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## LIVING OUT BY SALLY SHEKLOW

# Why I'm Going to PRIDE

**B**ecause of Orlando.  
Because just yesterday I reverted and referred to my wife as "my partner."  
Because my gay friend's 70-year-old lesbian sister has yet to come out of the closet.  
Because lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people are the most likely targets of hate crimes.

Because Skye Mockabee, 26, found dead in a parking lot in Cleveland, Ohio, July 30 is the 17th transgender woman of color murdered in the U.S. this year.

Because queer and gender non-conforming youth are still bullied and shamed and rejected and made to feel their lives aren't worthwhile.

Because the 2016 Republican platform condemns the Supreme Court's ruling for marriage equality, supports protections for business owners whose "religious beliefs" prevent them from serving same-sex couples, promotes conversion therapy and denounces opening school bathrooms to transgender people.

Because the 2016 Democratic platform applauds the Supreme Court's recognition of our right to marry; guarantees equal rights in housing, employment, public accommodations, credit, jury service, education and federal funding; opposes state efforts to discriminate against LGBT individuals, including restriction of access public spaces; supports a progressive vision of religious freedom that respects pluralism and rejects the misuse of religion to discriminate; vows to combat LGBT youth homelessness and improve school climates, support LGBT elders, ensure access to necessary health care and protect LGBT people from violence — including ending the crisis of violence against transgender Americans; will promote LGBT human rights and ensure America's foreign policy is inclusive of LGBT people around the world.

Because my rainbow HILLARY pin arrived in time to wear at PRIDE.

Because I need the reminder that I'm part of an amazing and wonderful diverse queer community. Because there's so much to celebrate.

Because this summer President Obama designated the Stonewall Inn the first-ever national LGBTQ monument.

Because lesbian actor Lily Tomlin is the first out performer to receive the Screen Actors Guild Lifetime Achievement Award.

Because Brittney Griner and six other out U.S. lesbians are among the 44 publicly out LGBTI athletes competing in Rio, the most ever for any Olympics.

Because the U.S. Navy is naming a new Military Sealift Command fleet ship the "USNS Harvey Milk."

Because PRIDE is one public place where I can hold hands with my wife without feeling self-conscious.

Because PRIDE is the best place to wear my tie-dye rainbow T-shirt.

Because I like running into queer friends and allies.

Because I owe it to my community to show up and represent and contribute and be counted.

Because I support the queer-owned and queer-supportive businesses that will have booths there.

Because queer and queer-friendly police will be there to protect and serve.

Because I like rainbow swag.

Because the queer community is creative and resilient and fun and beautiful.

Because it's important to see each other being ourselves and celebrating our diversity.

Because it's fun.

Because I'm proud of our progress and all we've accomplished.

Because being in queer spaces affirms and uplifts and re-energizes us.

Because of all these and lots of other reasons I am definitely, happily and proudly going to PRIDE.

*Award-winning writer Sally Sheklow has been sharing her out-and-proud lesbian life in EW since 1999. She will be attending the Eugene PRIDE Festival noon – 6 pm, Saturday, Aug. 13, at Alton Baker Park.*



## LANE COUNTY FARMERS MARKET

Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday 8th and Oak St, Eugene

Saturday, Aug. 13th: Celebrate National Farmers Market Week!

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