

We are family

Our families are the ones who stand by us. In my community, I know that when we're needed, we're there.

BY JESSE CRAWFORD

Family. The word means a lot of different things to many cultures and people. In rural Southern Oregon, when family comes to mind I see my community of friends as my family. Oh, yes, I have a blood family, too. Among blood family, even though I am out, I'm treated with the same respect in which I grace them. My folks are great; I wish everyone's could be the same. Unfortunately, the opposite is often the case. I know of a number of good sons/daughters/sisters/brothers/uncles/nieces, who have been rejected, cast out, and on occa-

visit his folks, and family and friends, back East. They knew of his visit four months in advance. He had sent literature for them to read about his condition. Two weeks before his trip his folks called and told him that if he visited their house, seven of his brothers and sisters said they would never step foot in their parents' house again. Only one of his brothers told him his condition would not stand between them. His mother said, "What would the neighbors think?" The friends he was to visit had the same reaction. To me, that was not his family. They didn't even have the time to read the literature he had sent. That hurt him the most. They did not deserve his love. My dear friend died very shortly thereafter. His gay family were the ones who stood by him.

Our families are the ones who stand by us. In my community (despite our different viewpoints) I know that when we're needed, we're there. I see that more and more every day in the gay community — and, not so amazingly, from a growing number of concerned non-gay people, as well. These people have welcomed us into their community and we also have welcomed them into ours. We are each others' families and support. We have to be for those who have none.

When we, in Douglas County, first formed GALA we celebrated at parties and dances where one of our all-time favorite dance songs of unity was, and still is, "We Are Family." Those who feel it, know it and share it.

Jesse Crawford, a past president of GALA, Gay and Lesbian Alliance, serves on the GALA Switchboard and Newsletter Committees, and on the MCC Board of Directors. Crawford was also instrumental in organizing Roseburg's first public gay and lesbian demonstration last November.



The Roseburg Report

sion, get the hell beat out of them, sometimes sending them to the hospital. Family homophobia and violence, whether mental or physical, destroys the person.

Recently, a dear friend with AIDS was to



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Photo by Nancy Kato, Seattle

Merle Woo, Asian American lesbian and socialist feminist, won reinstatement at UC Berkeley after being fired because of her sexuality, politics, sex and race. She is now battling a second termination.

March for Merle. March so that discrimination can't rob anyone's job.

Oct. 11th

ASSEMBLE: 9:00 am at the Ellipse, 17th St. & Constitution Ave. [Behind the White House] March starts 12 o'clock pm. Rally at the Capitol, West Terrace!

National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights



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- ☐ Host a Fundraiser
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- ☐ Please send information on how I can get involved

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Design, Typesetting & Labor, donated by Mike McNamara, Seattle