



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

April-May 2001

Newsletter 210

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COME CELEBRATE WITH US!
WE ARE CELEBRATING OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY!
PICNIC IN THE PARK
SUNDAY, MAY 6, 2001, NOON-4PM

Griffith Park, Crystal Springs picnic area
(behind Ranger Station on Griffith Park Drive)
Family style BBQ picnic with food and beverages provided
Entertainment, games and celebrity guests



Tickets are \$25.00 for adults, students & seniors \$10.00, children under 14 are free.
For more information/RSVP please contact Little Divas Productions at (213) 989 0702.

The Los Angeles chapter of PFLAG - Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays celebrates 25 years of support, and love, for our Community, with a picnic/barbecue. We are family and we invite your family, your partners, your children, and your friends to share this momentous day with us.

OUR NEXT SPEAKERS (please see page 3!)

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.

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

We have lots to celebrate! PFLAG has reached a milestone. We now have 450 chapters.

And, locally, we are celebrating our 25th anniversary on May 6, to which I'd like to invite all of you. Share this afternoon of fun and memories with our friends, families, children and allies. 25 years is a long time. I'd like to thank all of you for your support and your faith in PFLAG and our mission. Without you we would not exist!

I also would like to say a special thanks to those of you who accompanied and supported our chapter over the years in an outstanding way: Liz Armstrong, Bea & Joe Bernstein, Peggy & Marty Olsen, and Larry & Adele Starr, who was our first president.

See you on May 6!

Larry Sperber

OUR NEXT SPEAKERS

April 17, 2001

Hon. G. Keith Wisot (Ret.) is one of JAMS most respected neutrals and is an especially skilled communicator. He will share his thoughts on *"Family: We can't live without 'em!" - Reflections on the struggle to maintain a family bond from the perspective of a gay son and a gay father*. Drawing inspiration from an article in the February *Advocate* magazine about the importance of sibling acceptance, I speak from my own experience about my awareness as a boy and adolescent that family was something I wanted strongly to preserve; the difficulties, partly reinforced through societal expectations that gay identification is inconsistent with family; my determination to have family experience as an adult and raise children; the rewards of sticking to that determination; the downside that results from competition between traditional family activity (Christmas dinner, family wedding) and visibility of the gay family member (gay partner at the wedding, children in competition with partner)."

Keith Wisot has served as a Judge, Superior Court of Los Angeles County, 1982-1994; served twice as Justice Pro Tem, California Court of Appeal, Second District J.D., University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law, 1966 B.A., Pomona College, 1963.

May 15, 2001

Peter M. Nardi, Ph.D., is Professor of Sociology at Pitzer College, one of the Claremont Colleges. Peter Nardi explores the meaning of friendship for gay men and lesbians, how friends often become a surrogate family, how sexual behavior and attraction affect these friendships, and how, for many, friends mean more and last longer than romantic relationships. He discusses how gay men meet their friends, what they typically do and talk about, and how these strong relationships contain the roots of larger cultural forces such as social movements and gay identities and neighborhoods.

Peter Nardi is the author of *Gay Men's Friendships: Invincible Communities* (1999); co-editor of *Social Perspectives in Lesbian & Gay Studies: A Reader* (1998); *In Changing Times: Gay Men & Lesbians Encounter HIV/AIDS* (1997); *Growing Up Before Stonewall: Life Stories of Some Gay Men* (1994); and editor of *Gay Masculinities* (2000) and *Men's Friendships* (1992). He has also published several op-ed pieces in the *Los Angeles Times* on gay/lesbian issues and is the Editor of *Sociological Perspectives*, a leading academic journal. He is politically active in the gay community, having served as chair of the Sociologists' Lesbian & Gay Caucus of the American Sociological Association, co-chair of the Los Angeles Gay Academic Union, and co-president and board member of the Los Angeles chapter of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). He received his B.A. from the University of Notre Dame and his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania.

NOTICE OF ELECTION

If you are interested in serving on our 2001-2002 Board of Directors which will be elected at the general meeting in June, please call nominating chair Liz Armstrong at (310) 454 6681.

Board meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 6:15 PM before the general meeting and are OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS.

HELP WANTED!

We have a vacancy and you might be the right person to fill the spot of the "**Nomination Chair & Outreach Specialist**". With the support of the Board you will grow into an exciting challenging leadership position with the following duties:

- As Nomination Chair: You will attend our meetings and observe new people and encourage their participation. In spring, board members need to be asked if they wish to continue and vacancies need to be filled by making nominations to the board and nominating the new board for elections at the June meeting.
- As Outreach Specialist: Collecting information on proposed legislation and events that would effect GLBT or support our PFLAG mission and share those at the meetings; writing letters to legislators and editors mentioning PFLAG positions and concerns; facilitate from time to time a group to discuss advocacy; ordering and selling PFLAG T-shirts for the parade.

If you are interested in taking on this rewarding task, please talk to Larry Sperber or Sharon Fane, or call (818) 788-8678.

Washington, DC - A new \$30,000 grant-based awards program has been established to support the work of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). The **Randy Crawford Memorial Award** has been established by Richard Felsenstein to honor Randy Crawford, his late partner and soul mate.

The objective of the Randy Crawford Memorial Award is to recognize and encourage individuals or groups who help to bridge the gap between the GLBT and straight communities. During their 4½ year relationship, Felsenstein and Crawford lived their lives for each other and as role models for others, regardless of their sexual orientation. They shared a vision that the world would judge them and others based on their deeds and nothing else. "Randy touched many lives and those who met him were immediately attracted to his warmth," Felsenstein said. "Randy was very successful by all measures in life but his greatest gift was the love that he gave to me. Although he died at 31 years old he made a difference in the world, and this award is a way to recognize the honest way he led his life." Each year for the next three years, the Randy Crawford Memorial will award up to four grants per year - totaling \$10,000 - to individuals or groups who work as a bridge between the GLBT and straight communities.

If the awardee is not a PFLAG member or chapter, the funds will be donated to the PFLAG chapter of the awardee's choice. The first award(s) will be distributed in September 2001. "The memorial," Felsenstein continued, "has been established to honor Randy, but I know he would want to also honor all the people in our lives who accepted and celebrated our relationship. It is a pleasure to work with PFLAG to help spread the word, and improve the world as we know it while recognizing a man who was an angel on earth."

Kirsten Kingdon, PFLAG Executive Director, said, "PFLAG thrives because of the work we do to bridge the straight and GLBT communities, and this program will help us to continue and expand that work. We are so grateful to Richard. His generosity will give PFLAG critical funding to make a difference in our communities."

For more information or to receive a nominating form, contacting PFLAG at 202/467-8180, or visit the website at www.PFLAG.org.

SPREADING THE WORD IN THE COMMUNITY...

- Lynette spoke at Taft High School to the Gay/Straight Club.
- Lynette and Larry spoke to the Gay Youth Group at MCC Church in West Hollywood.
- Lynette and Larry had dinner with 14 members of other PFLAG chapters to introduce them to our new co-president, George Unger.
- Lynette and Larry spoke at The Museum of Tolerance to new volunteers, staff and administrators. On the panel presentations with them were Angie Kiel and Mariko Ballentine.
- Lynette participated in a PFLAG presentation for Linda Garnets class at UCLA along with Sharon Fane, and Harold and Ellen Kameya.
- Lynette spoke at a same-gender marriage rally in Beverly Hills.
- Lynette was one of 5 speakers at a rally before the Grammys to protest honoring Eminem.
- Lynette and Larry attend Caprice Young's Advisory Committee for Gay and Lesbian Youth.
- Lynette and Larry met with Governor Roy Romer, the new Superintendent of LAUSD, to express concern about gay and lesbian youth in the schools, and to try to get sensitivity training on a regular basis for faculty and administrators of all schools.
- Lynette and Larry speak to a joint-meeting of the Gay Men's Chat and Lesbian Chat at the Gay and Lesbian Center.

Good-Bye To A Good Friend & PFLAG Supporter

(by Bea Bernstein)

I was asked to represent PFLAG at the memorial service for our dear friend Griff, Howard Griffith Martin, Jr.

I met Griff 23 years ago, when he hosted a retreat at his home for the board of directors of the Gay & Lesbian Community Services Center. At our first meeting Griff and I bonded and became good friends. He called me his Jewish Mother. He loved my chopped liver. Whenever I attended an event at his home, well, most of the time, he got his Jewish Mother chopped liver.

Griff was a good son, caring and helpful. In 1980, PFLAG celebrated our 4th birthday at his beautiful estate. What a party that was. We honored Quentin Crisp. My then 88 year old mother bent the ear of our special guest Mayor Tom Bradley. All the food was home cooked by our parents including my chopped liver. There were other PFLAG parties, the last 2 years ago, celebrating our 23rd birthday.

I remember Griff sitting quietly wearing a kind of smiling grin that said "I'm happy that you are having a good time at my home." In Yiddish - that's kvelling - getting pleasure from the pleasure you give.

Griff told me that he designed his home and its wooded grounds and paths at 711 Inverness - so that he could offer something special to the gay/lesbian community for fund raisers and other functions. He enhanced this exotic setting with his brightly feathered macaws, his bassets and beagles and a pool of koi - which swam under a section of glass floor in his living room.

When I think of Griff, I see him smiling, his grin, his smile, sitting quietly kvelling at the pleasure he is giving to his parents, to his friends, to his community.

Adele Starr, our founder could not be here today - she sends a message and I join her in saying thanks GRIFF, WE'LL MISS YOU, especially at our 25th birthday celebration - remembering the good times we shared.

LAW & ORDER I

On Valentine's Day, Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), reintroduced the "Permanent Partners Immigration Act" (H.R.690), which would allow U.S. citizens and legal residents to sponsor their foreign same-sex partner for residency here in the United States.

For more information on this issue, check out <http://www.immigrationequality.org>

LAW & ORDER II

On March 1, Assemblymember Paul Koretz (D-West Los Angeles) introduced Assembly Bill (AB) 1338, the California Family Protection Act, which would establish civil unions in California. Passage of the bill would provide rights, protections and benefits for gay and lesbian couples and their families

A special thanks to Harold & Ellen Kameya and Melanie Saldana!

"...after our rap groups we serve refreshments..."

Guess what - we wouldn't have had those refreshments if Harold & Ellen Kameya had not done a fabulous job supplying these delicious snacks throughout the last year! Thank you, Harold & Ellen!

And to keep this wonderful "tradition" alive, our Board Member Melanie Saldana has volunteered to take over! A great big thank you to you, Melanie, for agreeing to take on this important task!

We love you and we love food!

SOUTHERN PACIFIC REGIONAL PFLAG CONFERENCE

Featuring State Senator Sheila James Kuehl and National PFLAG Board Vice-President Carolyn Wagner.

Senator Sheila Kuehl, the first openly gay legislator in the State of California, will discuss ways in which the making of public policy will affect the answers to these questions. Senator Kuehl is in her first legislative term in the California State Senate after serving six years in the Assembly. During that time she authored 73 bills that have been signed into law, many pertaining to GLBT issues. She was twice voted the Assembly member with the greatest intelligence and most integrity.

Carolyn Wagner is well known throughout the PFLAG community as the woman who, along with her family, put Title IX, the federal statute barring sex discrimination in public schools, to the test regarding anti-gay harassment. After her son, William, fell victim to a vicious hate crime in the tenth grade, she filed a complaint charging that the local school system had failed to act. Under an agreement reached between the U.S. Dept. of Education's Office of Civil Rights and the school district in June 1998, the district agreed to overhaul policies and procedures and to train staff and administrators, or risk loss of federal funds.

When & Where?

Saturday, April 28, 2001, 8:00am - 4:00pm, Altadena Community Church, 943 E Altadena Drive, Altadena CA

Register Now! (Registration Deadline: April 21) \$20 per person including continental breakfast and lunch. To register, please mail check for \$20 (payable to PFLAG Pasadena) to PFLAG Pasadena, Box 125, Altadena CA 91003. Don't forget your name, chapter affiliation (if any), address, city, state, ZIP, and your phone number.

Workshop Selections:

Morning Session: Legal Protections For GLBT Public School Students; Exploring A Favorable Religious Perspective; Leadership Development; Taking A Look At Bisexuality

Afternoon Session: Legal Issues & Practicalities Of Alternative Families; The Transgender Phenomenon; Strategic Planning, Children Of Lesbians And Gays Everywhere (COLAGE); Mama, Papa, Yo Soy Gay

AT THE MOVIES by Walter Lippmann

BILLY ELLIOT

Mandatory gender roles and parental expectations are at the heart of BILLY ELLIOT, the recent British import.

When the 11-year-old son of a coal miner finds he has no interest in boxing, and isn't any good at it anyway, the boy has to hide his interest in ballet, knowing his dad will reject this interest as one fit only for "sissies". In a sense, the boy, played to perfection by newcomer Jamie Bell, enters a self-made closet due to this.

In various settings we see the confrontation between a father and older brother, steeped in machismo yet also bound by the best love they can manage, work their way through a range of responses before finding resolution in what I found was a thoroughly heartwarming manner.

HIT AND RUNWAY

This is a hysterically-funny comedy about a pair of mismatched people whose common needs compel them to collaborate in the writing of a screenplay. A macho straight male and a nerdy Woody Allenesque gay man go back and forth in a love-hate collaboration as they try to bring about the perfect screenplay while dealing with their continuous personality conflicts and a raft of additional plot complexities.

We all laughed continuously when this picture screened at OUTFEST 1999 and it's now gotten a commercial release. If still in theaters when this newsletter reaches you, run out quickly and have yourself a delicious 104 minutes of fun.

BEFORE NIGHT FALLS

This movie is being touted as an Academy Award nominee for Spanish actor Javier Bardem in his very powerful portrayal of Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas on whose memoir of the same title this picture is based. Dual performances by Johnny Depp in a pair of side roles as a drag queen and a prison guard who taunts Arenas by putting his gun in the Arenas character's mouth in a manner at once terrifying and suggestive, and a brief cameo by Sean Penn as a Cuban peasant are high points for movie watchers.

The Cuban government brutally mistreated its gay citizens in the 1960s and 1970s. Gays were jailed and prevented from obtaining work in some areas. Arenas came to the US during the Mariel boat lift in 1980 and lived in the US until he died at his own hand in 1990 while suffering from AIDS.

BEFORE NIGHT FALLS and the adulatory reviews it's garnered gives the impression Cuba remains a hell for gay people. Having just returned from two months there, that is definitely NOT the case now.

Activist Jon Hillson has written a long comment about these aspects which can be found at this website: www.seeingred.com

For another view of the status of gays in Cuba I recommend the 1995 documentary GAY CUBA available on video. Gay and lesbian Cubans who reside in Cuba are interviewed, along with their parents and lovers in this inspiring story of gays and lesbians gaining acceptance in a society not previously noted for it.

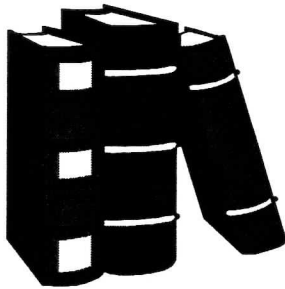
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Academy Award-winning documentarians Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman (THE CELLULOID CLOSET and COMMON THREADS) focus on the notorious 1871 section of the German criminal code under which sex between men and other men, and between men and animals was subject to severe criminal penalties.

It wasn't enforced severely, and in the 1920s Germany was a mecca for lesbian and gay people in Europe. This ended shortly after Hitler came to power. Through archival footage and interviews with those very few survivors who are alive and were willing to speak on camera, the stories of these remarkable survivors were eloquently presented. Interestingly, both west and east Germany kept the old legislation on the books until the late 1960s, and no reparations have ever been made to the victims of Nazi brutality. The recollections of the survivors are at once funny, haunting and tragic.



OFF THE BOOK-RACK



"Some persons find themselves through no fault of their own to have a homosexual orientation. Homosexuals, like everyone else, should not suffer from prejudice against their basic human rights. They have a right to respect, friendship, and justice." (1976, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, pastoral letter "To Live in Christ Jesus: A Pastoral Reflection on the Moral Life")

"With Listening Hearts" -

Understanding The Voice of Lesbian & Gay Catholics

By Peter J. Liuzzi, O. Carm.

ISBN 0-8091-3983-9

In his book, Fr. Peter, Director of the Ministry with Lesbian and Gay Catholics of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, sheds some light on official Church teaching on homosexuality. He points out that the scriptures are not the only source of the understanding of homosexuality, as literalists or fundamentalists would have us believe. He says that if the Bible clearly condemns same-sex activity, it even more roundly condemns hatred. He describes the difference between sexual sins "against nature" and sexual sins "according to nature." Sexual sins according to nature are contrary to right reason and include fornication, rape, incest and adultery. Sins against nature have an added dimension of not only being contrary to reason but also inconsistent with the very purpose of sexual activity, which is openness to new human life. Masturbation, contraception and homosexual intercourse fall into this category. Such acts, by their very nature, regardless of one's intentions or circumstances, are always forbidden. These sins are "intrinsically evil." He reminds us that official Church teaching says that sexual practices find their true meaning only within the sacrament of matrimony, and even then only if they're open to the creation of new life. All other sexual activity is therefore disordered and objectively sinful. (Let me repeat: ALL other sexual activity!)

In his final word, Fr. Peter says: "Homosexuality can be viewed as a problem to be solved. We can also view homosexuality as one of the mysteries of life...We all journey together. If we dare to walk together, we will meet difference and paradox in those we walk with. Walking together does not always mean finding easy solutions to our differences...That journey will be long and arduous, not without risk or tears of a mother for her homosexual child. Our homosexual Catholics and their parents have walked too long alone. No one need walk alone."

I was fascinated by this book that deals compassionately with such a complicated complex subject as Roman Catholic Church teachings on homosexuality. Just the existence of this book is a huge achievement that should be acknowledged. If you have Internet access, check out the Ministry's web site at <http://mlgc.la-archdiocese.org/>

PFLAG Reaches Milestone:

450 Affiliates

PFLAG is now organized in 450 communities across the United States. PFLAG, the premier family voice for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) people, is also the largest grassroots GLBT organization in the country. PFLAG was founded in 1973, and became formally established as a national organization in 1981. In 20 years, PFLAG has grown from a group of 20 chapters to a nationwide network of 450 affiliates, and is continuing to grow.