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Secretary: **Lisa Norton**,  
Treasurer: **Brett Pinder**

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PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender 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**

**January/February 2021**

My apologies for the tardiness of this newsletter. Political stresses and uncertainties caused the delay, but OCC PFLAG's new organization of OCC PFLAG (see p. 2) and changes in Washington, D.C. ( see p. 3) put everything back on target.

In this "Take Action" segment, we laud Elliot Yoder, now 19, for taking his school district to court because he could not use facilities according to his gender identity. The 9th Circuit Court ruled in his favor, and the U.S. Supreme Court has refused to take the case. Therefore, in Dallas (OR) students may use bathrooms corresponding with their gender identities.

According to the 9th Circuit Court, schools do not threaten anyone's constitutional rights with this permission for transgender students. Oregon's majority Democratic legislature and governor for the upcoming session will hopefully keep the policy in place, and the federal administration will not be challenging the 9th Circuit Court decision.

In Virginia and Florida, other courts made the same ruling as the 9th Circuit Court.

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*During the restrictions of COVID-19, the PFLAG newsletter may sometimes be published every two months instead of monthly. If you have news, please send it to Nel Ward, Box 2304, Newport, OR 97365 or nelward@charter.net.*

**The beginning of 2021 marks two big changes for LGBTQ people and their supporters in Lincoln County. In the first, Jeanne St.John, longtime OCC PFLAG leader, has retired, leaving the organization to a competent group of people with the same dedication St.John has shown for the past 13 years.**

**In the second, the federal administration, under new management, plans equal rights for people, including those of all genders and identities. We look forward to chronicling these changes.**

**St.John—pp. 2, 6; Federal administration—pp. 3,5**

# People Who Make a Difference

On February 6, 2008, OCC PFLAG gathered for its first meeting under the leadership of Jeanne St. John, who helmed the organization in a variety of ways for 13 years. After she “retired” a few times, she says she’s making it definite this time. We laud her calm persistence and competence in being the lynchpin for the LGBTQ community in Lincoln County. She has left the organization in the capable hands of Beck Johnson, chair; Lisa Norton, secretary; and Brett Pinder, treasurer. They also listed the other board members: Amy Shumate, Destin “Des” Swisher, and Marci Grace Frederick (Trans Support). St. John plans to continue in an advisory capacity and avid supporter.

Des is a senior at Taft High School and the long-time president of the Gender Sexuality Alliance club at Taft who has given talks to staff about LGBTQ+ issues. Additionally, he is a member of the Rural Organizing Fellowship, a group of rural leaders helping to build a more progressive world. Although he is involved in all sorts of activism, his focus is primarily on education and working with youth. When he isn't working on his latest project or drowning in schoolwork, you can find him writing, cooking, or playing video games.

In an interview by another former OCC PFLAG leader Ineka Estabrook, St. John talked about the formation of the group, its directions and accomplishments, and its future. Many thanks to Estabrook for her interview!

According to St. John, “PFLAG got started because of a suicide of a Newport boy in high school ... during Christmas vacation.” Although the county health department provided a support group for LGBTQ youth, requirements included identification of participants, involvement of parents, and the use of insurance. The members had no privacy. Finding this privacy, the PFLAG group started with very few members—even down to one young person—but recommendations from Safe Schools and other experts helped St. John to expand its PFLAG chapter, useful in rural areas, as an umbrella for services. Then school district Tom Rinearson helped St. John with her efforts.

St. John, the group’s only retired person with time, set up a nonprofit. Thirty-five people, filled with enthusiasm, came to the first meeting and built on the existing infrastructure for LGBTQ people in the community. Dan Beck, from the Coastal AIDS Group, was support for gay men, and Debbie Spicer was the health department AIDS outreach. The first priority of the new chapter with monthly meetings was to educate members, friends, and family—primarily LGBTQ people.

The first meeting coincided with St. John and her long-time partner, Kae Bates, legally permitted to register for a civil union. An article based on an interview with them led to publicity, thank you notes, and accolades for their work with PFLAG to support young people. Both of them, retired from the Lincoln County School District, knew almost everyone in the schools, creating a safer environment for other LGBTQ people in the community. [Left: Jeanne celebrates her marriage to Kae. We regret the loss of Kae who died on August 23, 2016, at the age of 73.]



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# Politics on Our Side

**Track current LGBTQ bills:** <https://www.freedomforallamericans.org/2020-legislative-tracker/> [All 2020 bills]

*In the almost 13 years that I have written positive things happening for LGBTQ people in this newsletter, at no time did I struggle more than the past four years as LGBTQ rights seemed to go into reverse in the United States while expanding in many places through the rest of the world. Since the inauguration of President Joe Biden on January 20, 2021, he has increased our rights by leaps and bounds. Biden truly represents "Politics on Our Side."—Nel Ward*

One important change from Biden comes from the executive order he signed on his first day of office to block discrimination against LGBTQ people. It begins:

"Every person should be treated with respect and dignity and should be able to live without fear, no matter who they are or whom they love. Children should be able to learn without worrying about whether they will be denied access to the restroom, the locker room, or school sports. Adults should be able to earn a living and pursue a vocation knowing that they will not be fired, demoted, or mistreated because of whom they go home to or because how they dress does not conform to sex-based stereotypes. People should be able to access healthcare and secure a roof over their heads without being subjected to sex discrimination. All persons should receive equal treatment under the law, no matter their gender identity or sexual orientation.

These principles are reflected in the Constitution, which promises equal protection of the laws. These principles are also enshrined in our Nation's anti-discrimination laws..."

The substance of this order, which may be the most far-reaching thus far in U.S. history:

"It is the policy of my administration to prevent and combat discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation, and to fully enforce Title VII and other laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation."

The entire order is here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-preventing-and-combating-discrimination-on-basis-of-gender-identity-or-sexual-orientation/>

On the same day Biden signed the order, Oregon Tradeswomen, Inc., Pride at Work, and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) challenged Donald Trump's administration rule issued on December 9, 2020, expanding the ability of federal contractors and subcontractors to cite religious objections to justify employment decisions that discriminate against women and members of the LGBTQ+ community, among others. A coalition of 15 states, led by New York, has also challenged the rule in district court.

Biden revoked DDT's ban on federal agencies, contractors, and other recipients of federal funding from conducting diversity training exploring racism and privilege. Trump had deemed these trainings harmful to White workers.

The Department of Labor had suspended the order's enforcement after a federal court in California granted a preliminary injunction against it after Lambda Legal filed a lawsuit. Departments of State, DOJ, EPA, and Veterans Affairs had already suspended diversity and inclusion training. The lawsuit will continue to ensure organizations suffer no adverse consequences from diversity practices they might have pursued while the order was in effect.

More on p. 5

## Bits

**Twenty positive LGBTQ stories from 2020:** <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2020/11/20-positive-stories-2020-grateful/>

The Lesbian and Gay Big Apple Corps (LGBAC), one of the first all-queer band groups in the country, was the first LGBTQ marching band to take part in the Macy's 2020 Thanksgiving Day Parade. The parade performance was pre-taped near the location of Macy's flagship store at Herald Square.

A partnership between Japanese authorities and Pride House International opened Pride House Tokyo, the first permanent LGBTQ center in Japan, last October on International Coming Out Day. It is the first "Pride House" officially recognized by the International Olympics Committee.

Last fall's ad from Burger King featured its mascot kissing rival Ronald McDonald with the words, "Love Conquers All" to celebrate Pride week in Helsinki (Finland).

Burger King Mexico honored Pride month by partnering with on-demand delivery service Rappi, changed its corporate logo to "Burger Queer," and gave away rainbow-colored crowns.



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## Laws Supporting LGBTQ People

**Washington D.C.:** The city unanimously passed a law to ban the evidence-free "gay panic" defense allowing a free pass for violence against LGBTQ victims. Eleven other states ban this false ploy, and judges in other states have disallowed the defense that criminals use to make them appear victims. D.C. updated the hate crimes law, clarifying prejudice does not need to be the sole motivating factor for a hate crime.

**New York:** Public, single-occupancy bathrooms must be available to all people, regardless of gender. Included are school districts, charter schools, state or community colleges, restaurants and bars, mercantile establishments, factories, and any others that are state owned or operated. California, Illinois, and Vermont have similar laws.

**Ohio:** A federal judge struck down a state law preventing transgender people from correcting their gender on birth certificates. Tennessee is the only remaining state prohibiting transgender people from changing their assigned gender on their birth certificate.

**United States:** SCOTUS refused to review a ruling from the 7th Circuit Court allowing same-gender spouses in Indiana to be listed on their children's birth certificates. The decision stands.

**United States:** A federal judge ruled unconstitutional the requirement of doctor's proof for transition-related care for a person to obtain the correct gender marker on passports. The State Department has "no explanation [or] evidence" for the requirement. The case concerned a man whose application was denied because he received hormone replacement therapy from a nurse practitioner. The judge wrote, "Not all transgender persons receive or require physician treatment."

**British Columbia (Canada):** Lawyers, witnesses, defendants, and others in court proceedings must specify a gendered title—Mr., Ms., Mx., or "Counsel"—to ensure that the court addresses them correctly.

**Switzerland:** A new law legalizes marriage equality with no need for a nationwide constitutional referendum. Lesbians may use Swiss sperm banks and list the wife of the childbearing parent as the child's second mother if a couple goes to an officially recognized sperm bank. Trans and intersex people may change their legal names and gender markers by simply making a declaration at a government office.

## More Politics on Our Side—Joe Biden

Biden's inauguration itself reflected respect for the LGBTQ community. Bisexual **Lady Gaga** sang the national anthem at Biden's inauguration, and another performer, **Jennifer Lopez** takes pride as "auntie" to her non-binary nibling (sister's child) **Brendon Scholl**. J.Lo introduced Brendon's 24-minute film, *Draw with Me*, about coming out to their family and using art to find themselves.

The **Trans Chorus of Los Angeles** participated in the virtual parade for the Biden-Harris inauguration.

Biden is nominating LGBTQ people for leading agencies.

**Pete Buttigieg**, a former presidential candidate and the first out gay nominee for a Cabinet secretary position, received accolades from both party members after a hearing for his nominated position as head of the Transportation Department. During his opening statement, he thanked his husband Chasten Buttigieg sitting behind him.

**Dr. Rachel Levine**, Pennsylvania Surgeon General, has been appointed to be the assistant secretary for health at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). If confirmed, she would be the first out transgender person appointed to a federal position and approved by the U.S. Senate. Despite vicious transphobic attacks, she led the fight against COVID-19 in her state. In the past four years, HHS discriminated against LGBTQ people by rolling back equal protections, redefined gender as "sex assigned at birth," stopped funding HIV/AIDS research, and removed LGBTQ healthcare information from its website.

More of Biden's LGBTQ appointments include **Jeff Marootian**, the openly gay director of the D.C. Department of Transportation, for Special Assistant to the President for Climate and Science Agency Personnel; **Rufus Gifford**, the gay former Ambassador to Denmark, as Chief of Protocol; **Gautam Raghavan**, a gay former White House staffer, as Deputy Director of the Office of Presidential Personnel; **Karine Jean-Pierre** and **Pili Tobar**, both lesbians of color, as White House Deputy Press Secretary and Deputy Communications Director; and **Carlos Elizondo**, a gay man, to be White House social secretary.

Other appointments confirm the rights of LGBTQ people. Biden's appointment for Department of Defense Secretary, **Lloyd Austin**, supports removing the transgender ban in the military; Biden has revoked Trump's ban. At his confirmation hearing, **Antony J. Blinken**, Biden's nominee for Secretary of State, said he will enact policies allowing U.S. embassies to support and protect LGBTQ rights around the world by flying the rainbow flag. He will also re-appoint a Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBTI Persons, a position unfilled by Donald Trump. In addition, he will reject the findings of the Trump administration's Commission on Unalienable Rights, staffed by anti-LGBTQ advocates, that "newly manufactured human rights" such as LGBTQ rights were not worth protecting.

On her second full day, First Lady **Dr. Jill Biden** visited Whitman-Walker Health, a clinic in Washington with a history of serving LGBTQ communities.

The image of socially-distanced **Sen. Bernie Sanders** (I-VT) wearing a mask and highly distinctive mittens at the inauguration went viral: his "smittens" were made by an elementary school teacher, mothering a five-year old with her same-gender partner. Jen Ellis made a pair for her daughter's preschool owner, Sen. Sanders' daughter-in-law Liza Driscoll—and then another pair for Sanders, using the mittens meme as a fundraiser for Vermont Meals on Wheels.

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Lambda Legal and Immigration Equality are suing to overturn a Trump rule preventing people with HIV and LGBTQ people from securing asylum in the U.S.

# People Who Make a Difference



Continued from p. 2

An initial step was establishing a board: St. John, chair; Jill Baker, treasurer; and Deb Lyman, secretary. Staffing tables at the Newport Saturday Market brought community and visibility. An LGBTQ Job Corps staff member drove students for monthly meetings; they also helped staff the tables. The GSAs (Gay/Straight Alliance or Gender/Sexuality Alliance) began at the same time when PFLAG arranged for Salem GSA youth to come to Newport High and promote the idea with staff. Workshops expanding education began for high school staff partly because of the support of Principal Jon Zagel at Newport High School, and later for community groups. A monthly newsletter with local, national, and international news began in 2009, thanks to Nel Ward who continues to create these valuable publications..

Brent Buford, who became treasurer in 2011, got involved because his Texas-raised son couldn't come out until after high school. Spicer replaced him later. In 2013, Estabrook began working with GSA members and their workshops to develop a supportive school. Meeting with parents at lunch or over monthly sessions over coffee and pie at the Chalet helped them support their children. [Above left: St. John in 2013 with then co-chair Brent Buford.]

St. John listed important accomplishments and milestones:

- ◆ Parents meeting together with PFLAG support .
- ◆ Marriage equality supported by petition signature gathering and training in discussing the issue with people.
- ◆ Initial and ongoing support of GSAs.
- ◆ Continuing grants from Pride Foundation for basic operations and materials.
- ◆ Helpline for assistance to LGBTQ and family members.
- ◆ Thursday Pizza lunch at NHS with therapists for almost nine years.
- ◆ Gay and Trans 101 for the health department, churches, senior centers, schools, and community groups.
- ◆ Teaching GSA members to be presenters, helping them with public speaking.
- ◆ Training community city leaders, including Newport, police chief in Trans 101 and educating them in the difficulties trans people have in using public bathrooms.
- ◆ Recruiting welcoming churches, increasing the number from one to 10 in Lincoln County.
- ◆ Doing annual GSA trainings and coordinating them with PAADA (Partnership Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse).
- ◆ Supporting field trips to state events for high school students.
- ◆ Winning the National PFLAG Award in Community Education in 2013.
- ◆ Establishing the LGBTQ Task Force, bringing together leaders in different communities such as health and education to address LGBTQ needs in the community.
- ◆ Developing a very active Facebook page for support/information and a Zoom support meeting every 2 weeks during the pandemic

St. John is “excited” to have a team of three young leaders with “excellent experience in private nonprofit management.” She added: “Our vision is to have a meeting space that is not in a church.” She expressed gratitude for church hospitality for the past 13 years but would like a “more neutral” meeting space. She also looks forward to having a staff person to coordinate meetings and increase events, difficult for a volunteer.

Thanks for your giving to PFLAG during the past 13 years, Jeanne!—Nel Ward

## Notes from PFLAG

**Facebook: Oregon Central Coast PFLAG**—<https://www.facebook.com/groups/103956190597>

**Bravery's updates, information, and resources:** <https://www.olallacenter.org/bravery-center>

**COCTC + Bravery Trans Support.**  
Zoom details at events tab, <https://www.facebook.com/braverycenter/>

The PFLAG OCC Basic Needs Grants provide emergency or urgent relief to LGBT+ people in Lincoln County. Individuals of any age who identify as LGBT+ (or their caregivers) and who demonstrate a financial need for medical aid, housing, transportation, or food can apply. The maximum grant is \$250. Much of the Grant's resources come from other LGBT+ people and straight allies. Contact PFLAG OCC at [pflagocc@gmail.com](mailto:pflagocc@gmail.com) for an application.

Email [pflagocc@gmail.com](mailto:pflagocc@gmail.com) for information about the Support Group.

## OCC PFLAG Calendar

**Because of PFLAG's work to protect people from COVID-19 infection, meetings will continue in Zoom. Meeting link below meeting dates/times.**

**Monday-Friday, 3:00-6:00 pm:** Virtual drop-in support for teens on Bravery's Discord Server (Send a request on Facebook, Instagram, or email [beckj@olallacenter.org](mailto:beckj@olallacenter.org))

PFLAG Zoom Online Support Group meets **every other Wednesday from 6:00-8:00 pm** until further notice for mutual support and encouragement in a time of isolation. All LGBTQ people as well as their families and friends are welcome.

**February 3, 6:00-7:30 pm**

**February 17, 6:00-7:30 pm**

**March 3, 6:00-7:30 pm**

**March 17, 6:00-7:30 pm**

**March 31, 6:00-7:30 pm**

**April 14, 6:00-7:30 pm**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/292522285>

Meeting ID: 292 522 285

## Media Matters:

Starring in *Star Trek: Discovery* for three years, **Mary Wiseman**, 35, has come out as "queer and proud."

*The Prophets*, a new book by Robert Jones Jr, focuses on the romance between two young male slaves on a deep South plantation who refuse to become "breeding slaves" for their owner. "Prophets" from the world of the dead offer guidance to the slaves, and Jones also explores the teenage boys genealogy in the Kosongo people, decimated by the slave trade. Reviewer Novuyo Rosa Tshuma describes the book as a "magnificent novel."



Out bisexual **Luz Noceda**, a 14-year-old Dominican-American girl, has insisted her lead character in Disney's new animated series *The Owl House* also be bisexual. In one episode, her date to a dance with another girl was "more than platonic."

*Two of Us*, a French film competing for Best International Feature Film at this year's Academy Awards, relates the story about two retired widows secretly in love for decades. People thought they were friendly neighbors until an unexpected event allows the daughter of one woman to learn the truth. The film opens in the U.S. on February 5. A trailer is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yp9PPAv9PyU>

After coming out as transgender, **Elliot Page** will continue to play the part of a cisgender woman, Vanya Hargreeves, in the third season of the superhero series *The Umbrella Academy* on Netflix. Page received an Oscar nomination for starring in *Juno*.



## Join PFLAG!

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Household (\$35)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Individual (\$25)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Student/Limited Income (\$15)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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