

Profile: Pam Spaulding

Durham resident captures nationwide attention with website
by Jim Baxter . Contributing Writer

North Carolina resident Pam Spaulding is the editor and publisher of the progressive weblog "Pam's House Blend." Her motto is "always steaming," and she's not just talking coffee. "Pam's House Blend" is ranked in the top 100 progressive political blogs. The popular site, which averages 85,000 visitors a month, was honored as "Best LGBT Blog" in the 2005 Weblog Awards.

"I've been doing 'Pam's House Blend' since July 2004," she says. "I just decided to rant about the anti-gay state of the political landscape in an election year. I didn't have any expectation of anyone out there 'listening' or commenting.

"I slowly gained a readership from posting links back to my posts at other blogs, such as Americablog, and by cross-posting my material at Daily Kos."

Michael Rogers, editor and publisher of gay blog PageOneQ.com, says "Pam is certainly the most important lesbian blogger in America. She's a lesbian in a gay blogging world that is overwhelmingly gay men. She's a blogger as a woman in an overwhelmingly male-dominated world and she's of color and the internet is so skewed to the privileged."

She was a featured guest at this year's National Lesbian and Gay Journalists

Association annual meeting in Miami Beach in September, where she took part in a panel discussion entitled "Advocacy + Personality + Journalism = Blogging." The room was packed.

Michael Jensen of AfterElton.com, who was the moderator, came up with the panel idea, Spaulding recalls. "He's a regular reader of the Blend and we both covered the Laurel Hester story." (Hester is the former New Jersey police officer who won the right to leave her pension benefit to her partner.)

"So he asked me out of the blue, and I accepted," Spaulding continues. "It was a great panel, well-attended and the journalists there had a lot of basic questions about how one starts a blog, how you generate readership, can you monetize your blog — most of us cannot do it — etc. Because I often take on the religious right, I was asked how I deal with hate mail or threats."

Spaulding's not afraid of controversial topics, on the web or in person. She has spoken at national forums and performed the first-ever live-blogging event for the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network's annual dinner in May 2006.

Spaulding lives in Durham, N.C., with her partner Kate and their three dogs. "We've been together two years in July and we're actually legally married in Canada," Spaulding boasts. "We wanted to be married legally somewhere on the planet, and of course you can't be married in Massachusetts."

Wedding issues come "up every so often," on her web site she says. "Usually when I blog about marriage amendments and make reference to the fact that Kate and I are legally married in Vancouver, I still receive emails — maybe a couple a month — from people who want to know what is involved regarding getting married in Canada, and I point them to various resources I found when setting matters up."

Spaulding put up a post last month about the Wisconsin amendment battle. "Fair Wisconsin, the equality organization there, had just started running commercials locally there to educate people," she says. "They have a wonderful commercial up now talking about two women. One of them had adopted a child, and one of them came down with terminal cancer. It demonstrates all the different hurdles her partner had to go through, and what rights she was not entitled to. It's pretty amazing.

"I find that a lot of sympathetic straight allies are woefully undereducated about marriage equality," she said.

Spaulding recounted a conversation that

she and her partner recently had with a woman who, while supportive, was amazingly uneducated on the issues.

"She thought same-sex marriage was legal in several states [and] that [anybody] could marry in Massachusetts," Spaulding recalls. Out-of-state same-sex couples cannot marry there if their home state doesn't recognize gay marriages. "She [knew] we could marry in Canada."

According to Spaulding, though, she wasn't aware "that states [are] successfully passing marriage amendments." Every one that has made it to the ballot has passed so far.

"Until we can educate people who would support us and get this issue on the radar for them," she argues, "how can we expect to fight the right wing?"

She pauses for a moment, then laughs. "That's one of my soapboxes!" For Spaulding — it's just one of

many. Check out her website — like caffeine, it's addictive. ▀

info: www.pamshouseblend.com



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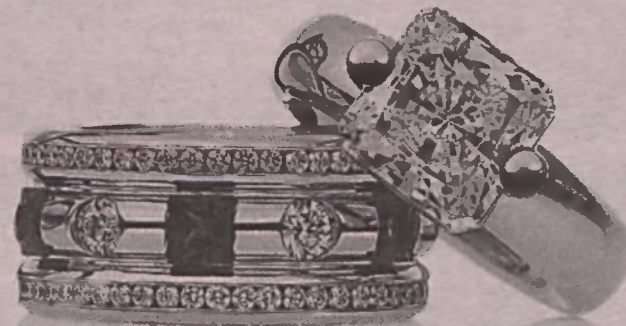
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