



**PFLAG**  
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

**ST. PAUL  
MINNEAPOLIS**

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Community  
Solutions Fund  
member

**A MONTHLY PUBLICATION BY AND FOR PFLAG MEMBERS**

**NEXT MEETING: September 15, 2002, at:**  
**Mayflower United Church of Christ**  
**Diamond Lake Road at 35 W in South Minneapolis**  
**1:30 p.m. Set up, conversation, library opens**  
**2:00 - 5:00 p.m. Program and Small Support Groups**

Program begins promptly at 2:00 p.m.  
You are encouraged to arrive any time before the regular meeting.  
Your assistance in setting up chairs,  
refreshments, and the literature table would be most welcome.

## Calendar of Events

**Sunday, September 15, 2002**  
**Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual**  
**and Transgendered People**

### 20th Anniversary Celebration

Mayflower United Church of Christ  
Diamond Lake Road at 35w in South Minneapolis  
2:00-5:00p.m.  
Bring Family and Friends  
Meet the Founding Members  
Celebrate our History and Imagine the Future  
(see page 4 for more information)

**Tuesday, September 17**

**PFLAG Board Meeting (see page 10)**

## A SPECIAL THANKS!

by Floyd Ward

There are several people without whom the PFLAG Pride celebration would not have been as big a success as it turned out to be.

**Claire Todd** — she set up the booth both days of the Pride Festival and filled in wherever we needed someone.

**Kris and Dale Gjerde** — they took charge of the Parade and helped tremendously at the picnic.

**Diane and David Grussing** — they set up the entire picnic area in our tent. This is the first time they have done this, and they did it very well.

**Pat Mingee** — Pat got us a truck for the parade and cleaned up the picnic area with friends.

**All those who donated** funds to the picnic — it enabled us to have our tent.

Without the people listed above, PFLAG's celebration of Pride would not have happened this year. So when you see these folks, please give them a special thanks.

The heat was a real problem this year and many chapters didn't participate in the parade or the picnic. Our contingent was about half the size as is usual.

We will hope for cooler weather next year!

## Cinderella: The True Story

by Peg Helminski

My daughter is a princess. This fact she knows clearly. She was, after all, rescued from a life of hard labor and dire poverty at the tender age of two when my husband and I adopted her from an orphanage in China. She was then magically transported across the ocean to an enchanted kingdom where peanut butter spreads on toast whenever she so desires and her shoes light up when she runs.

It is of little wonder then, that her majesty (now four years old) decrees that every night at bedtime, a princess story is required. After teeth are brushed, jammies are on, and prayers are said, I lie next to her on her bed and by the light of the night-light I tell whatever story she asks for. Occasionally, I get to speak of *Sleeping Beauty* or *Beauty and the Beast* or even *Snow White*. Most nights, however, *Cinderella* is the required story.

Before I go any further, let me emphasize that these stories are not my choice. I, personally, do not care for stories of weak women waiting for handsome princes to rescue them. Thus far, however, her majesty has shunned all stories of empowered damsels not distressed.

Life continued like this night after night, month after month. In every telling, the loving mama dies and the father marries a woman who turns out to be a wicked stepmother. Well, I'll spare both of us the rest of the tale, I am sure you know it. I had begun to think I was doomed to retelling this banal tale for the rest of my life until I took her with me to Loring Park one hot June Saturday. This was not any ordinary

Saturday. This was Pride weekend.

About five years ago, a friend I had known for more than 30 years, a woman I knew to be a strong Christian, left her husband, announcing that she was lesbian and could no longer live a lie. She had decided to embrace the true self God had created within her. This move of hers catapulted me into a desperate search for answers and truth. My heart was deeply troubled. Everything I had been taught told me that she was embracing a life of sin! I grieved! What would become of the eternal soul of this sister I loved?

Rather than just looking at what is clearly evident in her life and accepting it as truth, I asked, "How can this be?" I threw myself into a research project more extensive than my master's thesis. Though I have lost count, I have easily read at least a hundred articles, books, research papers, and church documents. (Maybe twice that!) These include Biblical commentaries, histories, medical and psychological papers, linguistic analyses, pastoral letters, and personal testimonies. I made it my business to talk with every voice I could find on the topic including priests, nuns, friends, former colleagues, and even a bishop. I looked into dark corners of the Church I never would have probed if not for this friend's new life direction. I even looked at the dirt swept under the ecclesiastical carpet.

It was a personal journey fraught with dragons — and no timely knights in shining armor! But that journey is a separate story for another day and now only serves to tell why I felt it was a priority to attend some part of Pride weekend activities.

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**Cinderella:  
The True Story**  
(continued from page 5)

Along the way to finding answers, I had made quite a few friends. As Pride weekend approached, it became clear to me that it was important to these new-found friends, for me to participate in at least some aspect of that celebration.

We couldn't go to the parade as my eldest son had a baseball tournament game at the same time, so I packed the princess and her eight-year-old brother into the red wagon, with a water supply and some sun screen and wound our way through the sweating mass of humanity at Loring Park that Saturday.

Those two cute little Chinese kids in the red wagon behind me drew a lot of attention. People (strangers) gave them stuffed animals, balloons, cookies, etc. We visited briefly with only a few folks we know, ate hotdogs, and drank lemonade. My kids crawled through the giant caterpillar and bounced in the bouncy room. They had a great time.

A few nights later, the princess decided to change the bedtime ritual. She said, "Tell Cinderella wrong." Usually she says, "Tell Cinderella long," meaning, "Don't take any shortcuts, Mom!" I tried to make her enunciate the 'L' and say "long" but she insisted she wanted the story **wrong** not **long** and got all giggly.

"Well, then, how do you want the story?"

"Not Cinderella."  
"Not Cinderella? Prunella?"

"Yes."

So I start telling the story of Prunella.

When I get to the part where her father marries a new wife to be the stepmother, she interrupts again. "I'm tired of this wicked stepmother. Let's have a wicked stepfather."

"You want the father to die and the mother to marry a wicked stepfather?"

"No, no, no! I want the father to marry a wicked stepfather!"

So, that night, I told my first story about a gay marriage and my daughter was delighted.

A few weeks later she said, "Mommy, tonight, I want two good mommies, two nice stepbrothers and two nice stepsisters. Oh, and a dog."

"You want the father to marry a nice stepmother after the mother dies?"

"No, I want the nice mommy to marry a nice stepmother after the father dies."

"O-kay,"

"You know, Mom, most kids have a mommy and daddy but some kids have two mommies. In the bouncy room, one girls had two daddies. I don't know why it happens that way, but sometimes it does."

"Oh," I said. "You are pretty smart for someone who's four."

"I know. I AM getting big, Mom. I'm going to preschool in September."

I am amazed that this revelation is so simple for her. She didn't have to read one theological treatise, not one medical, anthropological or linguistic study of original Biblical texts! She did not wade through any of John Boswell's footnotes or seek out any advice from esteemed theologians or trusted friends. I just left her alone in the bouncy room with a bunch of other kids for ten minutes and she came out transformed, educated, worldly — and far too informed to deal with anything as important as *Cinderella* (or friendship) in any old usual telling of the tale.

Why do we adults make it so difficult? Why can't we simply accept what appears as clearly evident? Perhaps if we simply make enough bouncy rooms and throw enough kids in there, they will giggle together and roll all over each other and bounce out their acceptance of each other — and the world will be a much better place! For that matter, maybe we should make some grown-up sized bouncy rooms ...

**Did You Know?**

In September of 1891, British physician and early gay-rights advocate John Addington Symonds published an essay that argued on behalf of homosexuality as a positive influence in society. Symond's family demanded that he remove his name from the English printings of