



INDY PFLAG NEWS

DECEMBER 2009

PFLAG meets the 2nd Sunday of each month. The next meeting will be Sun., Dec. 13 from 2 to 4 pm at St. Luke's United Methodist Church in the Youth Wing (North door), just west of Meridian on 86th St.

December 13 meeting: "Queer Radio 101"

At our December meeting, we'll meet the host and the producer of bloomingOUT, a radio program that airs from Bloomington, IN every Thursday evening from 6-7 pm EST on WFHB, heard around the world and available via live-streaming, podcast or download anytime.

Helen Harrell, host, is a long-time activist for social justice. She is a former clinical therapist, pre-school teacher, construction worker, union organizer, and co-founder of Bloomington, IN chapter of Pride at Work. She is a workshop presenter, free lance writer, columnist and lecturer. She is the advisor for the undergraduate LGBT student group OUT. She is also last, but not least, a mother and grandmother who considers herself to be most fortunate to have the opportunity in assisting WFHB and the bloomingOUT staff with the challenge of educating and illuminating the public in regard to LGBT issues. Her goal is and has always been to eliminate discrimination in any form and to help create a truly just society and world.

Carol Fischer is the producer of bloomingOUT and weekly podcast b OUT2, News Views & More. Through her involvement in the anti-war movement in the seventies, the disability movement in the eighties and her ongoing activism on behalf of feminists, Carol has been in the forefront of social issues since her teen age years. A former nurse, electrician and Marine, she was also the founder of the Parent Information Resource Center in the eighties.

Helen and Carol will focus on the history of the show, the fun and work involved and the importance of it to the community at large – especially for those who don't feel safe to be out. Helen says, "I hear from those in small towns or in the country who report feeling safe for one hour a week when they listen to the show."

We've added a new facility to the Indy PFLAG website. You can now go online to join, renew your membership, or make a donation using PayPal. Check it out at www.IndyPFLAG.org



Notes from Annette

At our last meeting on November 8th, Indy PFLAG participated in a Spirit & Place event. The theme of this year's Spirit & Place Festival was "Inspiring Places." Our chapter teamed with Indiana Youth Group and St. Luke's Methodist Church to focus on how "People Make the Place." We wanted to show how we turn a plain, empty classroom into a safe place where people can share their stories and their feelings.

For the first part of the event, we had a panel of 5 people who discussed what PFLAG and IYG mean to them. We heard stories of questioning, realization and acceptance. The audience then got the chance to ask the panelists questions.

The second part of the event was led by Rev. Barbara Child from the Universalist Unitarian Church. Rev. Child had us pair with someone we didn't know to talk about safe spaces and how we can create them. We then were given the task of writing ourselves a letter in which we described how we would take care of ourselves.

I was glad that we did not "preach to the choir." There were many people attending whom we never met before. These straight and GLBT people got a chance to learn what PFLAG and IYG do. Hopefully they came away with a new respect and understanding about GLBT people and their families.

It's at times like these that I realize what PFLAG means to me and how I have changed in the 10 years since I began attending meetings. We have to keep spreading the message and keep telling our stories. I am glad that we were given this venue through Spirit & Place.

MANY THANKS to all those who made this event possible: our amazing panelists, those who brought delicious snacks to share and our steadfast group of volunteers. There's always something we're working on and we're always looking for people willing to help. Please consider giving a little bit of your time in 2010 to support, educate and advocate for our LGBT loved ones.

"Volunteers are love in motion!"

Indy PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) is a group of people who share common experiences and provide support for each other. We listen and love. We help families have open, positive and loving relationships with GLBT children and we work for their civil and human rights.

Why do we hate? Academics seek answer in new field

By The Associated Press; 11.19.2009 3:03pm EST

(Spokane, Washington) Why did the Nazis hate the Jews? Why did the Hutus hate the Tutsis? Hate is everywhere, but the fundamental question of why one person can hate another has never been adequately studied, contends Jim Mohr of Gonzaga University, who is developing a new academic field of hate studies. The goal is to explain a condition that has plagued humanity since one caveman looked askance at another. "What makes hate tick?" Mohr, director of Gonzaga's Institute for Action Against Hate, wondered. "How can we stop it?"

Gonzaga founded the institute a decade ago after some black law students received threatening letters. It has since started a Journal of Hate Studies, hosted a conference and offered its first class on hatred last spring. The hope is that other universities will follow suit, said Ken Stern of the American Jewish Committee in New York, who has been involved in the effort. "We wanted to approach hate more intelligently," he said.

Stern, who has spent 20 years battling anti-Semitism, said the need for hate studies became obvious when people started fighting groups like the Aryan Nations, which once flourished in this area. Opponents galvanized against the Aryans, but didn't really know how best to fight them, Stern said. "We were flying by the seat of our pants," he said. "There was no testable theory." There is not even a good definition of hate, Stern contends.

Philosophers have offered numerous definitions: Rene Descartes said hate was the urge to withdraw from something that is thought bad. Aristotle saw hate as the incurable desire to annihilate an object. In psychology, Sigmund Freud defined hate as an ego state that wishes to destroy the source of its unhappiness.

Gonzaga, a Jesuit university best known for its basketball team, offered a class on the subject taught by five professors from different disciplines. Student Kayla De Los Reyes was in that class, and said the information both horrified her and gave her hope. "Hate is something that is part of the human emotional makeup," she said. "Everyone feels it at one point or another. You have to learn to control it."

The goal is to create an academic home where a variety of disciplines, including history, psychology, religious studies, anthropology and political science, can be brought together to focus on hate. It's the same sort of effort that led to the creation of disciplines like black studies or women's studies, Mohr said.

Such academic efforts are not without controversy. Some skeptics fear they are little more than attacks on the dominant power structure. "This stuff tends to be one dimensional and presumes the guilt of an archetypal white male," said Glenn Ricketts, spokesman for the National Association of Scholars.

Indeed, De Los Reyes said one of the more interesting topics in the class involved white privilege. The most recent Journal of Hate Studies contained articles about oppression of gays, Nazi experiments on Jews, the local battle against Aryan Nations, and Muslim support for suicide bombings. Heather Veeder, a graduate assistant for the institute, said the organization has an important mission. "Hate thrives in areas not illuminated by education," she said.

But Stern said it is too easy to blame ignorance for hate. People can have plenty of knowledge about something and still

hate it, he said. The problem is when one person or group can separate another person or group from their humanity, thinking of them as an "other," Stern said. "We dehumanize them and justify violence against them," Stern said.

There is no simple answer to why people hate, Mohr said. Hate can be sparked by greed, or fear, or a tribe bonding together in opposition to another. People looking to belong will hate others to fit into a group, he said.

With all the political conflict in the United States, it can seem that hate is on the rise. Some people seem to hate President Obama. Some hate Muslims. Some hate homosexuals. But Mohr said he wouldn't pursue a field of hate studies if he didn't think something positive could be achieved. "We can change," Mohr said. "There has to be hope."

Tips for a Happy Holiday for Friends and Allies

If you are the friend or family member of someone gay...

***Get support for yourself.** It is important to realize you are not alone.

***Take your time.** Acceptance may not come instantly, but be honest about your feelings.

***Don't be nervous** about using the "correct" language. Honesty and openness creates warmth, sincerity and a deeper bond in a relationship. If you are not sure what is appropriate, ask for help.

***Realize** that the situation may be as difficult and awkward for your GLBT loved one as it is for you.

Before the visit...

***Practice in advance** if you are going to be discussing your family member's sexual orientation or gender identity with family and friends. If you are comfortable talking about it, your family and friends will probably be more comfortable too.

***Anticipate** potential problems, but do not assume the reactions will always be what you expected.

***Consult** with your GLBT loved one when coordinating sleeping arrangements if he or she is bringing home a partner.

*If your family member is transgender, **practice** using the correct pronouns.

During the visit...

***Treat a GLBT person** like you would treat anyone else in your family.

***Take interest** in your family member's life. He or she is still the same person.

***Don't ask** your GLBT family member to act a certain way. Let them be their natural selves.

*If your GLBT family member is bringing a partner, **acknowledge** him or her as you would any other family member's partner.

*If your GLBT family member is bringing a partner, **include him or her** in your family traditions.

***Ask your GLBT family member** about his or her partner if you know they have one.

To talk with a parent who also has a gay son or lesbian daughter & to learn more about Indy PFLAG, please contact:

*Sarah (317) 545-7034

*Charlene/Oran (317) 897-0126

*info@indypflag.org

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