



**BONNER COUNTY  
HUMAN  
TASK  
FORCE  
RIGHTS**

# THE RIGHTS STUFF

JUNE 2006

THE RIGHTS STUFF is published—occasionally—by the BONNER COUNTY HUMAN RIGHTS TASK FORCE. Helping with this issue were: Lynn Benson, Brenda hammond, Gretchen Hellar, Phil Deutchman & Christine Holbert.

## • THE LARAMIE PROJECT •

*by Brenda Hammond*

*The Laramie Project*, a play about the reaction of the citizens of Laramie, Wyoming, to the murder of Matthew Shepard, is being presented at the Panida's new Little Theater on July 7 & 8 and again on July 14 & 15. It is produced by the Looking Glass Theatre Company and directed by Deborah McShane, assisted by Steve Neuder.

The play was written by Moises Kaufman and the Tectonic Theater Project, after interviewing more than 200 people from Laramie about their reactions to the tragedy of Matthew Shepard's death in 1998, and to the media scrutiny to which their town was subjected. It was originally an exercise in group journalism, in which the interviewers spoke to the characters they would eventually write about and then portray in the play.

The unique power of this play is its ability to present the unsettling questions raised by this event regarding the potential for violence instigated by homophobia in a small town in America. These questions are presented through the voices of the inhabitants of that town. They come from the hearts and minds of those citizens, without the added emphasis of any judgmental rhetoric.

The cast of fifteen actors includes Ron Ragone, Linda Robey, Jim Shirrell, Jeremiah Hatch, Gail Cory-Betz, Greta Weber, Kate

AcAlister, Kim Borst, Annette Kemp, Hope Rainbow and Hannan Vogel. The presentation is sponsored by PFLAG—Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays—and the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force.

Be watching the local newspapers for final details—and take this opportunity to see this thought-provoking work and visit the outstanding “Little Theater” that has been created of what was once the Kamloops Bar & Grill.

## • FOURTH OF JULY PARADE •

*by Gretchen Hellar*

Sure it's fun to watch the parade, but it is even more exciting to march in it. The Human Rights Task Force will be strutting up First and Cedar Streets to show our commitment to helping to create a community where everyone has the freedom to be the best that they can be. We invite all of you to join us and stand up for the principles we all celebrate on this day.

We will have colorful banners, a great group of people, and a sunny day (we hope). Please join us and experience the positive reaction we always receive from the crowd. The audience's warm reception indicates that our community is dedicated to human dignity and respect.

Stop by the desk at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Church at 9AM on the morning of the parade to ascertain our location in the parade line. Bring your kids, your parents, your in-laws, a sign, even your dog (Please bring a “pooper scooper” if your pet accompanies you.). Let's make this a day of paying tribute to human rights.

## • COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE •

*by Phil Deutchman*

At its recent Board meeting of 5 June, 2006, the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force established the COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE. The Committee is gathering news accounts and other materials that document that detainees held in custody in Afghanistan, Iraq, Guantanamo Bay, and elsewhere have allegedly been tortured. The committee will then compose an “Open Letter to the President of the United States,” asking that he issue executive orders to all U.S. agencies that have been potentially or allegedly involved to cease to engage in these practices.

If you have any news reports or information you'd like to share with the Committee about this issue, please send them to: phil\_deutchman@yahoo.com.

## • SPRING FORUM A SUCCESS •

*by Lynn Benson*

The community hall was filled with participants eagerly waiting for the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force Annual meeting and Spring Forum. We were so fortunate to have speaker, Noemai Ban, a Holocaust survivor, as our presenter for the evening program.

Ms. Ban also presented for two days to a variety of our schools as well as to the Spring Forum. She was well received by all who heard her story, especially the children, who sat spellbound during the presentations.

Noemi told us that she shares her experiences as a way to honor her loved ones who died during the Holocaust and to promote the belief that sharing is healing. If you missed the opportunity to hear Noemi Ban in person, you can access her story at <http://SharingisHealing.com> or purchase a DVD of her lecture at the Spring Forum from the Task Force. Please call the Task Force office at 263.0275.

## • THE LOST BOYS OF SUDAN •

by Gretchen Hellar

The East Bonner County Library and the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force are pleased to present a moving documentary entitled *The Lost Boys of Sudan*. This documentary won an Independent Spirit Award and earned two Emmy nominations when it aired on the PBS series *P. O. V.*

Orphaned as young boys in one of Africa's cruelest civil wars, Peter Dut and Santino Chour survived lion attacks and militia gunfire to reach a refugee camp in Kenya. From there, remarkably, they were chosen to come to America. Safe at last from physical danger and hunger, a world away from home, they find themselves confronted with the abundance and alienation of contemporary American suburbia.

We learn not only about their lives but also a little about ourselves. *The Lost Boys of Sudan* will be shown on July 26<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM at the Sandpoint library. Mark your calendars for this unique experience.

## • HUMAN RIGHTS QUOTES •

True generosity consists precisely in fighting to destroy the causes which nourish false charity.

—Paolo Friere, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Peace, in the sense of the absence of war, is of little value to someone who is dying of hunger or cold. It will not remove the pain of torture inflicted on a prisoner of conscience. It does not comfort those who have lost their loved ones in floods caused by senseless deforestation in a neighboring country. Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where the people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free.

—HH The Dalai Lama

## • THIS YEAR WILL BE EVEN BETTER •

by Gretchen Hellar

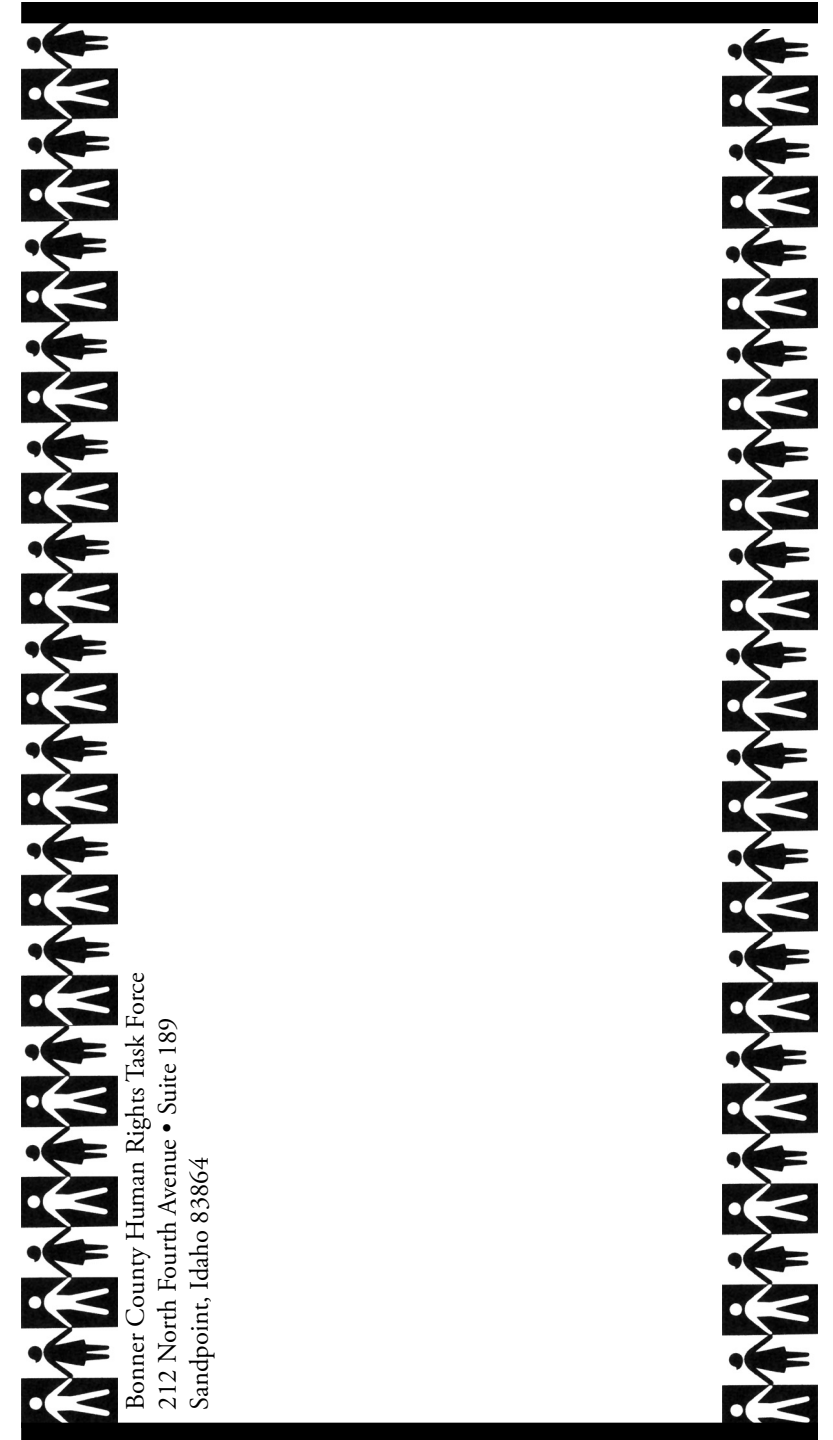
On June 30<sup>th</sup> between 5 pm and 7 pm at the Garden at Sand Creek Grill (105 South First Street, Sandpoint) the Foundation for Human Rights Action and Advocacy (FHRAA) will be holding its annual fundraiser. If you attended last year, you already know that event was outstanding—fabulous food, great music, an exciting silent auction, beautiful weather, an enchanting setting. Most importantly, everyone got a chance to meet other folks committed to human rights and dignity. This year's event promises to be equally as exciting and fun.

In addition to not missing a good time there is another reason to mark your calendars for this notable event. Teaching our youth how to effectively resolve conflicts in a peaceful yet open manner will have ramifications throughout their lives and in our community. In fact, the theme of FHRAA's program is "Empowering Young People with Skills for a Lifetime." Is there any more important task? Spending a couple hours with committed people on a beautiful summer evening for a good cause—what a way to celebrate what is best in our community.

All donations to FHRAA are tax deductible and all of its funds are used to support human rights education in our community. FHRAA is requesting a \$10 donation, and promise an fun evening. Please support their efforts; we look forward to seeing you on June 30<sup>th</sup>!

## BCHRTF WEB SITE

Coming soon, you'll be able to find current news about the ongoing work on the Task Force on an updated web page. Our web page has been dormant of late, but it will soon be refreshed with new information. Also, a software improvement will allow members of the Task Force board to post updates much more easily. Visit us at <[www.bchrtf.org](http://www.bchrtf.org)> and make your suggestions known!



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