientation would not be protected in employment, McDonnell said, "There really isn't any rampant discrimination on any basis in Virginia. If you're going to have a law, it needs to actually address a real problem." The state's attorney general said colleges and universities could not protect gay students and employees based on sexual orientation. Deane said she may have been the impetus for McDonnell's views.

Gay Meetings, Chambers of Commerce Provide Networking Opportunities

StartOut, a new nonprofit networking group for gay entrepreneurs organized in spring 2009, has drawn some 1,000 participants to events in San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles.

Entrepreneurs come to StartOut events to network, share ideas, and talk business in a setting free of awkward assumptions (“What does your husband think?”).

And they come to hear speakers like Chip Conley, who serves on the group’s

advisory board. Conley, 49, came out as a gay man four years before he opened his first hotel, the Phoenix, in 1987.

Of the 1.2 million gay-owned businesses in the United States, about 29,000 of them belong to local gay chambers of commerce, according to Justin G. Nelson, president and a founder of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, which was organized in 2002 in Washington.

FedEx to Offer Partner Benefits

More than 200,000 employees at FedEx will be able to obtain same-sex domestic partner benefits beginning Jan. 1, 2012.

At this time FedEx offers domestic-partner/spousal health benefits in California where it is legally required and to employees in its FedEx Office division (formerly FedEx Kinko’s). In 2008 eight out of 10 (83 percent) of the Fortune 100 offered same-sex domestic-partner benefits.

Two More Anti-Gay “Family Values” Men Fall from Grace

Two influential people who oppose gay rights have resigned their positions within the past month. Psychologist Dr. George Rekers, left the board of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality after it was discovered that he recently took a two-week vacation to Europe with a male traveling companion who he found on rent-boy.com. Twenty-year-old Jovanni Roman received expenses and a \$75-a-day stipend. Rep. Mark Souder (R-IN) left Congress after it was revealed that the conservative evangelical Republican had an affair with a part-time staff member.

The problems of these men point out the hypocrisy of those who espouse the belief that Christianity and belief in “family values” is in opposition to LGBT rights. In his May 24 column, E.J. Dionne said:

“How can being pro-family possibly mean holding in contempt our homosexual relatives, neighbors and friends? How much sense does it make to preach fidelity and commitment and then deny marriage to those whose sexual orientation is different from our own? Rights for gays and lesbians don’t wreck heterosexual families. Heterosexuals are doing a fine job of this on their own. . . . How many more scandals will it take for people who call themselves Christian to rediscover the virtues of humility and solidarity?”

Paid \$120,000 by the state of Florida for testifying in favor of the state’s ban against gay adoptions, Rekers was also a key figure in the Arkansas lawsuit about its ban. His books were also used to oppose legalized gender-neutral marriage during the trial about California’s Proposition 8. The outcome of this trial has not yet been announced.

In his May 12 column, Leonard Pitts, Jr. wrote about others who claim that homosexual urges can be “cured”: “The crusader against gay rights who is revealed to be secretly gay himself has become a . . . cliché. The list includes disgraced evangelist Ted Haggard; the late former Spokane Mayor James West; California state Sen. Roy Ashburn; Mel Stewart, ghost writer for the likes of Jerry Falwell, who became a gay activist; and Michael Bussee, a founder of Exodus International, another group that purports to cure homosexuality. He gave it up when he fell in love with a guy named Gary Cooper.”

State PFLAG Leaders Meeting

Jeanne St. John represented OCC PFLAG at the 5/22 day-long meeting in Eugene. Topics and speakers focused on the development of the TransActive organization; Don't Ask, Don't Tell; BRO Marriage Matters Kick-off Events; and reports from each chapter.

Camping for LGBT & Friends-

Safe Space—a Reconciling Retreat provides gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons and their friends and families a safe space to share their struggles and hopes in a faith community. There will be opportunities for sharing and listening, making new friends, and finding solidarity and empathy as people of diverse sexual orientations as well as outdoor fun and spiritual renewal. The camping retreat is co-sponsored by Oregon-Idaho Camping and Retreat Ministries and Reconciling United Methodists. [See calendar.]

California Starts National Trend

A state day of “significance” created by California legislature became national on May 22, 2010. From Massachusetts and Florida to Arizona, people in states across the nation celebrated the first Harvey Milk Day that honors the slain gay rights leader on what would have been his 80th birthday. Milk had said, “If a bullet should enter my brain, let that bullet destroy every closet door.”

Why Is Lesbianism an Issue?

A photograph of Supreme Court nominee Elena Kagan playing softball has generated open talk about whether she is a lesbian. (The White House has denied it.) An argument for asking her about her gender identity is that a positive response might affect her ruling on gay rights issues. Those promoting this argument missed the point that “straight” judges also have a “gender identity.”

OCC PFLAG Calendar:

June 4-6: Q-Doc Film Festival—Portland

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

June 11: CAN's Our Families' Dinner—St. James, Lincoln City

June 12: Newport Saturday Market

June 16, 12:00-1:00 pm: LGBT Task Force Meeting—LCHHS Building, 36 Nye St., Newport

July 10: Newport Saturday Market

July 14, 7:00 pm: PFLAG Meeting—St. Stephen's, 9th & Hurbert, Newport

July 21, 12:00-1:00 pm: LGBT Task Force Meeting—LCHHS Building, 36 Nye St., Newport

August 26-29: Women in the Woods—Breitenbush Hot Springs (www.womeninthewoods.com)
Slide scale and scholarships available.

August 29: **PFLAG's Second Family Picnic!**

September 24-26: Safe Space, a Reconciling Retreat—Suttle Lake (<http://gocamping.org/camps-retreats/detail/safe-spaces-retreat>)

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 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.

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