



PFLAG *Southwest Washington Chapter*

October 2018 Newsletter

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Join us at our regular meetings:

Second Tuesdays, 7pm
Children's Home Society
1112 Columbia Street,
Vancouver, WA 98660

In this issue:

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- National Transgender Day of Remembrance
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Next Education and Support Meeting: October 9, 7pm

- Jason Roper visits us again with his new video titled *Losing Parents to Homophobia: Acceptance*. He will discuss how acceptance is the last stage of grief and how he came to this stage.
- The education session will be followed by our caring and sharing support group



October 11, 2018

Nearly 30 years ago, on the anniversary of the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, the first National Coming Out Day was observed as a reminder that one of our most basic tools is the power of coming out. One out of every two Americans has someone close to them who is gay or lesbian. For transgender people, that number is only one in 10. (from the Human Rights Campaign)

2018 dates to remember:

- October 11, National Coming Out Day
- November 2, 6pm-8pm, Celebrating Artistic Expression in the Trans Community (see flyer)
- November 13, 7pm PFLAG SWWA meeting
- November 20, National Day of Remembrance Commemoration
- December 11, 7pm PFLAG SWWA meeting



November 20, 2018
6:30-9pm
YWCA Clark County

This day honors the memory of those whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence. This year's commemoration will take place at YWCA Clark County at 6:30pm. At 7:30 pm there will a facilitated conversation on creating a safe community for everyone here in Clark County.

PFLAG Chapter Happenings

Go Ready Festival

PFLAG Southwest Washington participated in the 2018 Vancouver School District's *Go Ready* festival at Hudson's Bay High School on August 22. *Go Ready* is designed to help students get ready for school.

It included food, entertainment, family-friendly activities, and information about early learning, employment, health care, housing and other resources such as PFLAG and Planned Parenthood. In addition, school nurses gave immunizations and school counselors were present.



PFLAGERS Dale Clukey, Linda Buckley, and De Stewart tabled at the *Go Ready* event. Linda provided Spanish interpretation.

Annual Triple Point Picnic

PFLAG Southwest Washington and the Children's Home Society put on the annual Triple Point Picnic for LGBTQ youth on Tuesday, August 28 at Esther Short Park. Fifty-one youth and adults attended. The chapter provided sandwiches and water while members, parents, and friends brought salads, sodas, chips, and desserts.

Triple Point is for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and questioning youth ages 11-18. Triple Point exists to empower LGBTQ+ youth and allies by providing education, safety, support and acceptance. PFLAG partners with Triple Point in providing additional support for LGBTQ+ youth.



Peace and Justice Fair

The annual Peace and Justice Fair was held on September 8 at Esther Short Park. There was music, dancing, poetry, and good food. Many organizations dedicated to promoting diversity and goodwill were there, including many LGBTQ affirming churches, Triple Point, NCAAP, League of Women Voters, Planned Parenthood, and, of course, PFLAG Southwest Washington.

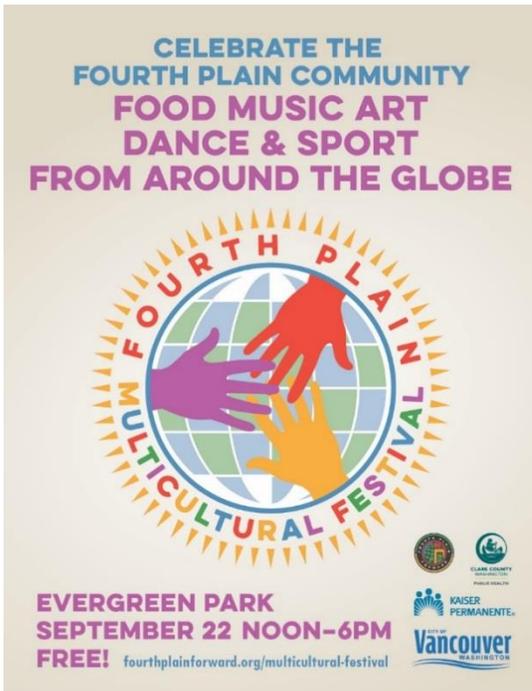
Besides giving Pride flags to many children, the PFLAG booth provided information about our chapter and PFLAG's mission and values. Colored chalk and bubble-blowing solution provided fun for the kids who visited the PFLAG booth, and their participation earned each a PFLAG sticker on their Passport.



PFLAGERS De Stewart and Dale Clukey joined Triple Point's Stephen Herndon (center) at the Peace and Justice Fair.

PFLAG Chapter Happenings

PFLAG Celebrates Diversity at the Fourth Plain Multicultural Festival



It was a balmy day at Vancouver’s Evergreen Park where PFLAG Southwest Washington helped celebrate Vancouver’s Fourth Plain Multicultural Festival. On stage the audience enjoyed music, songs and dancing from a multitude of cultures including Bulgarian, Punjabi, Hawaiian, Native American, and Mexican. The food booths offered equally diverse offerings.

This family-friendly event was ideal for spreading the word about PFLAG. We gave out Pride flags and PFLAG flyers and booklets. It was not all work as members Foster Nostrand (shown above), De Stewart, and Dale Clukey enjoyed the good food and had a fun time dancing to the swinging music!



Please join us at

Creating A Day of Memories Creating Artistic Expression in the Trans Community By artist Annette Sabater

Friday, November 2
6pm-8pm, Program starts at 6:30pm
Cerimon House
5131 NE 23rd Ave
Portland, 97211
www.cerimonhouse.org
Entry fee: \$5 on line or at the door

About the Artist

Annette Sabater is a Seattle area native. She studied art in addition to physical therapy in college and later became the mother of a transgender daughter. Her daughter inspires her writing and art, as she seeks to educate the public in a creative manner.

Washington State Council 2018 Fall Conference
Opening Doors to Safe Spaces
September 29, 2018



Messages of Hope in Trying Times

Stepping Up and Coming Out

Before taking roll call of attending chapter representatives, WSC President Shelly Cooper shared her story of growing up in a girl's body, struggling with the expectations and rejections of family, and finding her own way through difficult years. She told of her surgery, and her work in various "manly" occupations. Near the end of her remarks, Shelly said, "This is the first time I've said it publicly, but I'm transgender." The audience cheered.

Speaking of her current position with PFLAG, Shelly said, "I never wanted to be the state council president. I've always felt that it's a job for a parent of an LGBTQ person." But she went on to say that someone stunned her one day by saying, "Shelly, you are the president we need at this time."

Considering her status as a person who is transgender, along with how many more people today are coming out as transgender, it's safe to say Shelly is right where she belongs, right where we need her.

Keeping Chapter Histories and Working with Other Organizations

WSC Treasurer Kathy Reim discussed several important items:

- The need for keeping accurate histories in each chapter
- How one man, by maintaining records, opened the door to new life for the Washington State council
 - Terry Ryland kept filing the necessary forms for Washington State PFLAG with Washington State, even though the organization was no longer active
 - Because of his diligence, WSC was able to receive a donation of \$100,000 from the estate of Roger Burgess
- How important it is to get the vote out in the midterm elections
 - Urged members to work with other organizations, especially League of Women Voters to get people registered and out to vote
 - Don't ask, "Are you a registered voter?"—a question that may cause a person to lose face
 - Instead, ask, "Is there anyone here who would like to register to vote?" Then provide the form and mail it for them, if needed

Chapters Helping Chapters

Shelly Cooper called for suggestions from attendees to help strengthen local chapters. Ideas offered include:

- Formalize a chapter speakers' bureau
 - Grants are available from Pride Foundation
 - WSC will train
- Seek grants from Boeing and Microsoft; Shelly will help write
- Table at local theatres and show films there
- Gather Likes on social media
 - Social media is vulnerable, but it's how people talk to each other
 - Assign one person to post
 - Post one positive thing a day regarding LGBTQ news

Seattle Police Department's SAFE PLACE Initiative

Officer Jim Ritter of the Seattle Police Department and founder of the SAFE PLACE Initiative, began by telling us how afraid his twenty-three-year-old daughter had been to tell him she was gay, even though he is a gay man. He went on to explain that even though times have improved from the days when "roving bands of teens" would drive around and assault gays, LGBTQ people are still targeted. He discovered that hate crimes in Seattle weren't being reported to the police, either because the victims weren't out yet, or because they didn't trust police.

Rainbow Window Stickers

Jim set about to change that. Since most of the attacks occurred in commercial, not residential districts, he asked businesses to post a rainbow sticker in their windows to let LGBTQ people the businesses offered safety and help. Businesses agreed to call 911 for any victim who entered their doors and to let them stay until the police arrived.

To his surprise, the initiative went viral. Japan sent a TV crew to shadow and film Jim, then created a program shown all over Japan. Soon, other jurisdictions showed an interest: the United Kingdom, Alabama, Tucson, Denver, Louisville, and more. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police presented the program to Parliament, who passed it into law, and now all RCMP use the program.

The program is heavy on training of police. Seattle shares the program only with those police departments who show passion and commitment to doing it right, including training.

Jim closed by playing the training film created by the Seattle Police Department, under his direction. In the film, six trans people tell their stories. As we know, telling our stories is the most powerful way to change hearts and create empathy.

An Oasis for Queer and Trans Youth

Seth Kirby, Director of Oasis Youth Center in Tacoma, Washington, shared the mission of Oasis, which is to create a safe space for youth to connect, learn, and grow. Youth meet there once a week to develop leadership skills. Another night a week is set aside to address the unique needs of queer and trans youth of color.

The group has come a long way in twenty years. No longer are they forced to meet in an undisclosed location due to attempts to burn down their meeting place, to damage their cars, or to crash their meetings. Youth in the Oasis program face family rejection, homelessness, and lack of access to healthcare. Oasis staff network within the community to find safe spaces for homeless youth, and provide referrals and partial payments for safe medical resources, including mental health services.

Project 13

Because youth are coming out at younger ages, Oasis launched Project 13, a six-week after-school program for queer and questioning middle school students aged 11 through 14. The weekly meetings focus on healthy self-identity and healthy relationships, peer pressure, social media, and leadership. Those under 14 must have their parents' permission to participate. This year, one thousand youth will use the program.

DACA and Undocumented Youth

Seth pointed out that about one-third of LGBTQ immigrants are undocumented. Their need for help is critical, because their homelands are not safe places for them. Those in the DACA program are currently in a "horrible limbo." Oasis partners with immigration attorneys to address the needs of LGBTQ immigrant youth.

The PFLAG Way

Throughout his talk, Diego Sanchez, National PFLAG Director of Advocacy, mentioned the intersectionality of oppression and the benefits of intersectional cooperation, as well as the importance of doing things "the PFLAG way." The latter involves confronting opposition or ignorance by telling our stories and acting calmly. "Stories change hearts, minds, understanding, votes, and laws," he said.

He acknowledged the courage it takes to tell stories of courage, and told his own story of emigrating from Panama, then navigating his transition from female to male in the 1960s and 1970s.

Diego cautioned us not to gather power for ourselves, but to give power to others, to give people room to grow.

He mentioned the increased attacks against the LGBTQ community today:

- For youth, the bathroom issue that continues to crop up
- For the elderly, legal issues faced when, for example, they must enter nursing facilities
- For trans in the military, the latest executive order and its ramifications

"But looking forward," Diego said, "we've tasted equality and it will return." He mentioned a couple of hopeful signs: the Rainbow Railroad, which helps LGBTQ people enter Canada safely, and equality indexes the LGBTQ community can research to find equality-friendly healthcare, corporations, and even cities.

Court: Landlords Must Protect Tenants From Homophobic Harassment

Reprinted with permission from the Advocate dated August 28, 2018

The decision from a federal appeals court comes in the case of a lesbian who says she was physically and verbally assaulted other tenants at her senior housing facility.

BY TRUDY RING
AUGUST 28 2018 8:10 AM EDT

A lesbian who says she was physically and verbally attacked in her senior housing community, being bruised, battered, and spit on, is going to get her day in federal court in a significant case for tenants' rights.

In what advocates are calling a groundbreaking decision, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit has ruled that a landlord may be held liable for failing to protect a tenant from known discriminatory harassment by other tenants.

The Chicago-based Seventh Circuit, which covers Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin, made the ruling Monday in the case of *Wetzel v. Glen St. Andrew Living Community*, a senior housing facility in Niles, Ill., a suburb of Chicago. It reversed a lower court's decision dismissing the case and ruled that under the federal Fair Housing Act, Glen St. Andrew "can be held accountable for purposefully failing to protect lesbian senior Marsha Wetzel from the harassment, discrimination and violence she suffered at the hands of other residents because of her sex and sexual orientation," according to a press release from Lambda Legal, which represented Wetzel. The suit now goes back to the lower court for further proceedings, so Wetzel will get a chance to prove her case. The decision also represents an expanded interpretation of the housing law.

"This is a tremendous victory for Marsha," said Karen Loewy, Lambda Legal senior counsel and seniors strategist, in the press release. "She, just like all people living in rental housing, whether LGBT or not, should be assured that they will at least be safe from discriminatory harassment in their own homes. What happened to Marsha was illegal and unconscionable, and the court has now put all landlords on notice that they have an obligation to take action to stop known harassment.

"This duty is particularly clear for senior living facilities like Glen St. Andrew, whose staff are entrusted and paid to provide a safe living environment for seniors, including LGBT residents. We are grateful that the court understood and reinforced that understanding."

Wetzel moved into an apartment at Glen St. Andrew in 2014 after the death of her partner of 30 years, Judith Kahn, with whom she raised a son; Kahn's siblings evicted her from the home the couple had shared. Since then, she "has been subjected to a pattern of discrimination and harassment because of her sex and sexual orientation, including persistent verbal harassment, threats, intimidation, and three separate assaults, at the hands of other residents. She has been called countless homophobic slurs, taunted about her relationship with Judy and their child, threatened with bodily harm, bullied and intimidated in all of the communal spaces in the facility, and physically injured by other residents, all because she had a committed relationship and created a family with another woman and because she is a lesbian," according to the lawsuit filed by Lambda Legal in 2016.

In one of the incidents, Wetzel, who uses a scooter for mobility, was going up a ramp at the facility when another resident hit the scooter so hard with his walker that she fell off the seat and incurred a large bruise on her arm, the lawsuit says. He had previously taunted her with homophobic slurs, and he used one at this time.

She reported the incident to managers, but they did not take her seriously, she says. When he continued harassing her, she kept on reporting it, but managers suggested she was lying. His remarks to her, she recalls, included “Judy died to get away from you” and that their son was a “homosexual-raised faggot.”

Another tenant made comments to her such as “you look like a man” and “homosexuals will burn in hell,” and at one point rammed her wheelchair into the table where Wetzel was seated in the dining hall, according to the suit. Later, Wetzel says, this resident spit on her.

Another time, she says in the suit, she was in the mailroom on her scooter when someone hit her from behind, knocking her forward over the scooter and leaving her with a head bump and a black eye. She did not see the person but heard them say “homo.” Other epithets she heard at various times included “fucking dyke,” “fucking faggot,” and “homosexual bitch.” Wetzel says she reported all this harassment to managers, but instead of addressing it, they retaliated against her.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, argued that in failing to act, the management of Glen St. Andrew violated both the federal Fair Housing Act and the Illinois Human Rights Act. In January 2017, the district court “dismissed the case without reference to the sex or sexual orientation claims, broadening the question at stake to the senior living facility’s general responsibility for protecting residents against resident-on-resident harassment and violence,” Lambda Legal’s press release notes. The appeals court reversed the dismissal and sent the case back to the district court for further action.

In Monday’s ruling, Seventh Circuit Chief Judge Diane P. Wood wrote, “Not only does [the Fair Housing Act] create liability when a landlord intentionally discriminates against a tenant based on a protected characteristic; it also creates liability against a landlord that has actual notice of tenant-on-tenant harassment based on a protected status, yet chooses not to take any reasonable steps within its control to stop that harassment.”

She cited the case *Hively v. Ivy Tech Community College*, in which the Seventh Circuit ruled last year that employment discrimination based on sexual orientation violates the federal civil rights law against sex discrimination, and she said that this “applies with equal force” to the Fair Housing Act. She further held that “the harassment Wetzel describes plausibly can be viewed as both severe and pervasive,” even though the Glen St. Andrew management characterized it “as no more than ordinary ‘squabbles’ and ‘bickering’ between ‘irascible,’ ‘crotchety senior resident[s].’” Wood said that for the purpose of this decision, the appeals court accepts Wetzel’s account as true, but Glen St. Andrew officials will have a chance to answer it when the case goes to trial at the district court level.

“The court today struck a blow for me and for all senior citizens — gay or straight — who deserve to feel safe and to be treated with respect,” Wetzel said in Lambda Legal’s press release. “That’s not too much to ask. No one should have to endure what I endured because of who I am.”