

PFLAG - PERTH



NEWSLETTER MAY / JUNE 2008

PARENTS FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS PERTH INC

THE OBJECTIVES OF PFLAG ARE TO:

- Provide a support system for families and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender & intersex people, in an effort to understand, accept and support them with love and pride.
- Offer loving support and understanding to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender & intersex people.
- Support and encourage the recognition of full human rights for them.
- Help parents, family members and friends to learn what the current members of PFLAG have already learnt and to help change attitudes and create an environment of understanding, so that all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender & intersex people can live with dignity and respect.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello Everyone,

Well, it is almost time for the AGM and nominations or re-election of the PFLAG Committee. It is with regret that I will not be re-nominating for President, but will continue to support PFLAG in some way. I just want to thank the present committee for their ongoing encouragement and support for me over the time I have been President. I know it would have been difficult for me without their help.

My hope is that I have helped in some little way to keep PFLAG operating for our community.

I urge readers to step forward and nominate for the next election as we need your support. Cheers everyone,

Jen

★ People have come and gone from PFLAG meetings for over 18 years now. Three Founding Members are still active. Many capable people have come and gone through these years and served us well, but sadly we have nearly run out of enthusiasts. We have an old adage 'When you don't need PFLAG any more, that's when PFLAG needs you' ---

To keep PFLAG vibrant and alive, as well as your membership, we'd love to have your presence at meetings to encourage new people, to have your leadership capabilities, to have your enthusiasm and ideas. ---- Or do you think PFLAG is a spent force and no longer needed in the community? We'd love to know. Ed.

PFLAG Dads Respond to *Details Magazine* Article on Gay Children

Campaign Launches on Organization's Blog

Washington, DC – Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) announced today that PFLAG fathers from across the country will begin speaking out online about their gay, bisexual and transgender children in response to an article on the *Details Magazine* website insinuating that men are uncomfortable with the thought of having a gay son. The article, by David Hochman, concludes that, “No matter how enlightened you are (or think you are), when it comes down to it, you don't want *your kid* to be gay.” PFLAG fathers will speak out, at the organization's national blog site (<http://www.pflag.org/>) all week, to challenge Hochman's article and shed light on their own journey toward embracing their gay, bisexual and transgender sons.

“Contrary to the *Details* article, there are countless fathers who are enormously proud of their gay, bisexual and transgender sons,” said PFLAG national president John R. Cepek, who is also the father of a gay son. “While some men may initially flinch at the idea of a son who turns out to be gay, hundreds of thousands of PFLAG dads are here to assure them that, in fact, every joy of raising a straight child can be had while loving your gay children, too. A good parent is one who loves their child regardless, not one who loves their child ‘in spite of,’ or refuses to love them because of who they are.”

Hochman's article, titled *Would You Really Be OK With a Gay Kid?*, profiles two men about the prospect of having a son who is gay. While both men report being accepting and comfortable of gay people, Hochman reports that they and “other progressive dads of their generation are more than happy to down margaritas and watch *Project Runway* with gay friends, they're not so comfortable with the idea of their own offspring going the way of Dumbledore. And only on the condition of anonymity will they elaborate on why, exactly.”

PFLAG is asking fathers with gay sons to join the conversation by sharing their own stories at www.pflag.org/blog. Cepek will kick-off the series today, with his own testimonial about his family. Over the next four days, other fathers will also be featured on the blog, and dads from around the world will be asked to contribute to the dialogue by sharing their stories online, too.

“By sharing our own stories, we hope we can educate other fathers on the joys of having a gay son,” Cepek said. “Our children should be celebrated, no matter who they love.”

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PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity. For more information, visit www.pflag.org. (US PFLAG).

This Dad is Proud and Loud!

This is one in a series of straight dads talking about their gay sons. It is from (US) PFLAG National Vice President, Mike Neubecker. Here is Mike's response to the recent 'Details Magazine' article on fathers and sons.

Its hard for me to stop talking about how proud I am of my gay son and his accomplishments and what he offers the world, once I get started. I might have done a little more than flinch when my son came out but I soon found my way to embrace my gay son in every way. One of my favorite songs as he was growing up was the Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young song, “ Teach Your Children Well” and later the verse goes,

“Teach Your Parents Well.” That song really fit our family because we taught our son so much about the world and taught him our values. When he came out as gay, my wife and I learned so much more about the world that we never would have if he hadn’t been gay.

Somehow I was misguided and believed that my dedicated skill at parenting would be rewarded with a child ‘product’ that would be the high school jock and dating the prom queen. I learned that rather than metaphorically shaping your child as you would a hunk of clay, the better metaphor is more like nurturing a plant long before it shows its flower with all the nutrients and care they need to grow. I was selfish to expect that my child to be a certain way to please me and gain my embrace. Appreciating your child with all their talents, qualities and goals is what a good parent does while instilling so many values such as commitment, care and respect for others.

While raising my son I don’t confess to being a liberal parent, not that there is anything wrong with it, but the love I have for my son truly opened my mind. If some liberal open minded fathers still shriek at the idea of having a gay son, then it may be due to the dominant culture we live in that they haven’t learned to challenge. I challenge them to open their minds a bit further and challenge the attitudes of our culture that value the straight macho male, while using gay people as joke punch lines. If they need some skills to do this they can visit www.straightforequality.org and begin to learn those skills.

And if one day their son comes out as gay, they will be way ahead of the rest in embracing them completely.

Did you know that, on the web pages, there are 406,000 hit sites listed under the search heading, PFLAG?

You sure need to have some idea where you want to go.

PFLAG – Perth is just one at :

www.pflagwa.org.au

This is another in the blog series of PFLAG dads speaking out in response to the recent ‘Details Magazine’ article about heterosexual fathers and gay sons. Today’s entry is from PFLAG dad Paul Wertsch, M.D., of Madison, Wisconsin, who writes about his son Greg. Paul also serves as Chair of the American Medical Association’s Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Issues Advisory Committee.

Can a father be proud of a gay son? You bet!

I was quite sad after reading the article written by a man who thought that it would be difficult to be proud of his son if he happened to be gay. I will admit that when my son came out to his mother and me that we were completely unprepared and felt ourselves very ignorant about the whole subject of sexuality.

Did it take a while to learn more about homosexuality? Yes.

Did it take a while for us to review all the hopes, plans, and expectations that we had for our son and his future life and discover that these hopes, plans, and expectations would be different but OK if he were gay? Yes.

Did I realize at the time that my son came out, how ignorant I was about the whole spectrum of sexuality and how his being gay would be a portal for understanding a wonderful side of life of which I had been previously completely unaware? No.

Did I ever think that my son would marry a man, who I now love as another son, instead of one of the wonderful young women he used to associate with whom I had hoped would be a daughter-in-law someday? No.

Did I have a lot of learning and growing to do when my son came out to us as gay? Yes.

Am I proud of my gay son? You bet that I am.

The Importance of Time (One for a quiet moment)

A young man learns what is most important in life from the guy next door.

It had been some time since Jack had seen the old man. College girls, career, and life itself had got in the way. In fact, Jack moved clear across the country in pursuit of his dreams. There, in the rush of his busy life, Jack had little time to think about the past and often no time to spend with his wife and son. He was working on his future and nothing could stop him.

Over the phone, his mother had told him, "Mr Belser died last night. The funeral is on Wednesday." Memories flashed through his mind like an old newsreel as he sat quietly remembering his childhood days. "Jack did you hear me?" "Oh sorry, mom. Yes, I heard you. It's been so long since I thought of him, I'm sorry, but I honestly thought he died years ago," Jack said. "Well, he didn't forget you. Every time I saw him, he'd ask how you were doing. He'd reminisce about the many days you spent over 'his side of the fence' as he put it," mom told him. "I loved that old house he lived in," Jack said.

"You know, Jack, after your father died, Mr Belser stepped in to make sure you had a man's influence in your life," she said. "He's the one who taught me carpentry," he said. "I wouldn't be in this business if it weren't for him. He spent a lot of time teaching me things he thought were important ... Mom, I'll be there for the funeral," Jack said.

As busy as he was, he kept his word and caught the next flight to his hometown. Mr Belser's funeral was small and uneventful. He had no children of his own and most of his relatives had passed away.

The night before he had to return home, Jack and his mom stopped by to see the old house next door one more time. Standing in the doorway, Jack paused for a moment. It was like crossing over into another dimension, a leap through space and time. The house was exactly as he remembered. Every picture, every piece of furniture ... Jack stopped suddenly. "What's wrong Jack," his mom asked. "The box is gone," he said. "There was a small gold box that he kept locked on the top of his desk. I must have asked him a thousand times, what was inside. All he'd ever tell me was 'the thing I value most'" Jack said. It was gone. Everything about the house was exactly as Jack remembered, except for the box. He figured that someone from the Belser family had taken it. "Now I'll never know what was so valuable to him," Jack said. "I'd better get some sleep. I have an early flight home, mom."

It had been about two weeks since Mr Belser died. Returning home from work one day, Jack found a note in his mailbox, "Signature required on a package. No- one at home. Please stop by the main Post Office within the next three days," the note read. Early the next day Jack retrieved the package. The small box was old and looked like it had been mailed a hundred years ago. The handwriting was difficult to read, but the return address caught his attention, "Mr Harold Belser." He took the box out to his car and ripped open the package. There inside was the gold box and an envelope. Jack's hands shook as he read the note inside: "Upon my death, please forward this box and its contents to Jack Bennett. It's the thing I valued most in my life." A small key was taped to the letter. His heart racing, as tears filled his eyes, Jack carefully unlocked the box. There inside he found a beautiful gold pocket watch. Running his fingers over the finely etched casing, he unlatched the cover. Inside he found these words engraved: "Jack, thanks for your time! – Harold Belser." "The thing he valued most ... was ... my time."

Jack held the watch for a few minutes, then called his office and cleared his appointments for the next two days. "Why?" Janet, his assistant asked. "I need some time to spend with my son," he said. "Oh by the way, Janet ... thanks for your time." *Author unknown. (Handed on by Edward, a late member. Ed).*

Quips from "Ginger Meggs" in the "West Australian"

- Discoveries are made by not following the instructions.
- If we really did profit from mistakes, I'd be real rich by now!
- Ginger Meggs : "What's the best thing about getting old?"
Grandpa : "The time it takes."
- Doing nothing gets pretty tiresome because you can't stop and rest.
- Careful planning will never replace dumb luck.

- It's not whether you win or lose, but how you place the blame.
- Ginger : "I'm a great believer in not doing today what you can put off until tomorrow! That way when I have nothing to do, I always have something to do.
- Life is something that happens when you can't sleep.
- The nice thing about standards is there are so many to choose from.
- Friend : Do you say prayers before meals at your place?
Ginger : I do if dad's been cooking. **4.**

You may not realise the following facts, but they're true.

- At least 2 people in this world love you so much they would die for you.
 - At least 15 people in this world love you in some way.
 - A smile can bring happiness to anyone, even if they don't like you.
 - Every night SOMEONE thinks about you before they go to sleep.
 - You mean the world to someone.
 - If not for you, someone may not be living.
 - You are special and unique.
 - When you think you have no chance of getting what you want, you probably won't get it, but if you trust God to do what's best and wait on His time, sooner or later, you will get it or something better.
 - When you make the biggest mistake ever, something good can still come from it.
 - When you think the world has turned its back on you, take a look: you most likely turned your back on the world.
 - Someone you don't even know exists, loves you.
 - Always remember the compliments you received. Forget about the rude remarks.
 - Always tell someone how you feel about them; you will feel much better when they know and you'll both be happy.
 - If you have a great friend, take the time to let them know that they are great.
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God's Answering Machine!

What if God decided to install an answering machine? Imagine praying and hearing this:

Thank you for calling my Father's house. Please select one of the following:

Press 1 for requests; Press 2 for thanksgiving; Press 3 for complaints; For all other requests press 4.

What if God used the familiar excuse, all angels are busy helping customers right now, please stay on the line and your call will be answered in the order it was received.

Can you imagine getting these kind of responses as you call on God in prayer?

If you would like to talk to Gabriel, press 1 To speak to Michael, press 2 For any other angel, press 3 If you would like King David to sing a Psalm for you, press 6.

For reservations at my Father's house press John 3:16.

For nagging questions about the dinosaurs, the age of the earth and where Noah's Ark is located ... wait until you get here!

Our computers show that you should have already called today Please call back on Monday.

Thank God that you can call as often as you want! You only need to ring once and God hears you!

Author unknown.

More "Ginger Meggs"

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Even moderation should not be practised to excess.• Ginger : "Is it good being old enough to get a senior discount."
Grandpa : "It is if you can remember to ask for it."• If only the good die young ---- what does that tell us about grandparents?• If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.• Nowadays I'd settle for the fountain of middle age.• A Conscience? A little voice that tells us someone might be watching! | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Life would be so much simpler if everyone read the manual.• I can't complain ---- but sometimes I still do.• The easier it is to do the harder it is to change.• Avoid criticism : Say, do and be nothing.• Work 8 hours, sleep 8 hours ; but not the same 8 hours.• Admit your mistakes before someone exaggerates them for you!• Unlike most people, I'm just an average person!• Too busy to laugh? Then you're too busy. |
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PFLAG INFORMATION

REGULAR PFLAG MEETINGS

Held at :

Women's Health Care House
100 / 102 Aberdeen St
NORTHBRIDGE

At 1.30pm, on the 2nd Sat of each month.

ALL WELCOME!

(The Blue CAT bus passes the door)

NEXT PFLAG MEETINGS

For 2008:

Saturday June 14th @ 1.30pm
Saturday July 12th @ 1.30pm
Saturday August 9th @ 1.30pm

NEXT COMMITTEE Meeting

Saturday June 14th @ 12.30pm

*** Annual General Meeting ***

Sat August 9th @ 12.30pm

(Appropriate Nomination and Membership forms for this meeting are enclosed with this Newsletter).

ALL WELCOME!

PFLAG is here for YOU!

City Helpline: (08) 9228 1005

PFLAG Country Contact:

Bunbury: (08) 9797 1470 (Jill)

CLOSETS ARE FOR
CLOTHES NOT
PEOPLE
JOIN PFLAG

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

PLEASE !!!

*Tell us your story,
(this may be anonymous)*

Send us a joke

Have a grouch!

Write a poem or a letter.

Offer a suggestion, (Not rude)

*Or just write to us
for any reason at all.*

Please forward contributions to -

Postal Address:

*Newsletter Editor
PFLAG-Perth Inc
PO Box 354
NORTHBRIDGE WA 6865*

*Or - PFLAG Editor email at:
sazabelrulz@hotmail.com*

*Or - NEW PFLAG email address:
pflagperth@hotmail.com*

*NB: Any previous email address for
PFLAG-Perth is no longer valid - we
apologise for any inconvenience.*

*Website (Up and coming):
<http://www.pflagwa.org.au>*

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