



Welcome

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2006. I don't know if you're like me but I am feeling that Christmas and New Year were so long ago now!

I initially thought we might ease into 2006 but it seems we are just as busy with many more plans and goals to achieve this year. There is still so much to do and PFLAG Brisbane are working towards achieving acceptance and equality for all through education and awareness. I hope you enjoy our first newsletter, and I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

- Shelley

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Saturday the 18th of March, at 1:30pm. Our guest speaker will be Mr Graham Norton - Senior Health Promotion Officer (of the Queensland Aids Council).

Graham will be discussing homophobia and the issues involved for families and young people who are LGBT in rural areas. Graham was also involved with PFLAG in New South Wales.

Our meetings are located in the QuAC building - located at 187 Melbourne Street, West End (cnr. Edmonstone & Melbourne Streets). Parking and entrance located at rear of building (off Edmonstone Street).

While we check the main front door to the building before the meeting begins, the conference room is around the back and we won't be able to hear anyone knocking on the front door.

Please enter via the rear glass door next to the car park.

Annual General Meeting

Our annual general meeting will be held at the next meeting (March 18th).

If you would like to be involved with the committee or hold an official position, please contact us (see back page for PFLAG Brisbane contact information).

Events - Sexpo

Love it or loathe it, the Health Sexuality & Lifestyle Expo (Sexpo) has come back to Brisbane again for yet another year.

With 70,000 - 80,000 people passing through the doors of the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre during the exhibition each year, Sexpo provides PFLAG with a positive way to expose our organisation and its efforts to the greater population.

For many in the LGBT community, PFLAG is the only stand at the exhibition that supports and represents the gay community. Many thanks to those who volunteered to make our stand the success it was for 2006.

Helpline

PFLAG Brisbane now has an official mobile "helpline" number. Many thanks to Grainne, Lynne, Maggie and Meryl who have volunteered to take on this very important role for PFLAG, and will share the task amongst one another. The number is **0400 767 832**.

Order of Australia Medal

As many of you may have already heard by now, Shelley has been awarded an OAM for "raising the public's awareness of issues of acceptance, tolerance and equality for the LGBT community and support for their families."

When asked about her honorary award, Shelley said "It was an absolute shock when I received the letter informing me [of the award]! You can not imagine how hard it was to keep this secret for three months."

News of the award made it to News Limited's 'news.com.au' website, and also the website of Sydney Gay & Lesbian newspaper, the Sydney Star Observer (www.ssonet.com.au/display.asp?ArticleID=5025)

Shelley was sincerely honoured but humbled, that those in PFLAG and others from the gay community went to so much trouble for her to receive recognition in this way.

Shelley wishes to thank everyone involved, and assures you that they "...all know how to keep a secret!"

Event - Mardi Gras

A large group of parents & young ones are attending the Mardi Gras festival & parade in Sydney this year. Many of us have marched before and know how exciting this day is for the gay community and for us as PFLAG parents.



'The PFLAG ute' - 2003 Sydney Gay & Lesbian Mardi Gras parade

However, for some parents it's a huge step to be publicly acclaiming their LGBT son or daughter. Well done to all the first timers who are marching this year. For many (including Shelley's husband Don - who is very happy to stay in the background) there is some trepidation about what to expect.

A big congratulations must go to one set of parents who for many years have known about their much

loved son being gay and have been accepting of him, but have never taken the steps to out themselves to friends or family. Much to their sons' joy, 2006 is the year they're taking the amazing leap and have decided to march with their son!

For more information about the festival & parade, visit www.mardigras.org.au.

Website Update

If you run a website, it's always very interesting to find out how many people visit it, where they come from and what they do while they're on the website.

Our web hosting provider Big Budda Boom, have provided us with some very interesting statistics, which their software has been collecting since the site was moved to their servers in September 2005.

Since the move in September, the month of November has definitely been the busiest on the site - with just over 10,000 hits. Coming in second, is October, with 7500 hits, followed by January (2006), with over 6000 hits.

October & November in 2005 both shared "11am-Noon" as the most popular hour of the day to visit the site. Interestingly, for January 2006, the PFLAG Brisbane website was most popular during the "10-11pm" timeslot.

The most popular document on the site is Shelley's free eBook, "Sexuality is not a choice", which was downloaded more than 311 times in December. So far (at the time of writing), it's been downloaded more than 750 times. Newsletter downloads from the site have also proved popular. The most popular page is always the website's homepage, but January saw the Worldwide Links page as the second most popular, followed by the Coming Out page.

Generally, most of our website visitors are surfing from Australian computers, but others are coming from the United States (including Educational & Military computers), the United Kingdom, Italy, and Cyprus.

Our website address is www.pflagbrisbane.org.au.

Please note that our website statistics software does not collect or contain any personal or identifiable information about site users.

Event - Movie Night

On Saturday February 4th, a group of PFLAG parents (Grainne, David, Lynn & Kieran) & friends (Andy, Russ, Iain & Joel) met for a night out at the movies... but it wasn't just any old movie in your average cinema - it was gay cowboy romance *Brokeback Mountain*, in none other than (a fully booked) 'Gold Class' cinema!

The evening began with some nibbles and wine at the bar, followed by an emotional two-hour widescreen rollercoaster. Tears were shed, hands were held (that was just some of the parents!) and a good time was had by all!

Most of those in our group were moved by the journey that *Brokeback* took us on - rating it 8's and 9's out of 10.

Check out the ***Brokeback Mountain*** article in this newsletter for our editor's reflection on the movie.

QuAC & PFLAG to have a new home!

It seems that the Queensland Aids Council (QuAC) & PFLAG are on the move again. This time, our move takes us to a permanent home (we always knew that the West End building would only be for up to 2 years).

At the time of writing, it is envisaged that the new location will be in the Newstead / Teneriffe area. While it's a little further away for those on the Southside, parking will be much, much easier here.

Many thanks to QuAC for including us in the move. We are always very appreciative of the economic and emotional support they give PFLAG and our team of volunteers.

Can you help?

A PHD candidate from the School of Psychology at University of Queensland (who is doing research concerning gay men and the conflicting issues of sexuality and religion/spirituality) contacted PFLAG recently hoping members may know someone

interested in taking part in this particular study. The research has been cleared in accordance with the ethical review process of UQ and is within the guidelines of the National Health and Medical Research Council. If you're interested in participating or would like more information please contact...

Nasrudin Subhi
School of Psychology UQ
Phone 07 3365 7385

Brokeback Mountain

[Editor's Opinion]

Whoever said that *any publicity is good publicity*, was right - for *Brokeback Mountain* has had about as much free advertising as any movie in it's class has probably ever had. Whether its heated debate on local talkback radio, or headlines in the press overseas, *people are talking* about *Brokeback Mountain*.

If cinema chain Birch Carroll & Coyle's session times are



anything to go on, it's proving a popular flick with audiences - showing at least four to six times a day in their Brisbane cinema's, and at least once (twice on weekends) a day in Gold Class... (sessions, including the one we attended, have been completely sold out!).

While I won't ruin the ending or tell you what the movie is about (there are plenty of websites out there, and by now, many of us would have already heard something about the movie), *Brokeback*, although set in the 1960's,

shows through the use of minimal dialogue, what many members of the GLBT still experience in some parts of the world today - a desire to simply be with someone they love, but to live a lie behind a brave facade in order to be 'accepted' by those around them.

After viewing the movie, it is easily understood just why Brokeback has been nominated for so many awards. Although dialogue is minimal (and when there is, it takes the audience a moment to snap back into their strong accents), the story is told incredibly well through the use of breathtaking scenery and powerful camera angles. True to its

era, country music is used in pub & bar scenes, but the movie has a powerful way of replacing dialogue with music. When the cowboys aren't saying it, you certainly know what they're feeling.

Scenes up the mountain are often accompanied by an emotional orchestral soundtrack, which features a strong yet simplistic acoustic guitar sound.

I would highly recommend this movie. Not just those who identify as LGBT, or know someone that is, but to everyone out there... even if to just open the eyes of our society a little more. *Verdict: A strong 8.5 out of 10. Also worthy of purchase once available on DVD.*

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PFLAG is totally voluntary & organised by parents. Please support us. You can assist by advertising here. For more information, please contact Shelley Argent.



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connecting your senses

The PFLAG Brisbane newsletter is designed & compiled by Andy Pudmenzky of Big Budda Boom

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