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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 en-
lighten an ill-informed
public

ADVOCACY to end dis-
crimination and secure
equal civil rights.

Oregon Central Coast Chapter

April 2014

Take Action!

Teachers can be fired by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cincinnati for any support of LGBT equality such as being a member of PFLAG, attending any pride event, or receiving LGBT-positive emails. The contract also makes “flagrant deceit or dishonesty” a firing matter. You can sign onto the letter to Archbishop Dennis Schnurr to speak out against this policy: <https://secure3.convio.net/hrc/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=1841>

Administrators at Sheridan High School, just south of Little Rock (AR), have refused to include a brief autobiography by Taylor Ellis in the yearbook because he wrote a few sentences about his coming out. You can ask Sheridan Superintendent Brenda Haynes and Principal Rodney Williams to reverse this decision: <https://secure3.convio.net/hrc/site/Advocacy?>

Marriage Equality in Oregon Closer to Reality

Governmental support for marriage equality in Oregon came from two directions in March. First, the GOP voted to support same-sex marriage at its annual policy-making Dorchester Conference in Seaside. Second, Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum announced that same-sex couples may begin marrying immediately after the decision if U.S. District Judge Michael McShane rules that the state ban is unconstitutional. Oral arguments will be heard on April 23.

More information on the status of marriage equality in both Oregon and across the nation on pp. 3 and 5.

Heart-Felt Love, by Brian Hanna



Brian Hanna is an Irish-born, Oxford-educated architect and long-time member of Tuesday Writers. He is also an enthusiastic member of the Newport Symphony Board. He read the following at the PFLAG Valentine's Day celebration, "Love Is Love." His poem is on p. 4.

I am here in at the invitation of Jeanne St John and Kae Bates, two of my favorite people, who have as good a marriage as I have ever seen. They have actually had a couple of weddings due to the fierce rear guard action from society's Neanderthals, but these marriages were always to each other.

I am also incidentally fulfilling a promise I made 25 years ago after open-heart surgery in British Columbia... that incidentally didn't cost me a cent. In the recovery ward of Vancouver's St Paul's Hospital, I was amused by the realization that God had found it necessary to open my heart surgically not just metaphorically. My life had been given back to me by the skill and compassion of others. I had been literally born again; I was experiencing the afterlife while still alive and without the intervention of Clergy.

The recovery ward patients were mostly loggers. All the nurses were gay men who reminded me of the corps de ballet of an all male Swan Lake. They were the kindest and funniest bunch imaginable. "Clap hands if you believe in fairies." "We don't want any Tinkerbells dying on us now do we?" were ongoing catch phrases and all of us grateful to be alive applauded, and even laughed to the extent that the staples in our chests would permit. I was impressed at how devoid of homophobia all the loggers were when they realized these sweet funny people could obviously be trusted with human vulnerability, which remains for any sensible person the acid test of authentic humanity.

The day I left to go home I carried armfuls of flowers that friends had sent me down to the nurse's sitting room to thank them. It was a good move. They all made a huge fuss, and one said very seriously, "If ever you get a chance to put in a good word for us, will you do it? They might listen to you."

The final reason I am here is to do a poem for you—this time love as a source of courage to face the world. This courage is more powerful than any obstacle the world may throw in your path. This poem, "Fear Is a Liar," was written by Garth Lean, an Oxford don and friend of my mother. I find amazing spiritual symmetry between the death of her brother and my uncle in a Japanese POW Camp in Borneo, and the near certainty that the grandparents of the Japanese-Canadian surgeon who did my triple bypass, and whose skill has given me the best 25 years of my life, were interned during World War Two as enemy aliens in Canada.

While I waited to go into the Vancouver operating theater a nurse brought a telephone to my bedside. It was my mother in Belfast. She read me this poem. I woke up knowing it by heart. [See p. 4]

Pope Francis didn't outright endorse same-sex civil unions, but he said that they must be "evaluated" for tolerance when couples' economic and health security is at stake. That's going a long way for the leader of the Catholic Church, far enough to concern the Catholic bishops in the United States.

Politics on Our Side



Baltimore: Watching *Meet the Press* with overtly conservative David Gregory has made me a great fan of Baltimore's savvy out-spoken Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake.

Her support for the LGBT community was obvious on March

3, 2014 during a discussion of the vetoed Arizona bill that would have allowed business and individuals to discriminate against anyone for any purpose. Her response? She invited LGBT residents of Arizona to move to Baltimore even though Arizona has better weather.

An officiator at one of the first same-sex marriages in the city after Maryland legalized marriage equality, Rawlings-Blake said, "We must be diligent in protecting all people." She is a politician to watch.

The Status of 'Swiss-Cheese' Rights in the United States

A recent poll shows that 59 percent of people nationally support marriage equality, and 50 percent of them think that the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right of same-sex couples to marry. The 33 states that lack marriage equality still have a majority support of 53 percent. An overwhelmingly 81 percent reject permitting businesses to discriminate against or refuse services to LGBT people.

That said, there's still a growing confusion among the 33 states that have failed to legalize marriage equality regarding the status of same-sex weddings. Some of them, for example Arkansas, even refuse to grant a divorce to a lesbian couple married in Iowa. In Tennessee only three same-sex couples could be recognized as married in the state; no other same-sex couple can marry in that state. In Kentucky, out-of-state same-sex marriages must be recognized. The first state to make a ruling from a full courtroom trial, Michigan, joins Virginia, Oklahoma, Utah, and Texas where federal judges ruled that banning marriage equality is unconstitutional. The governor stated that the 300 marriages before the ruling was ordered on hold are legal, but the couples cannot benefit from the 1,000+ Michigan laws until a final ruling is made. The federal government will recognize these Michigan marriages.

What all these states have in common is that the court decisions are all on hold. The old state patchwork that used to have three alternatives—married in state, married in state because of legally married outside state, or not married—has gone so far as to declare only three couples in one state legally married. In some states, governors and attorneys general defend the bans on marriage equality; in other states, they say they won't.

Another anomaly occurred in Illinois. Although same-sex couples cannot legally marry in the state until June 1, a court ruled that couples could be married before then if at least one of the couple is terminally ill. Long-time activist Vernita Gray was the first to marry her partner, Pat Ewert, on November 27, 2013. Gray died on March 18, 2014.

In addition, two counties are issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples after a judge ruled in Cook County that banning them is unconstitutional. Champaign County decided to follow suit, but the other counties are waiting until June.

Here's a great overview as of March 23: <http://www.buzzfeed.com/chrisgeidner/one-of-these-marriage-equality-cases-could-go-to-the-supre>

The same "swiss-cheese" approach to LGBT rights occurs in employment. It's time for that issue to be corrected.

PFLAG Presents Health Issues To Advisory Committee

OCC PFLAG Board Members Jeanne St.John, Ph.D., and Debbie Spicer, RN, will present information related to LGBT health concerns to Lincoln County's Public Health Advisory Committee at their April 1 meeting.

The February 2014 issue of the *National Public Health Journal* was devoted to LGBT issues, and PFLAG was invited to meet with PHAC to provide them with information about the LGBT community and about Bully Prevention efforts in the County.

PFLAG will use materials from their LGBT 101 and Bully Basics workshops at this info session.

Bully Prevention Update

Bully Prevention was the topic of the March monthly PFLAG meeting when Majalise Tolan, principal of Taft High School in Lincoln City reported on how they are implementing the Olweus Bully Prevention program. She was delighted with how fully the Taft High staff has embraced the program, with the training led by Nate Fingerson, new middle school counselor and a team of teachers.

Although they had planned a slow phase-in because of the mid-year start, teachers are moving forward more quickly than anticipated because they are seeing such good results. The weekly class discussion meetings are popular with staff, students and parents.

Tolan also reported that all LCSD administrators had participated in her workshop on the Olweus program at their March meeting—and all had agreed to administer that program's survey to determine each school's bully issues and locations.

'Fear Is a Liar' by Garth Lean

Fear is a liar poisoning today
With fantasies of what may come tomorrow.
Till every joy is shadowed with a sorrow
and dreading all, we leak our lives away.
If we have spouse and child we fear to part
And longing fear we won't attain
And snatching at it even as we gain
We forfeit the heaven, the harmony the heart
But fear is a liar. Truth is, God molds our days with love
And with the same precision
As he makes wings for flight
Or petals fold within a sheath
Or shapes an eye for vision
So he makes us yearn for what is right
Then swift and sudden hurls us our delight.



Colors Make Your Day Brighter!

San Francisco's Castro, the gay icon of the United States, is installing rainbow pedestrian crosswalks. The crossings at the 18th and Castro intersection, costing a local organization \$37,400, will hopefully be finished by June's Pride March. Another project is the Rainbow Honor Walk with the names of LGBT civil rights activists on inlaid plaques. West Hollywood put in rainbow crosswalks a couple of years ago.

The presence of gay-straight alliance (GSA) groups in schools reduces the risk of suicide among both LGBTQ and straight teens, according to a study published in the *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies* and funded by the Canadian Institute of Health Research.

Update on Status on Marriage Equality in Oregon



[The following information comes from Mike Marshall, campaign manager for Oregon United for Marriage. Left: Marshall with his partner Rob Walker.]

The Freedom to Marry initiative was launched in Oregon just 14 months ago in February 2013. The goal was collecting 160,000 signatures to cover the necessary 116,284 required to place a ballot initiative overturning the state constitutional amendment banning marriage equality. At that time, polls showed that 55 percent of people in the state supported the freedom to marry as compared to the 41 percent who were in opposition. The 55 percent was an increase of 20 percent since October 2011. The 160,000 signatures were submitted to Oregon United

for Marriage by Valentine's Day 2014.

Basic Rights Oregon and ACLU also filed a lawsuit in federal court to overturn the state's ban on marriage equality. Oral arguments are scheduled for April 23, and Oregon United for Marriage anticipates a positive ruling by early summer. If this does not happen, however, the 160,000 signatures can be submitted to the state before the July 3 deadline.

Currently, the Oregon Family Council, which led the 2004 fight for the marriage ban, is trying to get another measure on the November ballot to grant businesses and individuals an exception to the state's anti-discrimination laws by allowing them to deny commercial services to same-sex couples for their weddings. At this time, the ballot title still lacks approval from the Secretary of State's office. That must be done before petitioners can start gathering the necessary 87,213 valid signatures. The number is lower than the one for marriage equality because the measure concerns a statute and not a constitutional amendment.

After the state legislature passed a law permitting domestic partnerships in Oregon, the OFC collected 63,000 signatures to overturn the law, almost 8,000 more than the necessary 55,179 at that time. Legal challenges dropped the valid number of signatures to 55,063, 96 fewer than required for the proposed initiative to be on the ballot. The domestic partnership went into law on February 4, 2008.

During the three months until the July 3 deadline for delivery of signatures, Oregon United for Marriage will continue its work to increase support for marriage equality, defeat the OFC measure, and provide a well-resourced campaign(s) in the fall.

Questions can be addressed to Marshall at 503-828-7193.

DoJ Extends LGBT Rights; Panel Argues for Transgenders in Military

Attorney General Eric Holder has extended Department of Justice rights to all same-sex married couples, including the right not to testify against a same-sex spouse. Other rights include filing for domestic support obligations, eligibility for DoJ programs that provide compensation to surviving spouses of public safety officers, equal marital benefits for federal inmates such as visitation rights and compassionate release, and joint bankruptcy filing. These rights are added to existing ones from the IRS and the Health Department. The government will also not contest same-sex married couples their rights in states where previously prosecutors could argue that the marriage is not recognized in the state where the couple resides.

Also a five-member panel led by former U.S. surgeon general Dr. Joycelyn Elders has concluded that the military should permit transgender people to serve in the military.

People Who Make a Difference



Maura Healey, openly lesbian candidate for Massachusetts attorney general, talks about LGBT rights: “My commitment is deeply personal... When we put together the state's case challenging DOMA, a lot of people tried to talk us out of it, and I know at the time I argued that case, the majority of Americans were not supportive of marriage equality, and even the president and the Justice Department were standing behind DOMA. But I also know that eventually that changed, and we did prevail, and things can change, but it requires perseverance, resolve, and that's certainly a commitment I'm going to continue.” Her case was the first time a state challenged DOMA, and the 2010 verdict was the first time a federal judge declared DOMA unconstitutional. The *Boston Globe* wrote: “Healey is just the kind of person you want in politics.”

Danny Leclair, 45, and **Aubrey Loots**, 42, were the first gay couple to be married during the Rose Bowl Parade on the 2014 New Year's Day. More than 700,000 people along the parade route and 60 million world-wide viewers had the opportunity to see the grooms on top of a cake-shaped float sponsored by AIDS Healthcare Foundation. The theme was “Love is the Best Protection.” Leclair said, “We hope to inspire others to believe that they are worthy of love—gay or straight.... Love is love no matter the form.”



Norway's **Crown Princess Mette-Marit** helped a gay couple when visa problems kept them from going to India to welcome their surrogate twins into the world. During her three days of minding the infants, the hospital staff even mistook her for a nanny. She paid for the travel out of her private funds and had to get a visa for her visit because her royal status does not exempt her

from visa regulations. The event occurred in December 2012, but it still makes me feel good about some of humanity.

As part of the “We Do” Campaign for Southern Equality, same-sex couples apply for marriage licenses. In Jackson (MS), Hinds County Barbara Dunn turns down **Becky and Andrea**, a couple with eight-month-old twins. As the groups's website states: “When it comes to legal rights, your zip code shouldn't matter.”—<http://www.southernequality.org/2014/03/equality-in-mississippi/>]



Lead with Love, April PFLAG Meeting

In this excellent short film, four families learn that a child or young adult is LGBT and share their honest reactions—intense emotions, fears, and questions.

The documentary also shows interviews in which psychologists, teachers, and clergy provide factual answers to parents' most commonly asked questions and concrete guidance to help parents keep their children healthy and safe during this challenging time.

“Lead with Love,” providing comfort, information, and guidance for parents who have recently learned that their son or daughter is LGB, will be shown and discussed at the April PFLAG meeting.

Upstander Week, Day of Silence, Newport High School Event

The GSA at Newport High is busy planning a full week of bully prevention and diversity-promoting activities, culminating in the traditional Day of Silence on April 11.

PFLAG OCC Co-Chair Ineka Estabrook is working closely with the students and principal Jon Zagel to coordinate activities including an all-school assembly on Monday, April 7. The student Drama Troupe led by Deborah Zirin will perform an improvisational skit demonstrating bullying, Upstander behavior, and bully behavior in teen dating.

PFLAG Co-Chair Jeanne St. John will present Newport High with the OSSP (Oregon Safe Schools Project) award for being an exemplary safe school for LGBT students. Teachers and students will be honored for their leadership as Upstanders, not Bystanders.

During the week students will register to participate in the Day of Silence on Friday, April 11, which will be followed by a GSA-sponsored Night of Noise.

OCC PFLAG Calendar

April 9, 6:00 pm: PFLAG Meeting—St. Stephen's, 9th & Hurbert, Newport

April 7-11: Upstander Week, Newport High School

April 11: Day of Silence

April 23: U.S. District Court Judge Michael McShane hears oral arguments on the constitutionality of Oregon's ban on marriage equality.

April 27, 11:00 am: OUT Lesbian Group—Café Mundo, Nye Beach, Newport

May 14, 6:00-7:30 pm: PFLAG Meeting—St. Stephen's, 9th & Hurbert, Newport

May 25, 11:00 am: OUT Lesbian Group—Café Mundo, Nye Beach, Newport

The Coastal AIDS Network* monthly activities:

Second Tuesday, 7:00 pm: “Activity Night” (call for information (541)994-5597)

Third Tuesday, 7:00 pm: “Pizza Night” (Newport Abbey's Pizza)

Fourth Tuesday, 7:00 pm: “Men's Pot Luck” (Locations vary! Call (541)994-5597 or email coastalaidnetwork@gmail.com for information)

We also try to have pizza in Tillamook or Pacific City. Email Dan, coastalaidnetwork@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 except for “Men's Pot Luck.” Occasionally we bend that rule for special events.

Social LGBT Oregon Coast Group:
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Out-Oregon-Coast/194768480642314>

“It's almost beyond belief that today, in 2014, I can say to you as your employee in so many states, 'You're fired because of who you love.'”-- Vice President Joe Biden, in a speech urging Congress to pass anti-discrimination protections for LGBT individuals

Join PFLAG!

YES! I support the mission of PFLAG. Enclosed is my annual 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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