

FAIRNESS

C A M P A I G N

August
2007

Join Fairness for Fun and Outreach at the Fair

Fairness Campaign's 15th year at the Kentucky State Fair is coming up this month! Over the last fifteen years, we have reached tens of thousands of people from all across the state with our message that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people have the right to respect, dignity and full equality. Being a part of our outreach at the Fair is a fun way that you can make a difference! Meet new people, see old friends and help find new supporters for Fairness! Bring a friend, family member, or partner...but most importantly, bring YOU! If you join us at the Fair for a four-hour shift, we'll pay for your admission! The Kentucky State Fair is Thursday, August 16 through Sunday, August 26, and shifts are morning (9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.), afternoon (1:30 - 5:30 p.m.), and evening (5:30 - 9:30pm).

If you've never gone to the Fair with us, or you're feeling rusty, please join us at the office for a brief orientation on any of the following days: Sunday, August 5 (4 p.m.), Tuesday, August 7 (6 p.m.), Wednesday, August 8 (noon), or Thursday, August 9 (6 p.m.). Please call the Fairness Campaign today at 893-0788 or email volunteer@fairness.org to schedule your shift!

We also need help getting ready. Join us for a volunteer night (or day) at the Fairness Campaign office. We'll be making buttons and t-shirts, calling volunteers, preparing fliers, mailing tickets...you name it! Give us a call or just come on by on Wednesday, August 1 (6-9 p.m.), Thursday, August 2 (6-9 p.m.), Saturday, August 4 (noon - 4 p.m.), and Wednesday, August 8 (6-9 p.m.).

Do you have great pictures or an affirming message that we should include in our slideshow? Do you have a flat screen TV or monitor that we can show it on? Do you have a truck and some time to help us load in and out? If so, give us a call at 893-0788 and plan to join us at the Fair!

Special Interest Session Saga Continues – Our Rights Are at Risk

As this newsletter goes to press, reports out of Frankfort suggest that Governor Fletcher will continue to call legislators to return to the special session called in July or perhaps even call another session in August. The Governor's so-called "special interest session" initially included over 60 legislative issues and included a specific challenge to U of L and UK's ability to offer domestic partner benefits for their employees. Many thanks go out to our supporters who called and lobbied with the Fairness Campaign during the short and unnecessary special session.

While the Kentucky Senate remained in session for several days in July, that chamber did pass a bill by a vote of 28 to 6 that would not only strip universities from offering domestic partner benefits, but would permanently preclude any "public agency" (any entity that participates in the state health care plan or retirement system such as university staff, public school teachers, government employees, and even some non-profit agencies) from offering domestic partner benefits. Denying gays, lesbians and unmarried couples access to employee benefits that include basic health care insurance is cruel and simply immoral. Once again, this is an issue of fairness, no more, no less.

We know that the right-wing forces will continue to use this issue as an election year lighting rod this fall and again next year. It's absolutely essential that we keep up the pressure on state legislators to prevent these mean spirited, anti-gay measures from gaining traction. Speak out! Be heard! We will not be silent!

PLAN TO ATTEND

ACLU's Bill of Rights Dinner, August 30, 6:15 p.m. cocktails, 7 p.m. dinner at the Kentucky International Convention Center, 221 S. 4th Street, more info contact: info@aclu-ky.org

Reproductive Freedom Project event, Sept. 29, 3-5 p.m., more info contact: rpf@aclu-ky.org

Kentucky Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression's Unity Dinner, Sept. 29, 6 p.m., at Louisville Gardens, 525 W. Muhammad Ali Blvd., more info contact the Alliance at 778-8130.

Voices of Kentuckiana's Beaux Arts Ball, Sept. 29, 7 p.m., at the Marriott Downtown, featuring The Kinsey Sicks' *Condoleezza*. Ticket information available at www.BeauxArtsBall.com.

15th Annual Louisville AIDS Walk, Sunday, Sept. 30, 3 p.m., the Belvedere. www.louisvilleaidswalk.org

Louisville Youth Group – support and social group for LGBTQ youth 14 – 21, weekly meetings. Call 499-4427.

PFLAG – Louisville - Monthly meeting, 3rd Sunday, 3 p.m., 1st Lutheran Church, 417 E. Broadway. Call 329-0229 for information.

you can
make a
difference



Louisville AIDS Walk

September 30, 2007

A Decade of Wanting You...

Be part of celebrating a community building tradition at Carla Wallace's 10th Annual Lawn Party on Sunday, August 26 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friends of Fairness from throughout the county and beyond will share time with old friends, make new ones, relax under the canopy of the oak trees and enjoy the delicious buffet prepared by Wiltshire Pantry. More than one party-goer has remarked that this event is the highlight of their summer months and regulars return year after year.

In a continuing tradition that honors the long-standing relationship in the work for equality and justice, the Lawn Party benefits the Fairness Campaign and the Kentucky Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression. Everyone is invited and you should receive an invitation to the event soon. Your RSVP will be greatly appreciated. Please call the Fairness Office for more information at (502) 893-0788 or to receive a formal invitation for a friend. We look forward to seeing you at the Lawn Party later this month.

Fairness Float Wins Award



The Fairness Campaign's Pride float won the top prize in the Kentuckiana Pride Parade in June. Congratulations to the exceptional team of volunteers who designed and built this award-winning celebration of Fairness pride!

Radio Show Wins Award

The power of community education that dismantles stereotypes and myths about LGBT people was recognized recently when local radio station WFPL's *State of Affairs* program on the topic of Gender Identity, featuring long-time transgender rights activist Dawn Wilson and therapist Richard Coomer, received a national award in July from the Public Radio News Directors for call-in programs. Congratulations on this exceptional work that helps foster understanding and creates a better place for all of us to call home!

A Culture of Disrespect

We've heard rumbling of late that the Fairness Campaign isn't "gay enough". "Why does the organization seem to always be out in front on these 'other' issues?" We would posit that it all boils down to our inability to accept a culture of disrespect. The Fairness Campaign was founded on the premise that everyone should be treated equally – not just the gays, the lesbians, and the transgender folks of the world, but the black and the brown, the poor and the rich, the young and the old. That's why our motto from the beginning has been "Fairness = Everyone".

One recent example of Fairness' opposition to injustice that some in the greater community didn't seem to understand can be found in the Derby weekend performance of Shirley Q. Liquor at a local gay nightclub. A group of Fairness supporters spoke out against the performance of Chuck Knipp, a gay white man who dresses up in blackface and women's clothes to portray a welfare mother with 19 children, many named after malt liquor brands and venereal diseases. You've probably seen the recent LEO article on Shirley Q. or perhaps you saw Knipp's performance in person. The question for many of us is "Where is the outrage?"

There isn't much – especially in the GLBT community, which is the primary audience for Knipp's act. In fact Knipp refers to his core audience as "gay men, their moms and rednecks."

Some people say that we need to just lighten up, suggesting, "Knipp is funny and it's just entertainment. It doesn't hurt anyone." Really?! Think about it.

The racial stereotypes that Knipp perpetrates demean poor black women on so many levels. The problem lies in the fact that the audience leaves a performance finding it acceptable to laugh at other people, to make fun of people based on a perception of who a person is merely by their race, their class, their sexual identity, their gender. It does hurt someone.

And it hurts the less than "manly" teenage boy in high school who gets called faggot walking down the hall, and the softball playing young girl who's labeled a dyke. Stereotypes hurt. That's why it should matter to the GLBT community – because this type of "acceptable humor" breeds a society where it's acceptable to disrespect your fellow human beings, which in turn slowly leads to a higher threshold for disrespect. Today it's "faggot" in the hallway, tomorrow it's gay bashing behind the bar.

One of the best answers we've heard on how to combat such a climate can be found in the July 2007 issue of *Ebony* magazine by the Rev. DeForrest Soaries, Jr – the mediator between Don Imus and the Rutgers University women's basketball team during that recent controversy. He breaks the needs down to four things:

One, we need education. We've got to start almost from scratch dealing with the development of an agreement on what respect is.

Second is mediation... We've got to train people as Martin Luther King Jr. did in being able to mediate the confrontations that occur to ensure that we can get past disrespect.

The third level is transformation. Both institutions and individuals will have to embrace a new behavior.

Last, we need to affirm. ... We have to affirm the people who represent what we say we believe in. You can't get rid of disrespect, but you can get rid of it being normal. It's the restoration of shame. One of the things that drives older people crazy is there seems to be no shame. And where there's no shame, there's no honor. And where there is no shame and no honor, you have complete social breakdown.

This topic needs to be discussed and voices of concern must be heard. We'd love to hear your take on it. That's why the Fairness Campaign is putting together a night of dialogue to discuss this issue and more. We'll use Shirley Q. as the jumping off point, but the conversation is about more than that. Why should we all care about racism, misogyny, classism, as well as homophobia? What's acceptable and what's not? Why? Maybe you really find Shirley Q. funny – come and tell us why. We'll be announcing a date for the dialogue in the near future and we hope you'll come be a part of the dialogue.

The question for many of us is "Where is the outrage?"

Out & About Dinner November 10

This year Kentucky Fairness Alliance's *Out & About* dinner event will be held Saturday, November 10 (the weekend following the fall elections) at the Frazier International History Museum in Louisville. This event, KFA's leading annual fundraiser, will benefit both KFA and the Fairness Campaign and support their collaborative work to stop anti-gay attacks in the General Assembly, defend domestic partners benefits for public employees and to win a statewide Fairness law in Kentucky.

The fundraiser, which will honor leaders working for change across the state, will include a silent auction, dinner, awards, a featured speaker and musical entertainment. The guest speaker is Vic Basile, the first executive director of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). He also co-founded the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, was executive producer of the documentary *After Stonewall*, served in the Clinton administration and currently serves as executive director of Moveable Feast. Moveable Feast prepares and delivers groceries and food to individuals and families in need in Baltimore and Maryland's Eastern Shore who are dealing with HIV/AIDS. He also is currently co-chair of the HRC Foundation board.

Louisville's own Robbie Bartlett will provide entertainment featuring her fabulous voice singing many of your blues and jazz favorites.

Sponsors for the event are still being confirmed and include Kentucky's leading corporations and institutions, local businesses and individuals as well as national GLBT organizations. Sponsors currently committed include Lexmark, the University of Louisville, the University of Kentucky Office of Community Engagement, HRC and Out & Equal Workplace Advocates.

The festive event will be held from 7 to 11 p.m. at the Frazier International History Museum, 829 W. Main Street in Louisville. Tickets are \$125 per person. Fair-minded folks from throughout the Commonwealth will be in attendance at this third annual event for KFA. *Out & About* rotates location within Kentucky each year. This marks the first time the Fairness Campaign has also been a beneficiary of the event.

To purchase tickets, volunteer to be a table captain, gather more information or to inquire about sponsoring *Out & About* 2007, please go online at www.kentuckyfairness.org. You may also call the Fairness Campaign office.

United States Social Forum – Another World is Possible / Another U.S. is Necessary

June 27 to July 1, 2007 members of the Fairness Campaign traveled to Atlanta for the first ever United States Social Forum. Based loosely on the model of the World Social Forum and guided by fourteen charter principles, the USSF was an experience in movement building from the ground up. The result was an inspiring array of opportunities that engaged and built relationships with other activists and groups working for systemic change. The USSF was the place to be for public space events, film festivals, cultural performances, art exhibits, poetry slams, programming in issue-based tents, workshops and more.

Corporate globalization and repressive political policies have left deep marks on our communities: increasing poverty; multiple oppressions rooted in class, race, nationality, gender, sexuality, ability and age; environmental destruction; and increasing militarism. The trip gave participants the opportunity to develop the bold collaborative visions, leadership, and strategies that we need to realize the call from our community: Another world is possible! Another U.S. is necessary.

This trip proved to be a life changing experience for many. It also connected the Fairness Campaign with many local ally groups working for equality and Fairness, specifically in the southeast region. We were able to experience and challenge the notion of how damaging single-issue organizing can be and that true change comes when we act in coalition and work to build movements that share values, spark ideas, prompt reflection and provide space for unity and new, alternative solutions.

By attending and participating in this forum, the Fairness Campaign remains committed to sending a message that collective people's movements can effectively challenge hurtful policies and create lasting change that builds a cooperative community of peace, justice, equality, solidarity, and self-determination.

The Campaign's new website is scheduled to launch this month. Check out our new look at www.fairness.org and learn more about how you can be involved in the work for equality!

Electing Fairness-Friendly Candidates Takes You

One person can make a difference, and CFAIR offers the chance for many people to make a huge difference in the November general election and beyond.

By helping to elect Fairness-friendly candidates, volunteers ensure the continuation of local equality ordinances, increase the likelihood for passage of statewide Fairness legislation and keep at bay those who would write hate and intolerance into Kentucky's laws.

CFAIR is the political action committee (PAC) of the Fairness Campaign. The committee needs your help in the coming months to identify and support candidates who support equality for all citizens of Kentucky. CFAIR interviews and endorses candidates in local and state electoral races.

Volunteers may use their skills and enthusiasm in these areas: Interviewing candidates who seek CFAIR's endorsement;

Volunteering for and contributing money to campaigns of endorsed candidates; and Committing to a term as a CFAIR board member.

Voters across Kentucky will cast votes in November for numerous key statewide offices including Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Auditor and State Treasurer. It's essential that friends of Fairness understand candidates' positions on issues that impact their lives and get out and vote for the candidates who understand the fundamental importance of equality and justice for all citizens.

The anti-equality, anti-fairness radical right boasts a strong political network, and CFAIR's work along with that of its allies is crucial to combating that influence. Every person who volunteers makes a difference in which philosophy triumphs: the politics of hate and division, or the politics of equality and unity.

Whether you enjoy walking precincts, working the telephones, stuffing envelopes, hosting meet-the-candidate events, or something else, your help can move Kentucky forward this fall. Add your voice, enthusiasm and skills to our effort to secure equal rights for all Kentuckians. Please call the Fairness Campaign office at 893-0788 to volunteer for CFAIR.

**Watch for
CFAIR
endorsements
in mid
August!**



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Join Fairness at the Fair!
Volunteer Daily August 16-26



Fairness believes gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people have the right to respect, dignity and full equality.

We believe that dismantling racism is central to our work and that all issues of oppression are linked and can only be addressed by working in coalition.

Join us in the work to make Louisville and Kentucky better for all. Renew your membership today by sending a contribution!



FAIRNESS

CAMPAIGN