

Pod Parents Online

Richmond Dad Puts Gay Parenting into the Ether

BY ROBYN MAGUIRE

What do you get when you mix a gay father, journalist, advocate and self identified computer geek? You get the perfect host and producer of The Gay Parenting Show on the Podcast Network, Scott Sherman. He also writes for *Out in the Mountains*.

Sherman produces the show dedicated to GLBT parenting issues in the basement of his home in Richmond, using cutting-edge technology to reach GLBT parents around the globe. His goal has been

provides resources, as well as a blog (also on the Podcast Network) where he journals frank accounts of both the joys and challenges of gay parenting.

In his most recent entry, Sherman shares with readers his family's experience of having their baby, Michael, taken away after 18 days because the biological mother decided to keep her child. Notably, the blog was written just two days after his family's loss (called a "revocation"). For Sherman, exposing some of the harsh realities of gay parenting is part of his mission.

"There are certain risks with parenting and this is one of the

issues that non-gay parents don't face.

"We have been extremely, extremely blessed. Our son is an amazing gift and we think he's perfect. We became parents and we became deeply affected by it. The specific incident that got me into advocacy was when we were reported for child abuse. It really radicalized us."

It seems fitting that Sherman reaches GLBT parents through podcasting, an arguably radical alternative to mainstream media.

The Podcast Network, which hosts Sherman's show, was founded by Cameron Reilly and Mick Stanic who struck out to provide the public with a better choice for entertainment and news.

"We were sick to death of the total and utter homogenous rubbish that mainstream commercial media companies were producing and flooding the radio and TV waves with," Reilly said. "We thought we could work with talented, creative people from around the globe to produce programming that appealed to real people."

And it's catching on fast with listeners. Reilly cites a prediction by media industry analysts that by 2010, 60 million people will tune into podcasts.

It's easy and anybody with computer access can listen to podcasts using any basic media-player software. Listeners can search for topics through iTunes, Google, and podcast directories. To find Sherman's show, listeners can plug "gay parenting, podcast" in the Google search bar and they will find links to The Gay Parenting Show podcast.

The Podcast Network has faced some backlash for hosting The Gay Parenting Show, but Reilly seems to take it in stride.

"We've received plenty of positive feedback on the show, all of it due to Scott's talent and personality as a host. We're excited to have The Gay Parenting Show on TPN, as we believe it's a subject that deserves much higher public awareness and support."

Reilly said. Even Motorola has taken notice. It's a new sponsor of The Gay Parenting Show and an obvious score for Sherman. Setting his sights on additional advertisers, Sherman is looking to prominent names in the baby industry, including Baby Gap and Pampers.

To check out The Gay Parenting Show, go to <http://gayparenting.thepodcastnetwork.com>.

Robyn Maguire is the field director for the Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force; she lives and writes in Winooski.



"There is no glossy mainstream media out there that's widely distributed and really talks about gay parenting issues."

— SCOTT SHERMAN

(at right, with son Sasha and husband Marty Rouse)

to fill a need that is often unmet by the more mainstream GLBT media outlets such as the Advocate, and podcasting is his newest tool. A podcast is an audio show similar to a radio broadcast available through the Web in various formats.

"There is no glossy mainstream media out there that's widely distributed and really talks about gay parenting issues. And there are a lot of voices that are not being heard so I thought that podcasting is a great way to get it out there," Sherman said.

The show's format is simple and is a bit of a family affair. Listeners are greeted by Sherman's 5-year-old son, Sasha, followed by an interview with a guest and a wrap-up, which includes an action alert. It usually runs 45 minutes to an hour long with only one commercial break. Sherman is energetic, on point and personable in his interviewing style.

Using the Internet as a way to reach GLBT parents is not new for Sherman. He has a website, www.gayparentingpage.com, that

risks. It's difficult. This is part of why I do it [podcasting]."

With listeners tuning in from Germany to Alabama, it's clear that Sherman is welcomed into the homes of GLBT parents everywhere who are seeking information and a connection with other GLBT parents.

Dave McGarvey, a manufacturing analyst with 3M Corporation from Petaluma, CA, and a gay father of three, is a podcast connoisseur of sorts. He has listened to each of the Gay Parenting podcasts and finds Sherman's personal touch and professionalism refreshing.

"Just having someone who's willing to share his life in an honest and open way is nice.

He's so much like any other parent," McGarvey said.

Sherman's advocacy for GLBT parents began when he and his partner were falsely reported for child abuse, a charge that he characterizes as motivated by homophobia. He wrote about the issue for *Newsweek*. It was then that Sherman recognized that GLBT parents face a host of

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