



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

February-March 2001

Newsletter 209

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

February 20, 2001

February Speakers are Virginia Uribe, and Gail Rolf-Los Angeles Unified School District Project 10 founder, and present coordinator. Project 10 was/is the basis for the current GSA's (Gay Student Alliances) spreading throughout the country. They will share the story behind the formation of Project 10, and their own personal stories.

March 20, 2001

Bill Mochon, PsyD is CEO of The Q Spot, an organization which helps educate and empower LGBT youth in Southern California. Dr. Mochon serves on various boards of directors involved in the LGBT community and is the Chair for GLBT Issues for the California Psychological Association, educating and directing resources to the 4,000+ psychologists throughout the state, in the subject of homosexuality. He is an internationally recognized speaker and has published in various peer review and professional journals, primarily on the topic of working with LGBT youth. Dr. Mochon will speak on: "Life after Laura: What psychiatry and psychology REALLY has to say about homosexuality and how it can empower youth today." Come and learn the truth about what has happened since 1973 and where we are headed. This presentation will also provide concrete tools for helping our LGBT youth find and develop their strength and participate fully in their families, schools, and the community in general.

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: 403 1234

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! Regards, Chris Haiss

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we enter a new year, we face many changes, and challenges, with a new President who was elected on less than a popular mandate. We have much work ahead of us just to ensure we maintain the gains of the last 8 years.

But rather than feeling resentment and regrets, let's consider that PFLAG is now in its 25th Year as a Support, Educational and Advocacy organization, and we are as strong as ever, growing with new leadership, and an everlasting commitment to our glbt children and friends. As we embark on our continuing journey and struggle, we are taking time to celebrate our accomplishments and achievements.

Please join us on May 6, 2001 for that Celebration. You will receive additional information in next month's Newsletter, but mark your calendars for May 6, 2001 for an afternoon picnic/barbecue of fun and memories with our friends, families and allies.

Larry Sperber

PFLAG's 25th Anniversary Celebration:

The committee for PFLAG's 25th Anniversary Celebration has met a couple of times and the planning ball has been set in motion and is gaining momentum. The Board of Directors unanimously voted to hire Little DiVas, a party/event planning company, to assist us with the details. The celebration will be held on May 6th with a family picnic/barbeque at a park. We are seeking sponsors for the party so we hope to keep the ticket price low. Please mark your calendars now and plan on attend this historical event!



If you have questions or would like to volunteer for this event, please contact Brett Mathews.

Cell: 310-283-4235

e-mail: brettmathews@hotmail.com

PFLAG LA Storms Long Beach Convention Center by george unger

This year's California School Board Association's (CSBA) annual conference was held in Long Beach CA and PFLAGLA was proudly represented with our own information booth. The conference is geared toward Superintendents and Board Members from districts throughout the state. Despite a less than ideal booth location, more than 100 copies of the PFLAG brochure "From Our House to the Schoolhouse" were handed out to conference attendees, most of whom were school board members. The conference also included two sessions presented by GLSEN.

Special thanks to Bill Clayton, Nicki and Dave Bregman for helping out this year. Next year's CSBA Conference will be held in San Diego.

"QUOTE - UNQUOTE"

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. If we exclude and discriminate against any group of people it affects us all... The gay rights movement fits very much into the concept and reflection of what the dream is."

- Yolanda King (Daughter of Martin Luther King, Jr.)

An Open Letter to President-Elect George W. Bush (Excerpts)

December 15, 2000

Dear President-elect Bush,

Congratulations on being elected to the office of President of the United States of America.

Like you, I am a patriotic American and a person of deep faith. But I am also the mother of a gay son and the Executive Director of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). Through a lifetime of working for equal justice, I have found that division cannot be solved without compassion and inclusion. I hope that your vision and values of "compassionate conservatism" have taught you the same.

In your acceptance remarks, you mentioned the need "to address some of society's deepest problems one person at a time, by encouraging and empowering the good hearts and good works of the American people." In essence, this is what PFLAG does. We are people across this country who reach out in love to those who differ from us, and come to understand and appreciate them.

PFLAG members share with you the desire to protect the rights and ensure the potential of all Americans. You have a great opportunity to assure that all claims that anyone was turned away from the polls or discouraged from voting because of their race or ethnic origin are rigorously and sympathetically investigated and pursued by your administration. As a nation we must face up to the continuing existence of racism in our country and do everything we can to eradicate unfair treatment because of race. Otherwise we will not be able to reap the benefits of our proud commitment to liberty and justice for all.

You have an opportunity, too, to reach out and listen to the concerns of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Americans and their parents, families, friends and allies. It is said that one in four families have a family member who is gay or lesbian. We are sick and tired of fighting those who would prefer that we all go back in the closet and stop seeking justice, safety and respect for those we love. That's never going to happen. You have the opportunity to make a difference in the way gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered Americans are treated.

Nowhere is this more important than in our schools. I have been struck by your passion for excellence in the education we give our youth. I share that passion. But I also know that unless our children feel safe in their schools, even the best teachers and the best materials will not make the difference they should. Harassment of gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered youth often goes well beyond verbal harassment to physical assaults. All too many of our PFLAG parents have been devastated by the physical and emotional harm done to their children by their peers - unchecked by administrators and teachers. The majority of young people who harass, bully and assault our youth because of their sexual orientation or gender expression do not fit the stereotype of hate-filled extremists, but are average young people who often see nothing wrong with their behavior. Anti-gay harassment - as well as harassment based on religion, race, ethnic origin, or any other prejudice - destabilizes the learning environment for all students.

No child can learn well when they are scared. No child should be afraid that they will be harassed because of who they are. We need to do a much better job of teaching respect for all in our schools and in ending the toxic atmosphere that exists in all too many of our schools today. We need your leadership at the federal level to send the message that anti-gay harassment is wrong. There is so much to be done. We need to teach our students that we will reach our full potential individually and collectively only when we learn to appreciate our diversity. We need to do a better job of teaching our youth our country's proud history of welcoming people of different religions, racial and ethnic origins, genders and opinions. It hasn't been easy and we don't always do it well, but welcoming diversity is at the heart of what has made our nation great. This is what can unite us now and in the future. We now need a national effort to realize that our lives can be enriched as individuals, as families, as communities, and as a nation if we embrace, rather than fear, our gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered brothers and sisters.

You have an awesome opportunity and responsibility ahead of you. We want to work by your side to make our schools and our country healthier. We call on you to keep us - all of us who love, admire and care about someone who is gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered - in mind in the days ahead.

Sincerely,
Kirsten Kingdon, Executive Director

Larry & Lynette Sperber's Outreach...

- Attended 5th Anniversary Celebration of GLBT Resource Center at UCLA.
- Attended Anniversary Dinner for Gay and Lesbian Center.
- Along with Showtime and the ACLU, they spoke on behalf of PFLAG at the Premier at the Samuel Goldwin Theater for "Queer as Folk."
- Attended and spoke to the congregants at MCC Church in West Hollywood to say a fond farewell to Rev. Nancy Wilson, who has been such a warm and wonderful friend to PFlag.
- They organized a Facilitator's Training class lead by Dr. Linda Garnets in which 15 PFlagger's learned how to facilitate our discussion groups.
- They spoke to the Lesbian Chat group at the Gay and Lesbian Center.

Facilitator Training Session

Saturday, December 2, 2000

By Regan DuCasse

It was early morning on a cool, sunny Saturday. I wasn't sure what to expect that day or even if I could make a four hour commitment to the session. It took place in a small meeting room around a conference table in the center of the room.

About twenty or so people were gathered, a mixed group; men and women, gay and not, young and older, ethnically diverse. Some already experienced in facilitating. A good balance, I thought, for a small group of people.

Our trainer, Dr. Linda Garnets, kept the proceedings going at an impressive clip, that made the four hours go by quickly, but at the same time a good deal of ground was covered, particularly because of the excellent questions being asked by the class.

Especially about keeping control of the emotional content of rap groups, which to me seemed the most important issue. Because of, inevitably, the factoring in of personal religion and politics. The most volatile aspects in any discussion.

I was impressed by the amiable interaction. I believe the collective talent in that room will make each PFLAG meeting comfortable and helpful for all who enter there.

Most notably, it was a pleasure to have Betty DeGeneres (mother of comedienne Ellen DeGeneres) with us for the session.

For myself, I left the session feeling fully informed, more committed and certainly impressed. I look forward to facilitating at the next rap. Doesn't get better than that.

The Netherlands becomes first in the world to recognize gay and lesbian couples under the same law covering heterosexual

Tuesday, December 19, 2000 / Planet Out News

The Netherlands Senate on December 19 voted 49 - 26 to extend legal marriage to include gay and lesbian couples -- the first in the world to acknowledge gay and lesbian relationships under the same legislation as heterosexual marriage. "As far as possible, homosexual marriage will have the same consequences as marriage," the Senate said in a statement. The lower house had passed the bill by an overwhelming margin in September. The marriages are restricted to citizens and legal residents of the Netherlands, and the Senate warned that, "A marriage between persons of the same sex ... has little chance of being recognized abroad."

Spokesperson for the Netherlands' gay and lesbian rights group COC Onno Hoes told Reuters, "This is an historic event, it's fantastic. We're the first country in the world where there is no distinction made on the basis of gender." The new law will go into effect in April.

The Netherlands began registering legal partnerships for gay and lesbian couples in 1998 which were very nearly identical to marriage; the new law allows those partnerships to be converted into marriages if couples wish. Some 9,500 couples had registered through July.

The Senate also approved by a vote of 47 - 28 a bill to broaden the adoption rights of gay and lesbian couples, although foreign-born children are exempted because of possible international problems. The Senate's statement said, "A child that is looked after and raised in a lasting relationship of two men or two women is entitled to protection, including legal protection, within that relationship. This is why the bill provides for the possibility of adoption by partners of the same sex."

Although resigned to the inevitability of the new laws, some clergy in the Netherlands believe that marriage should have been reserved exclusively for heterosexuals. That is certainly the view of the Roman Catholic Church, as Pope John Paul II told the Netherlands ambassador to the Vatican in October.

German Senate OKs DP Bill

Friday, December 1, 2000 / PlanetOut News Staff

The conservative upper house approved some recognition for same-gender domestic partners, and the "Red-Green" coalition has a plan to gain more.

The upper house of the German legislature, the Bundesrat, on December 1 approved a bill extending some legal recognition to gay and lesbian couples, while stalling a second measure which would have brought the total rights of registered life partners to about 90 percent of those of married couples.

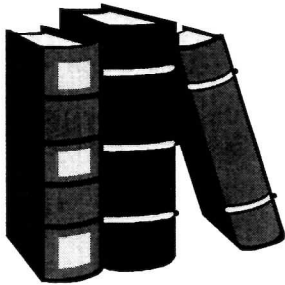
Having failed to advance similar legislation previously, the gay-supportive ruling "Red-Green" coalition of Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's Social Democrats and the Green Party had strategically divided their partnership package into two parts, one which required the approval of the conservative-dominated Bundesrat and one which did not. The second part, roughly categorized as the legal structure for the partnerships, was easily passed last month by the coalition majority in the lower house, the Bundestag, and now the Bundesrat has added its approval as a formality.

This means that next year German gays and lesbians will be able to register their partnerships to gain the same rights of inheritance, tenancy, joint insurance, and access to the courts for property division on dissolution that married couples have, along with residency for foreign partners in bi-national couples and the ability of one partner to make medical decisions for the other in event of disability.

The rest of the package, including valuable benefits requiring amendments to the tax, welfare and labor codes, did not find a majority in the Bundesrat -- but it's not dead yet. The ruling coalition is prepared to further divide this second half of its proposal, which notably includes pensions, health care and tax benefits, if parts of it can be passed.

Objections were raised in the Bundesrat on both fiscal and moral grounds. The Government tried to allay fears of "soaring" costs by citing the experience of other European nations that only modest numbers of couples would participate. The moralists believe recognition of gay and lesbian couples will damage traditional marriage. They have already set in motion a legal challenge to the partnership law, claiming that it violates the special status the German constitution guarantees to marriage.

OFF THE BOOK-RACK



It's Saturday, December 2, and here I am - at *the Different Light Bookstore*, 8853 Santa Monica Blvd, in West Hollywood. No, I'm not applying for a job or meeting a blind date. I'm here for Betty DeGeneres' reading from her new book

"Just a Mom"

By Betty DeGeneres
ISBN 1-55583-613-5

It was great to have this first-hand experience of listening to Betty DeGeneres and having her sign my book copy. Another highlight of that evening (and in my life!): ELLEN was in the audience! ...I should have asked for her autograph, too, considering myself one of her biggest fans! But that's another story... If you have Internet access, check out <http://www.BettyDeGeneres.com>

Excerpt from the introduction:

In her first book, *Love, Ellen*, Betty DeGeneres revealed the struggles of her own life and those of her famous daughter, television and film actress Ellen DeGeneres. At the end of that book, Betty invited readers to send letters, questions, and stories about their own battles as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or straight human beings caught up, as she is, in the fight against homophobia. The response was overwhelming, and the result is *Just a Mom*.

In this loving and thoughtful book, *America's Mom*, Betty DeGeneres, does what she's been doing for her family for years. She provides supportive, practical, nurturing advice grounded in years of life experience and an ever-evolving understanding of motherhood. Any gay person, any parent of a gay person, any sibling or friend or acquaintance of a gay person will benefit by reading this wonderful book.

Marriage

"Expressions like "partners" or "significant others" are not good enough. We are family and we want our childrens beloved to be recognized legally as son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law or sister-in-law. That little piece of paper matters a very great deal!"
(Adele Starr)

DON'T FORGET! DON'T FORGET! DON'T FORGET!

February 14 is Valentine's Day! Don't forget to buy some flowers for the special person in YOUR life! (I have to get flowers for my partner - we start our 15th year on February 11!) Go out for dinner! Or attend one of the events that raise awareness for the recognition of same-sex couples! Happy V-Day! ♥♥

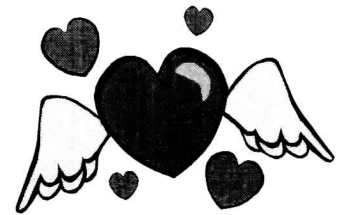
ASIAN & GAY?

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**.

Excerpts from Barbara G. Walker's Research on MARRIAGE & FAMILY

(The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets/Harper & Row 1983)



The word marriage came from Latin *maritare*, union under the auspices of the Goddess Aphrodite-Mari. Because the Goddess's patronage was constantly invoked in every aspect of marriage, Christian fathers were opposed to the institution. Origen declared, "Matrimony is impure and unholy, a means of sexual passion." St. Jerome said the primary purpose of a man of God was to "cut down with an ax of Virginity the wood of Marriage." St. Ambrose said marriage was a crime against God, because it changed the state of virginity that God gave every man and woman at birth. Marriage was prostitution of the members of Christ, and "married people ought to blush at the state in which they are living." Tertullian said marriage was a moral crime, "more dreadful than any punishment or any death." It was *spurcitiae*, "obscenity," or "filth."

St. Augustine flatly stated that marriage is a sin. Tatian said marriage is a corruption, "a polluted and foul way of life." Influenced by him, Syrian churches ruled that no person could become Christian except celibate men, and no man who had ever been married could be baptized. Saturninus said God made only two kinds of people, good men and evil women. Marriage perpetuated the devilry of women, who dominated men through the magic of sex. Centuries later, St. Bernard still proclaimed that it was easier for a man to bring the dead back to life than to live with a woman without endangering his soul.

St. Paul damned marriage with faint praise, remarking that to marry was only better than to burn (1 Corinthians 7:9); but later followers of Pauline Christianity damned marriage altogether, according to the word of Jesus: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26).

Jesus renounced his family, declaring that he had no relatives except the faithful (Mark 3:31-35). Jerome interpreted this as a mandate to destroy marriage and the family. He was disgusted by motherhood: "the tumefaction of the uterus, the care of yelling infants, all those fond feelings which death at last cuts short." He said every man who loves his wife passionately was guilty of adultery. Augustine also expressed disgust at feminine sexual and maternal functions. He coined the saying that birth is demonstrably accursed because every child emerges "between feces and urine."

This was the early Christian notion of a "good" woman: one who placed faith before family. Church customs reflected this view. There was no Christian sacrament of marriage until the 16th century. Catholic scholars say the wedding ceremony was "imposed on" a reluctant church, and "nothing is more remarkable than the tardiness with which liturgical forms for the marriage ceremony were evolved." It is perhaps not remarkable to find that these liturgical forms were not evolved by the church at all, but borrowed from pagans' common law.

The Anglican marriage service came from Anglo-Saxon deeds used to transfer a woman's land to the stewardship of her "houseman" (husband). The original wording had the bridegroom say: "With this ring I thee wed and this gold and silver I give thee and with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly chattels I thee honor."

The bride responded: "I take thee to my wedded husband, to have and to hold, for fairer for fouler, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to be bonny and buxom in bed and at board, till death us depart (sic)." A curious clerical note made in the margin at a later date, explained that "bonny and buxom" really meant "meek and obedient."

