



Heart Beat

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays



PFLAG Olympia, Washington

Issue 81 May-June 2007

Capital City Pride 2007



It's that time of year again, time for Olympia's great Pride parade and celebration. This year Pride will be bigger than every, with more people marching in the parade and more business and organization booths in Sylvester Park.

Plus — this year's celebration will be expanded to two full days of activities, Saturday, June 16 and Sunday, June 17, with the parade held on Sunday.

Once again, PFLAG will host Pancakes in the Park for Pride. Come cook with us! We will be asking for folks to sign up at meetings.

We encourage all members to come out for a wonderful Pride celebration. For more information, visit the terrific new Web site at www.capitalcitypride.net. The site is frequently being updated, so check back frequently in the days leading up to Pride.

Gender change and marriage

by Julianne Wasilausky

On February 22 there happened one of those coincidental occurrences that make you wonder if maybe there isn't someone somewhere with an elfish sense of humor who delights in meddling with the earthly affairs of us mere mortals. This date marks the 5th anniversary of my gender reassignment surgery.

At work, out of 125,000 members, we have 3 cases that have to do with marriage, and gender change. I recall dealing with one of them a couple of years ago when one of the married partners came into my office for a routine matter, and I noticed that the gender coding on our screens didn't look right. Without digressing too far from my original thread, I'll say that I got a firsthand look at what automated computer systems do when confronted with something out of the ordinary and contrary to their programming.

By way of background, in Washington there is (yet) no same sex marriage. Our Basic Health computer system is programmed with that as a basic assumption, and has prompts that pop up little warnings if we do something the system thinks is wrong, like coding two females as spouses on an account, or trying to approve enrollment for someone whose birthday makes them over 65 and possibly Medicare eligible.

The coincidental event was that on 2/22, the Communications Consultant completed updating and posting to our intranet site yet another updated procedure. The Training maven sent out an e mail announcing this. The procedure in question was the one for changing the gender of one spouse in our system, to match that person's change of gender. Naturally this interested me, so I followed the link to the procedure and read it. There was an error of fact in it, and also it raised a procedural question that was obvious to me, but probably not

to anyone else in the agency.

I wrote an email in response, pointing out that their statement that the gender on the birth certificate cannot be changed, was wrong. It can be changed. (Obviously, I know, as I have done it. There was no need to tell them that, of course.) At this point, I'll just forward the thread as it winds its way from Training, through Communications to the Policy Analyst. It also goes by the assistant director in charge of our Basic Health division. Until I spoke up, they all seemed ready to "sign off" on the procedure as written.

Our story, so far . . .

From: (Communications)
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2007 7:50 AM
To: HCA DL BH CUSTOMER SVC A (NANCY'S GROUP); HCA DL BH LEADERSHIP/APPEALS/TRAINING GRP
Subject: Gender change after marriage document

Please read the new document, under procedures,

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▼ SUNDAY, MAY 13, 2-4:30 PM

"Daddy & Papa" — a GREAT film about gay men's journeys to become parents, followed by a short discussion hosted by Erica Dixon, professor of sociology at South Puget Sound Community College.

The film explores gay fatherhood and its impact on American culture through the stories of four different families. From surrogacy, foster care, and interracial adoption, to the complexities of gay marriage and divorce, to the battle for full legal status as parents, Daddy & Papa presents a revealing look at some of the gay fathers who are breaking new ground in the ever-changing landscape of the American family.

▼ SUNDAY, JUNE 10, 2-4:30 PM

Gay Friendly Businesses — A look into how we can best support gay-owned and gay-friendly businesses.

PFLAG-Olympia meeting format

2:00-2:30 p.m.	Introductions
2:30-2:40 p.m.	Announcements
2:40-3:15 p.m.	Support
3:15-3:30 p.m.	Social time/snacks
3:30-4:30 p.m.	Program (see above)

COLORS IN THE RAINBOW:

RACE, CULTURE, AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION ~ PART 4 OF A 6 PART SERIES: NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE

BY STEPHEN M. WHITE, PSY.D.

The term "Native American" encompasses many different tribes throughout the countries of the Americas, each of which has its own history and customs. Despite this diversity, Native Americans have historically been, with rare exceptions, relatively accepting of variations in sexual orientation and gender identity.

Just as there are many different tribes, the people of these tribes have had many and varied ways of looking at sexual orientation and gender. The Navajo have used the term "third-gender" for gay men and "fourth-gender" for lesbians. In addition to heterosexual men, heterosexual women, gay men, and lesbians, some Natives included two more "genders" - transgendered men and women.

Many tribes have members who are considered "two-spirited," that is, having both masculine and feminine spirits in the same body. These

individuals had been termed "berdaches" by anthropologists, but most Natives prefer the "two-spirit" term. These individuals may be biologically male or female, but each shows some form of cross-gender activity. Males may adopt typically female roles such as cooking, making pottery or clothing, or caring for children. Female two-spirits have taken part in traditionally male activities such as hunting, fighting, and even leading tribes. Biologically male and female two-spirited individuals often, but not always, choose to wear clothing common for the opposite sex. Non-Native audiences may be familiar with the concept of a two-spirited individual from a sympathetic (if not entirely correct) character in the film *Little Big Man*.

The term "two-spirit" is sometimes used to refer to LGBT Native Americans in a broad sense, though this can be deceptive. Many two-spirited

individuals do correspond to what Western culture thinks of as gay or lesbian, but some do not. They may show varying degrees of cross-gender characteristics which may or may not include a romantic or sexual interest in those of the same biological sex.

Conversely, it is certainly possible for Natives to consider themselves gay or lesbian without adopting the "two-spirit" designation.

Two-spirited individuals have traditionally held an honored place in many Native societies. They are often believed to have special powers or a particular connection to the spirit world, and may be called upon to perform sacred rituals and ceremonies. To some extent respect toward two-spirits has been eroded by the prejudice against homosexuality and transgendered people in the larger culture. An example of this is the recent votes of the Navajo Nation Council in Tsale, Arizona, and the Cherokee National Tribal Council in Oklahoma in 2004 to define marriage as between a man and a woman.

The experience of parents varies greatly when they learn that a child is LGBT/two-spirited, depending on the particular tribe's attitude toward sexual orientation and gender, as well as the individual parent's background. Even parents who do not struggle directly with their child's sexual orientation must still contend with the idea that their child is already a member of a racial minority, and are now seen as a minority within a minority.

For parents who are struggling to understand and accept their child there are many Native-specific resources available. Books include Will Roscoe's *Changing Ones: Third and Fourth*

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NEW or RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP

Please check the membership types you prefer:

- Individual \$35
- Household \$50
- Senior/Student/Low Income \$15
- New Renewal

Membership \$ _____

Add this amount as my tax-exempt gift (thank you!) \$ _____

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP AND GIFT \$ _____

I want Olympia's bi-monthly newsletter *HeartBeat* (which is mailed in an envelope with no identified return address.)

I want the national quarterly newsletter *PFLAGpole* (which is not mailed in an envelope).

I want to be added to the PFLAG-Olympia email alert/announcement list (include your email address.)

DATE: ____/____/____ PHONE: (____)____-____

SIGNED: _____

PRINT NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Mail with your check to: PFLAG Olympia, P O Box 12732; Olympia, WA 98508-2732

PFLAG is a tax-exempt non-profit 501(c)(3) organization not affiliated with any political or religious institution.

Women "coming out" after 30 a peer-facilitated support group

for women over the age of 30 who are "coming out" or have previously come out as queer, lesbian or bisexual, or who are questioning their orientation.

**Meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month
from 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm**

Unity Church of Olympia; 1335 Fern Street SW

For more information, please contact Victoria Nuesca
970-3517 vnuesca@msn.com.

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Genders in Native North America, a well-researched work that details the variations in sexuality in 150 tribes, as well as the historical practice of same-sex marriage. Roscoe also edited Living the Spirit: A Gay American Indian Anthology, an anthology that examines Native LGBT history in many tribes from several different vantage points, including interviews, diaries, anthropological writings, biographies, poems, and novels.

The stories of several two-spirited people are included in Two-Spirit People: Native American Gender Identity, Sexuality, and Spirituality, edited by Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang, and a predominantly male-focused examination of two-spirits is Walter L. Williams' The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture.

Additional books include Lester B. Brown's anthology, Two Spirit People: American Indian Lesbian Women and Gay Men, and Sabine Lang's Men as Women, Women as Men: Changing Gender in

Native American Cultures.

Video resources include the 1991 documentary Two-Spirit People a 20-minute examination of two-spirit status in historical and modern Native cultures, and Mona Smith's 15-minute film Honored by the Moon. Writer/director Sherman Alexie's The Business of Fancydancing (2002), depicts a gay Native poet who returns to his reservation to attend a funeral and follows his interactions as he re-connects with people he grew up with.

Groups helpful to LGBT men and women and two-spirited individuals include Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirits, a San Francisco-based social and support network, NativeOUT, a group for LGBT Natives in Arizona, and 2SPR - Two-Spirit Press Room, a media & cultural literacy project that seeks to provide accurate information about LGBT Natives to the media.

Role models for parents or children can be hard to find. In addition to poet/filmmaker Sherman Alexie, a rising star in the political arena is Native activist Jack Jackson, Jr. In 2002 Jackson

was elected to the Arizona State legislature, becoming the first openly gay Native American to serve in a state legislature. He has since been appointed by Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano as the new executive director of the Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs.

Tradition is important in Native society. As non-heterosexual Natives become more visible there is hope that the honor they have paid LGBT/Two-spirited men and women in the past will be rediscovered, and that the tribes will unlearn the prejudice they have adopted from the larger culture.

Organizations/Resources

Bay Area American Indian Two-Spirits (BAAITS): www.baaits.org

NativeOUT: www.nativeout.com

PFLAG - Phoenix:

www.pflagphoenix.org

2SPR - Two-Spirit Press Room: home.earthlink.net/~lafor002

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Gender change and marriage

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Miscellaneous. Thank you, (Name), for your work on this!!

(Communications)

From: Wasilausky, Julianne
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2007 9:00 AM
To: (Communications)
Cc: (Training)
Subject: RE: Gender change after marriage document

I've just read the procedure, and would like to point out that it is possible to have one's gender on the birth certificate changed.

Those in transition and who have acquired the necessary documents under the HBIGDA standards, can in fact have the gender changed on their Washington Driver's Licenses prior to GRS (Gender Reassignment Surgery).

Thanks!
Julianne

From: (Training)
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2007 3:22 PM

To: (Communications), (Policy), (Administration), Julianne Wasilausky
Subject: Small Update to Gender change after marriage document

After some additional research (thanks, Name!) and legal conversations (thanks, Name!), I removed the incorrect sentence that stated you could not change the gender listed on your birth certificate. Thank you!

See update: <http://insidehca/bh/trainingdocumentsGenderChangeAfterLegalMarriage.doc>

(Julianne, I didn't include the information from the second paragraph about having gender changed on your license, because I don't think it affects our procedure in any way. Thanks so much for your input!)

From: Wasilausky, Julianne
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2007 3:42 PM
To: (Communications)
Cc: (Policy), (Training), (Administration)
Subject: RE: Small Update to Gender change after marriage document

Hello,

The section that might be tricky from a Benefit Specialist standpoint (and yes, I realize these cases are rare) is with the following point in the procedure:

1. Verify marriage is still legally intact and date of gender reassignment happened after marriage.

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PFLAG-Olympia Alert

PFLAG-Olympia Alert is an email service of PFLAG-Olympia designed to inform members of upcoming events, programs, and more. Email updates are sent out prior to each of our the regular second Sunday meetings and whenever something comes up that we think our members and friends need to know about. You can subscribe to the alert by sending an email to our newsletter editor at newsletter@pflag-olympia.org — put "Subscribe PLAG-Olympia Alert" in the subject line.

The PFLAG Mission

To promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered 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.

Gender change and marriage

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It would appear that BH will be needing to get proof from the member as to the date of gender reassignment. Does this mean surgery date? Date transition began? Date the RLE (Real Life Experience) began? Date gender on WDL was changed?

Since the WDL can have the gender changed prior to GRS (gender reassignment surgery) whereas the birth certificate can only be changed after surgery, would BH require the transitioning partner to remain with an inappropriate gender tag on the account (e.g., MBMS shows "M" while WDL and gender presentation are "F") until after surgery?

Thanks!
Julianne

From: (Policy Analyst)
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2007 4:16 PM
To: Wasilausky, Julianne; (Communications); (Training); (Administration)
Cc: (Assistant Director)
Subject: RE: Small Update to Gender change after marriage document

Julianne, you bring up a good point because of the way Washington law interacts with itself, I think I need to have (Legal) take another look, so stay tuned.

* * *

I tend to stay tuned, on subjects that interest me.

Returning Board Members

After a landslide election we are proud to welcome Shirley and Brianne Pearson as returning board members. We're very glad to have them back!

From our By-laws: The Board shall determine the method of selecting all officers except the President and Treasurer, each of whom shall be elected at the annual meeting.

PFLAG Olympia welcomes all allies - straight and GLBTQ.

Our chapter's monthly attendance typically has an equal number of both.



PFLAG

Olympia, Washington

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

MEETS at 2PM on the second Sunday of each month at First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE, Olympia (except in August when we have our annual picnic at a local park.) It is handicap-accessible.

DIRECTIONS: from Sylvester Park on Capitol Way and Legion Way, go 12 blocks east on Legion Way to Boundary Street. Turn left around the church. Park in the lot at 5th Avenue and Boundary and enter through the glass doors.

Letters, articles and requests for literature are welcome.

Mailing address:

PO Box 12732; Olympia, WA 98508-2732

For information or to discuss personal matters with an understanding parent and experienced PFLAG member,

**CALL the PFLAG-Olympia HELPLINE:
(360) 866-0511**

Email: info@pflag-olympia.org
Website: <http://www.pflag-olympia.org>

BUY PFLAG-OLYMPIA GEAR

t-shirts ~ sweat shirts
coffee mugs ~ mouse pads
BBQ aprons ~ tile coasters
canvas tote bags ~ boxer shorts



Buy yours now on the web at

http://www.cafeshops.com/pflag_oly

HeartBeat

is a free publication of the PFLAG chapter in Olympia, Washington, published six times a year. The editors are Alec & Gabi Clayton.

Unsolicited articles are welcome and are due by the 10th of even-numbered months. The editors reserve the right to reject or edit material.

The deadline for the next issue is 6/15/2007

Mail submissions to:

HeartBeat

P.O. Box 12732

Olympia, WA 98508-2732

Or email to: newsletter@pflag-olympia.org