



P.O. Box 24565 Los Angeles, CA 90024 (310) 472-8952 <http://www.pflagla.org>

December-January 2001

Newsletter 208

OUR MISSION

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) promotes the health and well being of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered persons, their families and friends through: **support**, to cope with an adverse society; **education**, to enlighten an ill-informed public, and **advocacy**, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

Our meetings are always held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at the Westwood United Methodist Church, 10497 Wilshire Bl., NE corner of Wilshire and Warner. Take 405 Freeway to Wilshire Bl. East exit. Continue 1.5 miles. The entry on Warner has an elevator; another entry is through the sanctuary to the corridor, then upstairs to the Fellowship Hall - 3rd floor. There is also easy access from the north driveway. Doors open at 6:30 pm.

PFLAG starts each meeting with a rap group where individuals can share their concerns, questions and understanding about and with the gay person or persons in their families. After the rap session, we generally have a speaker or panel of speakers whose topic includes subjects pertinent to the families, gays and lesbians. If needed, a separate group for people wishing to share and learn about people with AIDS (PWAs) is held, along with a Spanish speaking support group facilitated by Spanish speaking parents.

OUR NEXT SPEAKERS

December 19, 2000

In what seems to be an annual tradition, Lynette Sperber will be lead a panel consisting of Angie Kiehl, Stuart Huggins and Harold Kameya for our December meeting. When we go into schools we have a message to deliver, and Lynette is among the best at getting that message across. Please join us, and join in this exciting presentation.

January 16, 2001

Bruce Cohen and his producing partner Dan Jinks recently won the Academy Award for the film *American Beauty*, starring Kevin Spacey and Annette Bening. In addition to his many other industry accomplishments including the *Flintstones*, Bruce is involved in a wide variety of volunteer activities in the g/l/b/t community. Bruce co-founded the group OUT THERE, a collection of gay and lesbian entertainment industry activists in 1995. He has raised money for and been involved with GLAAD, the Human Rights Campaign, the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center, and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Bruce has been greatly involved with national, state and local politics, and has served on the Board of Directors of OUTFEST. Please come and hear this dynamic personality at our January meeting.

HELPLINES, CHAPTERS & CONTACTS 9 am to 9 pm**Area Code 310**

West LA: 454 6681 (Liz) LIZARM@aol.com

West LA: 472 8952 (Adele)

South Bay Chapter: 373 2351

Area Code 323

291 2990 (Elfi Martin)

Area Code 562

Long Beach Chapter: 984 8335

Area Code 626

Pasadena Chapter: 914 1241 (Denny)

Area Code 661

Santa Clarita Chapter: 254 2177 (Peggy)

Area Code 714

Orange County Chapter: 997 8047

Area Code 805

Ventura Chapter: 498 4964 (Rita or Steve)

Area Code 818

Studio City: 788 8678 (Lynette) Lynette114@aol.com

Woodland Hills: 340 8945 (Irene & Alvin)

Area Code 909

Claremont Chapter: 624 6134

Redlands Chapter: 335 2005 (Kathy)

Area Code 949

South Orange County: 380 7035

OTHER HELPLINES / RESOURCES

Spanish Speaking:

(323) 465 1008 (Silvia)

(310) 453 8506 (Angela)

African American:

(323) 731 0888 (Shirley)

Asian Pacific Islander:

(818) 368 2008 (Ellen) HKameya@juno.com

Parent of person with AIDS:

(818) 342 1064

LA Gay & Lesbian Center:

(323) 993 7400

Straight Spouses:

(626) 449 3267 (Onnolee)

TREVOR - 24 hr suicide prevention line

for gay, lesbian, bisexual and questioning youth:

(800) 850 8078 www.trevorproject.com

Merging Identities:

One of the National Conference for Community & Justice's programs that helps gay, lesbian and bisexual youth develop positive identities relative to sexual orientation, culture, religion and family.

(213) 250 8787 www.nccjla.org

Hablando Entre Hombres

Spanish support group for Latino Gay Men

(213) 273 8723 (Ramon Ramirez)

(213) 273 8715 (Walfred Lopez)

PFLAG National

(202) 467 8180 www.pflag.org

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

If there is anything you would like to see in the newsletter, please e-mail me at haichi_ca@hotmail.com, call me at (323) 460-4849, or just drop me a note at our PFLAG meetings! Happy New Year! Chris Haiss

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Since our last Newsletter was mailed, many exciting events have taken place. I have just returned from Portland, Oregon and our 2000 National PFLAG Annual Meeting. As you may be aware at our annual meetings we have elections of Board members and Regional Directors. Some of our National leaders retire, and some leave because of term limits.

With the retirement of Paul Beeman our National president, because of personal reasons, we have elected a new President, Arnold Drake, a physician from the Memphis, Tennessee area. We have also elected new National officers. Carolyn Wagner is a vice president, Gary Watts our secretary and Kelly Kirby returns as our treasurer. There has also been a turnover in the Regional Directors Council with Carole Benowitz now serving as the new Chair of the Council, and a vice president on our Board.

The following is a brief part of the acceptance speech from Dr. Arnold Drake, our new PFLAG National President, given at the annual meeting. "A final word about my plans as your president. You have elected an outstanding group of talented persons for your Regional Directors and National Board. You have a capable and dedicated Staff. You have asked us to work for you. We plan to discuss all these issues and more. And you have asked us to design and lead you in successful national programs to bring our PFLAG message to even more people. I promise you that with over 80,000 households, with 30,000 active members, and 21 Board members, all of whom feel passionately about PFLAG, we will disagree. That is inevitable. But I promise you that we will reach a consensus, and we will be active. We will work very hard for you."

I am pleased not only being your Los Angeles Chapter President, but to represent you as a National Board member, and be a part of such a wonderful and talented group of dedicated PFLAG leaders and staff members. Please continue to support our National organization with both your moral and financial assistance.

Larry Sperber

IN MEMORIAM

TERESA GONZALEZ

Sadly we've lost a long-time PFLAG member. Ten years ago, Teresa, in her capacity as a city librarian, helped PFLAG to have books on gay men and women placed on the shelves of public libraries in Los Angeles. She died of breast cancer at age 42. Teresa is survived by her partner Beatrice.

JUST A REMINDER

We are enclosing an envelope for your TAX DEDUCTIBLE annual dues and/or a year end TAX DEDUCTIBLE donation to PFLAG.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated. We are all in this struggle together, and every little bit you give goes a long way.

Thanking you in advance. Larry Sperber, President

Torrance School Board votes to add PFLAG to their approved speakers list

By George Unger

Tuesday, September 5. Just got home from the meeting. It started at 7:45 pm and I left at 11:15 pm after the board had voted (but not the end of the board meeting). Everyone in the audience was given a chance to speak and I'd estimate that of the crowd of 60-80 people, approximately 30 people got up and spoke to the board. All but one of the speakers ask that PFLAG not be allowed to speak at the school. I was amazed at statistics they would quote and how homosexuals brought AIDS in and how PFLAG promotes the homosexual lifestyle. There was a very large group of Christians in the group and they were adamant of how PFLAG was intolerant of any viewpoints other than their own. Everyone wanted to know how PFLAG got invited to speak to the school. Before the meeting a candidate running for State Assembly by the name of Mr. Felando passed out a sheet on the incumbent's voting record promoting deviant sexual behavior in the schools. Many of Sheila Kuehl's proposals were listed. The crowd gave emotional pleas not to allow PFLAG to influence their young children. Many local Christian pastors spoke and used statistics like the average life expectancy of a homosexual man was 41 years old and that the statistic of 10% of the population being gay is a wrong.

So at the end of this the 5 school board members got to say their words and I'm glad to say that our presentation to them did change the mind of at least one of the board members. The tally was

Mr. Driskell - no Dr. Blishke - yes Mrs. Ashcroft - no Mr. Kuwahara - yes Mrs. Wilson - yes

I thought Dr Blishke gave the best talk at the end explaining to the parents that this was one day of Human Relations week. Mr. Driskell said that he did some research and two of the reasons that he would vote against PFLAG as an approved speaking organization is that PFLAG has a national agenda based in DC and they support same sex marriage which he believe shouldn't be discussed in the school. Also that he our presentation to them was "over emotional" and these emotions could easily sway young minds and he wished PFLAG at the presentation would have made a statement basically acknowledging there are groups out there with opinions on homosexuality that are different than those of PFLAG (again, intolerant to the viewpoints of others)

As a side note, Mr. Driskell also tried to modify the proposal that the board was voting on and his modification was voted down.

Congratulations on a hard fought victory! The board showed a lot of courage voting for such an unpopular (at least in the parents eyes) group.

ASIAN & GAY?

Harold and Ellen Kameya are working with other Asian Pacific Islander (API) parents to start a support group directed toward the cultural needs of their various ethnic groups. They are being aided by members of the Gay and Lesbian Center and the Gay Asian Pacific Support Network (GAPSN).

This group, the Los Angeles API PFLAG Family Project, will be a project of the Los Angeles Chapter of PFLAG. Their first official meeting will be held on Feb. 11th, 2001.

Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence
753 Arroyo Parkway Suite I-200
Pasadena, CA 91105

Dear Sisters:

On behalf of The Los Angeles Chapter of PFLAG I want to thank you for your most generous donation of \$250.00 from the proceeds of your annual softball game. All members who attended from our chapter indicated they had a terrific time.

Larry Sperber
President-PFLAG-Los Angeles

SPREADING THE WORD IN THE COMMUNITY

Lynette Sperber was one of 5 speakers at a Press Conference for "Close the Book on Hate" campaign launched by the Anti-Defamation League and Barnes & Noble bookstores nationwide. "Close the Book on Hate" is a partnership between ADL and Barnes & Noble designed to provide children and their parents, caregivers, teachers and civic leaders with resources and programs to help end prejudice and discrimination in all of its forms. The campaign's goal is for participants to gain respect for members of our community and increase understanding and tolerance for our differences. It coincides with the release of "Hate Hurts", a book that will guide us in our fight against racism, anti-Semitism, and homophobia.

Lynette and Larry Sperber had the pleasure of attending the Los Angeles premiere of "That's a Family". The same producer and director of "It's Elementary" created this wonderful documentary that is a must see, and should be required viewing by all students, of all ages. Larry Sperber urges all PFLAGERS to contact Women's Educational Media at 415-641-4616 or wemfilms@womedia.org to find out how you can obtain copies for your chapters, and/or school districts.

A brief report from the Days of Protest

Monday, September 11, 2000

By Sharon Fane

We gathered at the gates of Paramount Studios on Monday morning for the second time to stand with our children and friends to protest the promotion and sponsorship of the toxic Ms. Schlessinger. We had hoped the "powers that be" would get our message at the March protest but they didn't so we had to come back.

"No More Mathew Shepards", "I am not a biological error", "Paramount, why do you hate me?" "Dr. Laura, You need to be educated", the bobbing placards proclaimed for the decision makers to read.

How we wish it would not be necessary for us to stand at the gates of this Los Angeles-based film corporation with such heartbreaking messages. But we had to remind them that their support of this mean-spirited hater of GLBT community is not acceptable!!! Who she is and what she says causes danger and pain to our loved ones and we will not tolerate those who pay her to "entertain". Whether or not she ever mentions gays or gay issues on the television show is not the point. She is a blatant homophobe and does not deserve a forum. One of the speakers suggested that David Duke would not be given a show, even a cooking show, just because he would not be mentioning race. He is still David Duke, an identified racist.

Another speaker said that no "celebrity" would be given a show on any topic who had called African Americans "biological mistakes". It just would not be done.

The speakers asked why a corporation would dare to support this homophobic, hate-spewing pseudo "doctor".

Not a matter of free speech, she is certainly free to say whatever to whoever will listen. But we were there to let Paramount know, in no uncertain terms, that we will not tolerate their giving her a forum in exchange for advertising dollars. And a few words of strong warning were issued to those sponsors who continue to support the show. Our community will be watching and buying or not buying.

The speakers were effective. The crowd was not huge. The media attention was. For that we are grateful.

We hope they got the message. If they did not we will keep coming back until they do.

ABOUT OUR CHILDREN

BETTY FOX

On the back window of our Camry, Roger and I have a bumper sticker that says Diversity is Our Strength. How true for us. We have been strengthened by the diversity in our family. We have four children, two boys and two girls. Perhaps even this is diversity.

Fortunately for us, three children live in Oceanside, only about five miles from where we live. Our oldest has a tire shop in Oceanside, and he and his wife have three grown children and one grandchild, (our great granddaughter). We were certainly pleased this year when Richard drove his monster truck in the Gay Pride Parade.

Our older daughter, Nancy, has two grown children. She too drove in the Pride Parade in her red convertible. One of her children, our granddaughter has been in a relationship with an African-American for four years now. More diversity.

And of course there is our younger daughter, Linda who came out to us in 1990, of all places, in a counselor's office where we were in family counseling with Nancy dealing with the problems arising before and since the recovery of her husband's addiction. Although, I had seen signs of her lesbianism from the time she was two years old, I was unprepared for the realization. I knew that she had tried to tell me something on various occasions but something always held her back. Now we knew, but it mattered not in our relationship. Fortunately for Roger and me, our church was beginning the process of becoming Open and Affirming.

We attended all of the forums and learned more and more about homosexuality. We met several gay and lesbian people and really began to be enlightened. Most importantly, we met Rocky and Jeanette Velgos at a forum at our church. I always say, PFLAG found us when we needed the support and education that they provided.

Linda has always been special since she was born seven years after her brother, Charlie. Now with this revelation, she was even more special. After she finished college, she served in Guatemala for three years with the Peace Corps. She has traveled more than our other children and has participated in various types of work. At present, she is working for her brother at his tire shop. There isn't anything that she can't do, if she puts her mind to it. Her future plans are to study more about computers, and she and Emma plan to pursue this type of work.

She has had three deep relationships, and we grew to love each one like another daughter. So many people are unhappy with their children's mates, but she has always picked very special people. She and Emma are now in their fifth year together. Another special thing is the continuing relationships that she has with male friends, purely platonic, but they remain good friends through the years. Nancy and I are sometimes envious because it is frowned upon for heterosexual married women to continue relationships with male friends.

Our involvement with PFLAG and our becoming better acquainted with gays and parents of gays have enriched our lives. It is with pride that I can say our family's diversity has made me stronger. Participating in the PFLAG meetings, marching in the Pride Parade with Pilgrim Church behind the PFLAG contingent, and being involved with the gay issues at Pilgrim and PFLAG has become a very important part of me.

I want to mention Charlie, our younger son, who lives in Placerville, California. He and his wife had difficulty in conceiving so they finally decided to adopt. We were pleasantly surprised when they brought home Ethan, who is Fijian and very brown. Now they have added Steven, who is African American, making their family definitely stronger with diversity. Life has been good to us, especially our children and especially Linda.

Thank you, Betty Fox,
for sharing your story!

If YOU have a story about the coming out of your child/ren you'd like to share with us, please e-mail it to me at haichi_ca@hotmail.com or fax it to 323.460.4849.

Your story can help
other parents & families!

Netherland chamber gives approval to equal marriage

By Will O'Bryan / Washington Blade / September 15, 2000

With little dissension, the lower house of the Netherlands Parliament on Tuesday passed legislation to allow same-sex couples to marry rather than "register". Dutch advocates of Gay equality are proclaiming that the legislation will give the Netherlands the first legally recognized same-sex marriages in the world.

"The Netherlands is the first country in the world who will open the traditional marriage to same-sex couples," Robert Wijland, a spokesperson for The Dutch Association for the Integration of Homosexuality, identified by the acronym COC, told the *Blade* Tuesday via e-mail. "It is more extensive than the partnership registration that other countries have."

"There are some differences with the adoption of the children in a [same-sex] relationship," Wijland pointed out about the new legislation. "You have to obtain custody through the courts. Otherwise, the traditional marriage will become open to same-sex couples." An adoption measure proposed with the marriage legislation would allow married same-sex couples to adopt Dutch children, according to COC.

Further, at least one member of such a marriage must be a Dutch national, according to the Dutch Gay newspaper, *De Gay Krant*.

The legislation, endorsed by President Willem Kok, his cabinet, and the parties that dominate both houses, still must pass Parliament's upper house, but passage there is expected to come easily, Wijland explained. A spokesperson for the Embassy of the Netherlands in Washington, D.C., confirmed.

"Hopefully it will be implemented the 1st of January 2001," Wijland said.

"I'm very happy," said Mark Wagenbuur, who watched the vote with his partner. Wagenbuur told the Associated Press, "What happened today represents changes in our society." He joked that, while he and his partner now plan to be formally married, they are uncertain who is supposed to offer the proposal.

As the Netherlands already offers a registry for same-sex couples and accords them the same basic rights granted to traditional married couples, this new legislation is somewhat symbolic. Nevertheless, it would set a precedent.

"I think it's a clear step forward," said Scott Long, director of programs and research at the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. "Any time you get the same rights, it's a positive thing. I don't see it as assimilation. ...I don't think a law like this is going to make [Dutch Gays] dissolve into the rest of Dutch society."

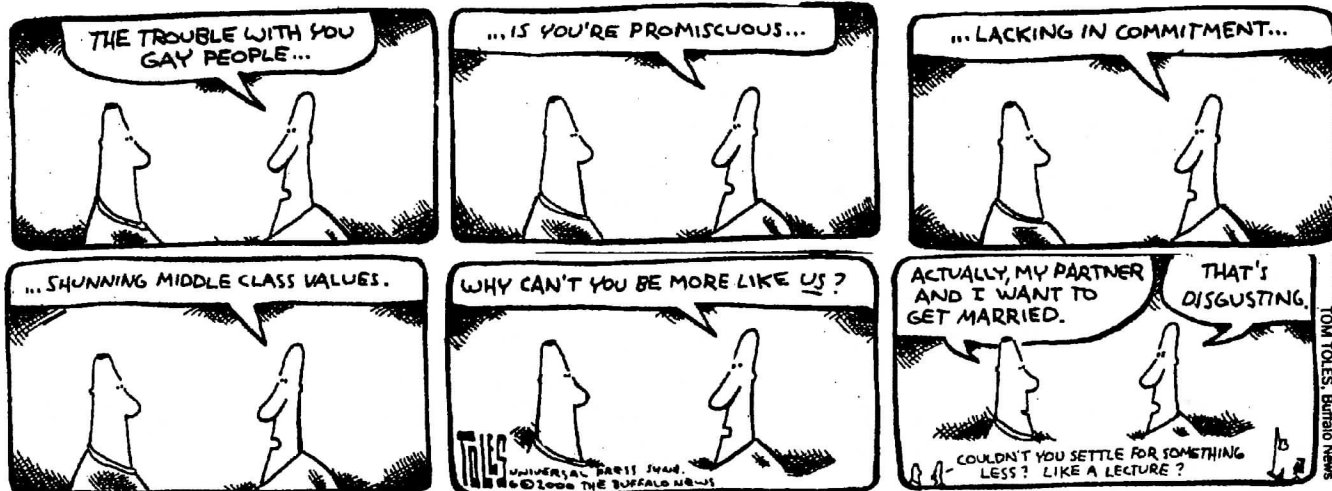
In 1989, Denmark became the first country in the world to offer official recognition of same-sex couples, doing so in the form of "registered partnerships," which are often referred to as marriages. A major difference between marriage and the partnerships, however, is that under Danish law, registered same-sex couples are not allowed to adopt children. One partner may, however, adopt the other's child.

Several countries have followed suit – to varying degrees – with similar legislation, such as France, Sweden, and Brazil. In the United States, California recognizes registered domestic partnerships, while Vermont offers same-sex couples "civil unions" which provide all state-level entitlements that come with legal marriage.

Should a spate of newly married same-sex Dutch couples travel beyond the Netherlands' borders, however, it is uncertain to what degree their marriages will be recognized.

Evan Wolfson, director of the Marriage Project of the New York-based Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, said that only "time will tell" how same-sex Dutch marriages might be received in the United States, although he did offer an opinion: "This is not 'Gay marriage,' it is not 'same-sex marriage.' This is marriage," he said. "The United States firmly owes the respect to its NATO ally and to couples legally wed to honor and respect their legal commitment."

The Dutch Foreign Affairs Ministry has offered to assist married same-sex Dutch couples who encounter problems abroad, according to AP.



Wrestling With Mixed Emotions Over Child's Self-Discovery

By Kathleen Kelleher / Los Angeles Times October 9, 2000

Before Gilbert Morales had mustered the courage to come out to his parents, his father made the discovery himself. He had pried open a locked wooden chest where his son kept photographs of and letters from his first boyfriend. Morales' father immediately ejected his son, then 18, from the family's San Gabriel house.

For the next six years, Morales' life was a tornado of different jobs, drug addiction and constant moves. He finally found shelter in a transitional housing facility run by the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center in Hollywood, got off drugs and contacted his mother. Two months later, he visited.

"I said, 'I am gay - so let me know now if you can't deal with it because then I won't bother you,'" recounted Morales, now 25. His mother assured him that she could handle it. "She is cool with it now," said Morales, who works as an outreach specialist at the Jeff Griffith Gay & Lesbian Youth Center, a Hollywood drop-in center. But Morales remains emotionally estranged from his dad.

"I really feel like my mom is both parents," he said.

Morales' family's reaction to his homosexuality is a reminder of how difficult the process of coming out can be for gay and lesbian youths. No matter how many gay and lesbian characters are elevated in the popular culture, gay and lesbian youths "still feel an incredible sense of being the only person coming out in the world because they are usually the only gay person in their family, in

their neighborhood or their high school," said Vernon Rosario, a child psychiatry fellow at the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute.

"Parents are the most difficult to tell because acceptance and validation by parents is one of the most fundamental needs one has," said Ian Stulberg, director of education and training for Mental Health Services at the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center. "My father was the first person I told, but I think it was unusual that I felt safe enough in his love to risk rejection from him."

That was in 1965. Stulberg was 15. "I broke down at the kitchen table crying," recalled Stulberg, who said he told his father that he had "homosexual feelings" and that he was miserable because he wanted to be "straight." "My father didn't want to see his son in such emotional pain, and he didn't want me to live like that," recalled Stulberg.

His parents offered unwavering support. Unlike other painful life passages parents may share with a child, parents don't personally know the isolation and shame of being gay. "If you suffer prejudice from society," said Stulberg, "most people can go to their parents about the bigotry. But that is not the case with most gays and lesbians because the family may harbor the very same prejudice that society at large does."

It was 1968 when Adele and Lawrence Starr found a note in their West Los Angeles home from their son, Philip. "He wrote: 'Mother and

dad, I have left home. I am a homosexual,'" said Adele. "We were scared out of our wits," she said. "I never knew anything about homosexuals except all the negative things you hear."

It wasn't until 1973 that the American Psychiatric Assn. Removed homosexuality from its diagnostic manual's list of disorders. The American Psychological Assn. Passed a resolution to support the move two years later.

None of that would help the Starrs as they grappled with their son's letter. They published a personal ad, which read: "Philip, we love you." Someone showed the ad to their son, and he came home. Philip Starr saw a therapist, who quickly announced that he was "normal."

Meanwhile, his parents found invaluable support and information from other parents of gays and lesbians and helped establish a local chapter of Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. PFLAG, founded in 1972 in New York, is a national nonprofit organization that offers support and education for the loved ones of gays.

Starr, 80, said the organization helped her learn to accept and understand her son. "We would have these meetings, all of these parents sitting in a circle talking about how wonderful our children were," said Starr, who still volunteers at the L.A. chapter of PFLAG. "We realized that there was nothing wrong with our children - that what was wrong was a misinformed society."

On November 6, the City of West Hollywood passed a resolution that declares the city a "City of Refuge" for same-sex binational couples. Although this resolution has no legal ramifications, it sends out a strong moral message: that it is cruel and inhumane to forcefully tear apart two loving human beings. With this decision, West Hollywood again showed courage and leadership in supporting civil rights for all. The City is, after San Francisco, the second city in the United States that declares itself a "City of Refuge."