

adoption of *Forward Together* as the international theme makes a stand of unity for 1986. The conference keynote speaker, GRNL's Executive Director Nancy Roth stressed the importance of erasing the lines that keep us from our own.

Roth also pointed to the need for education on every level of society, says Schmitz. "Everyone must get involved; share your ideas; submit a design for a logo, whatever you do helps us all. Lesbian & Gay Pride begins with you."

Parents FLAG plans Portland parley in '86

The Portland chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays will host the 1986 convention of the PFLAG organization. Plans for the event, October 9-12, 1986, have been brewing for some time; speakers, workshops and performances will educate, stimulate and delight the expected 400 national delegates. The 3½ day event will be held at the Westin Benson Hotel.

The theme of the '86 conference will be focused on religious concerns of parents, friends, lesbians and gays. "The issue of how to justify homosexuality within a religious context is a consistent concern of parents and friends as well as lesbians and gays," says Kristan Aspen. Aspen and her parents are longtime gay and lesbian rights advocates and members of PFLAG.

Aspen says that women are especially encouraged to offer workshop topics and leaders to conduct them. "The majority of the input has come from the male point of view," Aspen continued. "Parents need to know how the lesbian and gay communities share some concerns and differ in others. And they need to know that feminism is integral to many lesbians and gay men."

For more information write Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, PO Box 23026, Portland, OR 97223.

Insurance crisis hits home

For thirteen years, the Portland Feminist Women's Health Center has operated as a non-profit, woman-controlled clinic, providing Northwest women with high-quality reproductive health care, information and referrals. Health care providers across the country face a malpractice insurance crisis. Many doctors and clinics, regardless of medical specialty or "safety record," are having

coverage cancelled and are unable to find new insurance carriers. Many insurance companies no longer offer malpractice because of the high risk of incurred claims payment, which means lower profits for the company. Where insurance is available, the cost of premiums has tripled or quadrupled.

The crisis will have a dramatic impact on the availability of all forms of health care, but will most affect primary care facilities with low-cost or sliding-scale services. Most abortion and family planning providers fall into this category. After twelve years of successful struggle against political barriers, women now find their access to reproductive health care further threatened by the insurance market.

The Portland Feminist Women's Health Center's malpractice policy expires soon. For several months they have conducted a nationwide search for a new carrier. The only option open at this time is to join other abortion providers in starting a new insurance company. To do this, they must contribute \$27,000 towards initial costs and their first quarter premiums.

The health center has raised some monies by cutting their budget and by having physicians and staff donate part of their services. They still need more and are asking for donations. Donations may be sent to Portland Feminist Women's Health Center, 6510 SE Foster, Portland, 97206.

New custody law affects lesbians, gays

by Cynthia Cumfer

The Oregon legislature recently passed a bill (House Bill 2460) that could have potentially far-reaching impact on people who, in fact, act as parents but do not have the legal status of parents. Since this describes many men and women in the gay and lesbian communities, I would like to discuss some of the features of the bill. This Bill became law effective September 20, 1985.

House Bill 2460 allows any person, including, but not limited to a foster parent, step-parent, grandparent or relative by blood or marriage, who has established emotional ties creating a child-parent relationship with a child, to intervene in court proceedings concerning custody, placement or guardianship of the child. The Bill also permits such persons with a child-parent relationship to file their own proceeding, if no such proceeding is pending, in order to obtain an order providing for custody, placement of the child, visitation rights, or "other generally recognized rights of a parent." However, the Bill specifically indicates it does not grant any right to

intervene in a marriage dissolution case.

According to the law, a child-parent relationship is a relationship that continues on a day-to-day basis, through interaction, companionship, interplay and mutuality, that fulfills the child's psychological needs for a parent, as well as the child's physical needs. If the person filing the case or intervening in the case can show that that person has maintained this type of child-parent relationship with the child with substantial continuity for two or more years, that person will be considered to have established what is called a "prima facie" case of a child-parent relationship. This means that it would then be up to whatever other parties are involved in the case to show why such a relationship does not, in fact, exist or should not be recognized. The person filing for custody, visitation, placement, or other generally recognized right, must either establish such a "prima facie" case in order to get the rights petitioned for, or must prove facts showing that what that party wants is in the best interests of the child.

It is not clear whether House Bill 2460 would allow a person who is not a legal parent of the child but who has, in fact, acted as the parent of the child to legally adopt the child. In one section of the Bill, the legislature does recognize the right of a step-parent to apply for adoption of the child. The Bill is silent as to whether it intends that other parties can apply for adoption.

There are a number of situations of interest to the lesbian and gay communities to which this law may apply: (1) when a lover dies and the partner wants custody of the children; (2) when a lover leaves town and wants a non-related significant person to have custody of the children; (3) when an ex-partner wants to establish visitation or custody with the other partner's children after a relationship breaks up; and (4) adoptions, including adoptions where the biological parent of the same sex keeps her parental status (although it is unclear whether the law will go this far). This new law is definitely one the lesbian and gay

communities should be aware of.

Special Note: A Multnomah County judge recently signed an adoption decree permitting the non-biological mother to adopt a child she is parenting with the biological mother. This is apparently the first adoption of this type granted in the United States.

Cynthia Cumfer has been an attorney in Portland for seven years. Her practice emphasizes the law concerning unmarried couples and families.

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