

Portland Voice

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May, 2011

President's Message

Last Saturday, I had the pleasure – and the honor - of being among the first of many activists from across the State to take part in a training for Basic Rights Oregon's new marriage equality Speakers Bureau. I found the first hour particularly energizing and enlightening as Thomas Wheatley, BRO's Organizing Director, brought us up to date on BRO's efforts to win the right for gays and lesbians to marry. I thought I would pass along the information that Thomas shared.

As I'm sure you remember, Constitutional Amendment 36 restricting marriage in Oregon to one man and one woman was passed by a 57 to 43 margin in 2004 and became law. A legal remedy to remove it through the courts was cut-off when the Oregon State Supreme Court refused to hear the case made by several Oregon same-sex couples that to bar them from the institution of civil marriage was unconstitutional. And in Oregon, repealing a constitutional amendment does not fall within the purview of the legislature. Only the people of Oregon can amend the State constitution or repeal an existing amendment. So, the only path for repealing Constitutional Amendment 36 is by vote.

Since that election in 2004, the public's attitudes towards marriage equality have shifted considerably. In fact, attitudes towards the right for gay and lesbian couples to participate in civil marriage are evolving more rapidly than any other social issue. As of today, five States and the District of Columbia embrace marriage equality. Twenty states have a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. To date, no state has overturned a constitutional amendment barring marriage equality by a vote of the people; but, as the nation looks on, Oregon may well be the first.

Over the course of the summer of 2010, BRO knocked on thousands of doors throughout the metro

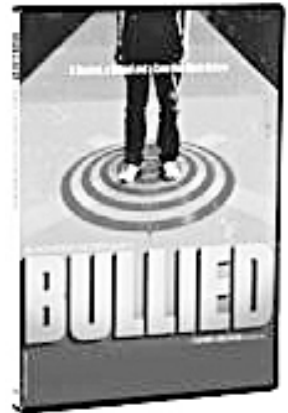
Monthly Meeting Information

Tuesday, 7-9 pm, May 10, 2011

Bullied: A Student, a School and a Case That Made History

Join us on May 10, 2011 for a viewing of *Bullied*. *Bullied* is a documentary film that chronicles one student's ordeal at the hands of anti-gay bullies and offers an inspiring message of hope to those fighting harassment today. A discussion will follow the film but, as always, we will also offer a support circle.

First United Methodist Church, SW 18th Avenue at Jefferson Street, Portland, OR



-- President's Message: Continued from left column --
area, asking regular folks if they support marriage equality or why they oppose it. At this time, 1/3 of the respondents to BRO's campaign fully support marriage equality; 1/5 believe that gays and lesbians should have "all the same rights" - just not access to civil marriage, and 1/5 believe that gays and lesbians deserve no legal protections at all. That 1/5 that believe in rights but struggle with the word "marriage" are the people that slowly - but surely -we need to bring to our side.

When you hear the word "marriage" what do you think of? Many people will say "family" or "commitment." Perhaps it means "children"; or "companionship", the

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PFLAG

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Transgender Minister Shares Story **Calendar of Events**

The Reverend David E. Weekley announces the publication of his new book: *In From The Wilderness (She-R-Man)*.

Stories of transgender people reach back to the beginnings of recorded history. Only recently, the psychiatric, medical, and secular worlds have begun to appreciate the authenticity of Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual, and Queer people. Sadly, many Christian churches and denominations continue to oppress and vilify the LGTBQ community.

This is the story of a transgender man who has been an ordained elder in The United Methodist Church since 1984. He quietly served his congregations for twenty-eight years before sharing his story and spiritual journey with his congregation, denomination, and the world. This is the story of a Transgender man, a Christian, an ordained minister, a loving husband and father - a human being. It is his challenge to his denomination and to all Christians and spiritual seekers to consider the truth of gender identity and sexual orientation as God given gifts to be celebrated and embraced among all other gifts.

Information on ordering books: phone: (541)344-1528 fax: (541)344-1506. Orders@wipfandstock.com

David is available for conversation, readings and book signings. Please contact him at www.shermanswilderness.org.

President's Message, continued

comfort of growing old with your dearest friend. An interesting poll in Oregon was recently taken: when straight couples were asked why they chose to marry, most responded that they did it for "love and commitment." But when those same straight couples were asked why gay and lesbian people might want to marry, they answered that it was for the rights that marriage brings. A full 1/3 responded that they didn't know. And that's where our challenge lies. To win marriage equality in Oregon we must convince about 100,000 Oregon voters of what we already know: that marriage is about love and commitment. It is about standing up in front of family, friends and community and pledging to love and nurture one another come what may. And that those feelings are the same regardless of who you love.

Over the course of the next couple of years, expect to hear a lot of talk about marriage equality in Oregon. I'm sure you've already seen the ads currently airing on television with straight couples explaining how they came to embrace marriage equality. If you're inspired, join us in the conversation. Look for the article in this issue of the Portland Voice by BRO's Kyle White to learn how you can get involved today – especially if you're a mom.

A final thought – my husband and I married almost

May 2, PFLAG Portland East County: Learn how Gay Marriage pertains to and affects LGBT couples, their rights and commitments to each other, and discuss the upcoming Freedom to Marry initiative on the Oregon ballot in 2012. May 2nd at 7:00PM, Eastrose Fellowship Unitarian Universalist, 1133 NE 181st. Ave, Gresham. Check our Facebook page for latest news!

May 7, Second annual PFLAG Portland Black Chapter's Mother's Day Tea: Ainsworth Church of Christ at 2941 NE Ainsworth St. Honoring the PFLAG Portland Black Chapter's moms and their contributions to the community. 11AM-2PM. Brunch will be served.

May 7, Oregon Safe Schools and Communities Coalition's Annual Meeting: 10:00AM-Noon at the Q Center. For more details, go to www.oregonsafe-schools.org

May 14: Queer Youth Summit - All day at Portland State University. Details at www.oregonsafeschools.org. Stop by the PFLAG table. We'll be there!

June 1, 70 NW Couch Street at the Portland University of Oregon campus. Portland Community Cinema presents *TWO SPIRITS*, a documentary about the murder of a Native American boy who was also a girl. It provides an historical and cultural narrative of the transgender aspect of Native Americans. Co-sponsored by Oregon Public Broadcasting and the University of Oregon School of Journalism. Following the film a panel of resource experts discusses the content and its relevance to our community.

June 14 meeting: It's Pride month! Come to PFLAG Portland and hear about the struggle for equal civil rights in our corner of the world as we hear from members of the Gay/Lesbian Archives of the Pacific Northwest.

June 18 and 19 – Time for Pride!! This is your official invitation to come walk with us in the parade on Sunday morning. Watch this space for details about when and where to meet. And don't forget to get your PFLAG t-shirt! We're taking orders on-line now at www.pflagpdx.org.

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ten years ago because we loved each other and wanted to seal our commitment to one another in front of our friends and family. I can't imagine someone telling me I couldn't have married the man I love. One day, I hope no one will be excluded from the transforming, wonderful – and yes, sometimes frustrating – institution that is civil marriage.

In peace,
Dawn Holt

Yes! I support the mission of PFLAG Portland

Enclosed is my membership fee. (Your membership includes National PFLAG membership.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Family (\$45)

Individual (\$35)

Student/Limited Income (\$15)

Donation (\$ ____)

Make check payable to PFLAG Portland. PFLAG is a 501c(3) tax-exempt organization.

Mail to: PFLAG, P.O. Box 8944, Portland, OR 97207

The Mission of PFLAG Portland

We, the parents, families, and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, celebrate diversity and envision a society that embraces everyone, including those of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. PFLAG promotes the health and well being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, their families and their friends through support, education, and advocacy. PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and strives to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity. Contact PFLAG Portland at 503 232-7676 or visit our website at www.PFLAGPDX.org.

Calling PFLAG Moms: Basic Rights Oregon announces "My Wish for Mother's Day"

If you are inspired by BRO's Marriage Matters campaign and you want to get involved, here's an easy way to take that first step. If you're a proud PFLAG mom, all you need to do is:

1. Send a picture of yourself with your child (ideally this would be a mom and her adult LGBT child but we have some flexibility here), along with a quote we can use as a caption. Captions can read: "My mother's day wish is for my child to have the freedom to marry the person they love", or "my mother's day wish is for my daughter to be able to marry the love of her life, as my son was able to marry his ", or "my mother's day wish is for my grandkids moms/dads to be able to marry each other". Send your pictures and quotes to Kyle White at kyle@basicrights.org.

2. Log onto your Facebook page on Wednesday, May 4th and change your status to "My mother's Day wish is for everyone (/my daughter/my son) to have the freedom to marry the person they love. If you agree, please repost."

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The Portland Voice is published monthly. Readers are welcome and encouraged to submit articles, editorials, poetry, news items, and photography for consideration to be included in our newsletter. Email our editor at pflagpdxnews@gmail.com or send information to P.O. Box 8944, Portland, Oregon 97207. Submissions are published at the discretion of the editor and may be edited for length or content. The deadline for content submissions to this newsletter is the 20th of the month prior to publication.

To get this newsletter via email, send an email to pflagpdxnews@gmail.com.

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Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

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