



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

October-November 2001

Newsletter 213

## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 - 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. There is also easy access from the north driveway. Doors open at 6:30 pm; general meeting begins at 7:25 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

### October 16, 2001

For more than 20 years, Terry Brewer has worked as a professional speaker to motivate and educate people from all walks of life. His presentations have been seen by thousands of people in businesses and industries throughout the world. He strongly believes laughter is a great motivator and tool for motivating your audience and making a memorable presentation. Please join us as Terry shares with us his personal journey.

### November 20, 2001

Please join us at our November meeting as local PFLAG'rs share their coming out stories. You'll get to hear their personal perspectives and journeys that have made them more accepting and aware of the world we together share. There will be a short Q&A afterwards.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR & JOIN US!

On SUNDAY NOVEMBER 4th PFLAG is invited to join the Gay & Lesbian Sierrans for their family hike to historic Mt Lowe. Meet in La Canada on the Angeles Crest HWY (SR 2), one block north of the Foothill FWY (I-210). We will carpool the 40 minute drive to the trailhead. The hike is 1.5 miles each way, about 500' of altitude gain. We expect to be back by midafternoon. Bring lunch for the top, water, sturdy shoes, and appropriate clothes. Rain cancels. Contact Will McWhinney, [yonder@chismahoo.com](mailto:yonder@chismahoo.com) 323-258-8062 for more information.

**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:

(213) 487 4992 (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](http://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](http://www.nccjla.org)

Hablando Entre Hombres

Spanish support group for Latino Gay Men

(213) 273 8723 (Ramon Ramirez)

PFLAG National

(202) 467 8180 [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

PFLAG's Transgender Special Outreach Network (TSO):

Karen Gross (216) 691 HELP / KittenGr@aol.com

Mary Boenke (540) 890 3957 / maryboenke@aol.com

[www.transfamily.org](http://www.transfamily.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](mailto:haichi_ca@hotmail.com), call me at (323) 460-4849, or just drop me a note at our PFLAG meetings! Gender bender greetings, Chris Haiss

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## The changing world of PFLAG and me

It's still not a year since our son, with great agony, told us he was gay, and the world has gone on, with some bumps along the way. His agony was the end of years of self-examination, realization, and having told many that this was who he was, except his parents. He feared the disclosure, and felt much better for having told us - on his 22nd birthday - leaving us to deal with our surprise and feelings. (Fortunately for all, continuing love and acceptance were our position. How sad that parents sometimes do not fulfill these most basic of responsibilities. ) For the shock of it all, almost all the loss of imagined futures, PFLAG appeared. I found it on the internet, and we went for double doses in the beginning, to Pasadena and West LA, and discovered the nurturing, caring and wide range of experiences in the real people we met were a balm.

Many of those people provided perspective, 'we've been through it and so will you' caring, and plain old warmth and friendship. We had become a part of an organized, nice minority that we had thought very little about before. It is still pleasantly amazing what a warm friendly and nice group of folks the people we meet through PFLAG are; far nicer than the average in our society. When the opportunity to be co-president of the West LA PFLAG appeared, I grabbed it, hoping I could repay some of the much I've received from the organization and its people. But what an opportunity it is - to work with George Unger, and follow Larry Sperber (look in the dictionary under 'hard act to follow' and there's Larry's picture). I plan to continue to make our son proud of his Dad's involvement in PFLAG, and to contribute to the cause.

And yes, my perspective has changed. I now know something about AB25, and feel a discomfort riding with folks on the elevator in my work building, which is also the Salvation Army headquarters, who I used to think were such caring and kind people. I read the headlines and hear the news differently, and how I say what I say on GLBT issues (I thought it was a Glorified sandwich when I first heard it) is changing. There is this process I'm changing with, and it's good, and interesting, and valuable. Thanks for letting me ramble through this first part of the journey with you.

Joel A Hendler - Co-President PFLAG-Los Angeles

## Between parent and gay child

Excerpts from *The Advocate*, the national gay & lesbian newsmagazine, April 16, 1985

The relationship between gays and their parents may be the most troubling issue any family has to face. *The Advocate* recently spoke with Adele Starr. The 65-year-old Starr is president of the nationwide Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. She is also a cofounder of the Los Angeles chapter of that organization. Starr's 34-year-old-son is gay.

### How important is the issue of how gays relate to their parents and how parents relate to their gay children?

**Starr:** I think it's very important. What is family all about? You bring up your children and you want to have a relationship with them. You want to see them happy. And as for the children, the gay people I have met want family relationships. They need their families.

### Do you think that all gays should come out to their parents?

**Starr:** There are many advantages to coming out. You can be honest with your family. You don't have to lead a dual life. You may not be able to come out where you work or in other places, but at least with your family you *can* be honest and open. In most cases, families—parents and siblings—do love the gay family member, and they will begin to learn to understand.

### What if the parent totally rejects the child?

**Starr:** We have found that parents may be very hostile in the beginning, but six months later they can change. I know one case here in L.A. where the father wanted to shoot the son, and when I spoke to them a year or two later, they were in business together. Give parents a chance. But there *are* totally hopeless cases, and then I guess the child has to write them off. Maybe there wasn't enough love there to begin with. If they have really made the effort to reach those parents—and I don't mean just over a period of a couple of years—if they have, in fact, done everything, pleaded with them, tried to get them to read about the subject, then there is nothing else you can do.

If you are a parent of a lesbian daughter or gay son and think that you will never become a grandparent read THIS!  
Thank you, Diane, for sharing your story!

## "Lesbian Moms & Our Children"

"I came out to my parents at age 21. Their first thought was that I won't have a family and, therefore, they won't have grandkids. They felt that I shattered their dreams as happy grandparents."

Diane always knew that she would have kids. Now she is the happy mom of a 9-year old and a 4-year old. The grandparents are actively involved in her kids' lives. "Some grandparents say bad things about their gay/lesbian son or daughter. That's the worst thing that can happen. They don't understand that they only hurt the child. My advice is to see your grandchild as a blessing and to try to have a wonderful relationship with your grandchild."

The myth that gay/lesbian parents are not suited for raising children can be refuted easily. Gays/lesbians go through lots of trouble in order to have kids. They do their family planning thoroughly and by doing so build their future and the future of their kids on solid ground. None of these parents got pregnant by accident.

Though Diane has the support of her family, she joined the group "Lesbian Moms & Our Children" about 10 years ago. The group was founded in the late 80s and covers Los Angeles County. Four hundred lesbian families come together for support and to socialize. Most of the members are full-time moms. It is important to them that their kids grow up with peers. They go hiking, bowling, camping, organize events such as pool parties, cruises, visits to the Children's Museum, celebration of Mother's Day, and much, much more. The kids are included in all events. They also hold rap groups for moms several times a year. During these sessions they provide babysitters for the kids so that the moms can fully focus on the rap group. "Lesbian Moms & Our Children" is not a separatist group. They do many activities together with gay dads.

Members of the group became parents in different ways. Some through donor insemination, some have kids from previous marriages, and about 20% adopted their kids or became foster parents. In order for these moms to have kids they had to be financially stable. They went many extra miles in order to have a family. The families cross over all ethnicities. They have one thing in common: The most important thing in the world for them is being a mom.

"Once you have kids you automatically become a family person. Sexual orientation is such a small issue when you become a parent, because your lifestyle will become much more like your parents' lifestyle. I try to be the best mom I can be. I am actively involved in my kids lives, for example at school, and I am well respected."

Diane's parents learned one important thing: Being gay/lesbian doesn't mean that you can't have kids/grandkids. And being straight doesn't guarantee that you will have a family.

Diane: "It's hilarious. I, the lesbian, am raising children and am living this down to earth family life in a suburban house that compares pretty much to the lifestyle of my parents, while my straight brother fully enjoys his life as a bachelor in his beach apartment!"

To contact "Lesbian Moms & Our Children", please call 310.397.5646 or e-mail at [lmoclosangeles@aol.com](mailto:lmoclosangeles@aol.com)

Other resources for gay/lesbian parents and their families:

Gay & Lesbian Parents of Los Angeles  
Phone: (213) 654-0307

Gay Fathers of Los Angeles (GFLA)  
Phone: (213) 654-0307 (24 hr. info)

Lesbian Moms Support Group  
(Providing emotional, cultural and social support for African American lesbian moms and their children.)  
Phone: (213) 964-7820

Lesbian Mothers Group of Long Beach  
Phone: (310) 424-4455

Maybe Baby  
(A support and discussion group for gay men and lesbians considering parenthood.)  
Phone: (213) 969-8607

Pop Luck Club  
(A monthly support/social club for gay dads and dads-to-be.)  
Phone: (818) 623-0889

Proud Families  
Phone: (562) 856-1827 (Lillian)

Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE)  
Phone: (415) 861-5437  
<http://www.colage.org>

Proud Parenting - For today's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender parents and their families:  
<http://www.proudparenting.com>

Gay Parent  
<http://www.gayparentmag.com>

## SPREADING THE WORD IN THE COMMUNITY

- Lynette attends Advisory Committee meeting for keeping trans youth safe in schools.
- Lynette and Larry introduce film "A Family Affair" at Outfest, the Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, as community collaborators from PFLAG.
- Larry is in Ohio for the PFLAG National Board Meeting.
- Larry and Lynette attend Speaker's Training Committee meeting along with George Unger.
- Lynette and Larry attend reception for site inspectors for the Gay Games 2006.
- Lynette, Angie Kiel, Stuart Huggins and Marty Olson do a presentation at the Museum of Tolerance for Employees of the City of Santa Monica.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The cruelest thing that can happen to two committed people in love: Your own government does not allow you to stay together here in the United States.

Under current immigration law, U.S. citizens cannot sponsor their foreign same-sex partners for residency. The options: Leave the United States and emigrate to a more humane country with your foreign partner; separate from your loved one; or live "underground" in constant fear that the loved one might be deported once his/her visa expires.

Come to the Human Rights Campaign's Town Hall meeting on binational same-sex couples and hear about the plight they and their families are facing. October 23, 7-10pm, at the Village, 1125 N McCadden Place, Hollywood (one block east of Highland, just north of Santa Monica Blvd).

### German partner law takes effect

Germany's gay partnership law took effect August 1. Dozens of ceremonies took place in cities and towns across the country.

The first couple to tie the knot was Heinz Harre and Reinhard Leuschow, who married at the Hannover town hall at 8:20 a.m. In Hamburg, 15 couples got hitched the first day.

"For gays and lesbians in Germany it's a huge step forward after a long battle," said openly gay Member of Parliament Volker Beck. "The law will make a lot of people very happy."

The law grants registered gay couples marriage rights and obligations in areas such as inheritance, health insurance, immigration, name changes and alimony. It withholds marriage rights in the areas of adoption, taxation, pensions and social-welfare benefits.

Legal efforts by two states to overturn the law were rejected by the Constitutional Court on July 18.

Elsewhere, registered same-sex couples have nearly all rights of marriage in Denmark, France, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and the U.S. state of Vermont. The Netherlands lets gays marry under the same laws as heterosexual couples.

### INTERESTED IN GAY HISTORY?

Join Lisa Diguardi's yahoo group  
"This Day in Gay History"  
by sending an email to  
[gayhistory-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:gayhistory-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

**August 31, 1988:**

Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) called Democrats "the party of homosexuals" at a Republican fundraiser. He denied the remark until an audiotape was produced.

And our own historical moment:

**August 1, 1981:**

Independent PFLAG chapters from around the country joined together to create a national organization that would coordinate and support the work of PFLAG chapters. Adele Starr was the founder of the PFLAG Los Angeles chapter in 1976, and the first national PFLAG president from 1981 to 1986.

### "QUOTE - UNQUOTE"

"Those of us who oppose sex change operations and the redefining of sex to include multiple 'genders,' are viewed as oppressive and bigoted, but genetics and common sense tell us that men are not women, nor are women actually men."

— Rev. Lou Sheldon



**BRAVO, LOUISIANA!** The following article appeared in "The Advocate", a Baton Rouge daily newspaper, on May 11, 2001. It shows how important it is to share our stories in order to make positive changes, as well as that Democrats are not necessarily our supporters. Thank you, Mel, for submitting this article from your home state!

### Gay anti-discrimination bill gains ground in Senate panel

(By Carl Redman)

After one of its members emotionally recalled how he learned one of his sons is gay, a Senate committee approved a bill Thursday to stop discrimination against gay men and women in the workplace.

The Senate Labor and Industrial Relations panel voted 3-2 to let the full Senate debate the idea of prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Sen. Ken Hollis cast a key vote for the Senate bill shortly after emotionally recounting to a crowded committee room the lessons he learned from one of his sons.

Hollis, a Metairie Republican with aspirations to be governor, said he wouldn't play politics with such a sensitive issue.

Hollis said he remembers when his son confided 10 or 12 years ago that he is gay.

"I hugged him and I said, 'I love you.' Two other friends of his came out very soon after that," Hollis said, his voice choked with emotion, "One of them got beat up by his dad. The other one got thrown out of the house."

Hollis said he remembers when his son called from a job on a university campus a few years later.

"He said, 'I'm afraid they've found out and I'm going to be fired,'" Hollis said. "He didn't ask for it. He didn't order it from Wal-Mart. He was born that way."

Hollis said the issue needs broad public debate.

Sen. Don Cravins, D-Arnauville, said his SB862 would prohibit employment discrimination against people on the basis of their "actual or perceived sexual orientation."

Cravins said he doesn't view his bill as politically charged. He said it's a matter of fairness.

"Every one of God's children should have an opportunity to make a living," Cravins said. "And they ought to be able to do it with relative calm in their lives."

Cravins said he recently was criticized by a minister, who said Cravins' bill runs counter to Bible teachings against homosexuality.

"How can you carry a Bible around, swing it up in the air and talk about Christianity and yet you will condemn God's children?" Cravins said. "Something's wrong with that."

As it cleared the Senate panel, Cravins' bill would apply only to businesses with more than 25 full-time employees. It would not apply to religious organizations.

Cravins said the bill does not require employers to extend benefits to employees' gay partners or require quotas or preferential treatment.

The burden of proving discrimination would be on the employee.

The Senate panel spent more than two hours on Cravins' bill, listening to arguments from the gay community in support of the measure and from opponents who argued against it largely on religious grounds.

Martin Pfeiffer, an LSU student whose gay rights activism included pushing for a gay club at McKinley Senior High while a student there in 1999, said gay men and women are productive workers.

But, Pfeiffer said, many will be tempted to leave Louisiana for opportunities elsewhere if they don't believe the state protects their rights.

Christopher Daigle, who works with gay students at Tulane University and is governmental affairs director for the Louisiana Electorate of Gays and Lesbians, said he gets up to 20 calls a year from people around the state seeking advice after being fired or forced out of a job because they are gay.

Daigle said he is forced to tell them that Louisiana has no laws to prohibit such job discrimination.

Heath Martin, who will soon graduate from McNeese State University, said he ran squarely into anti-gay discrimination on the job several years ago.

Martin said he was working at a restaurant in Lake Charles and progressed rapidly from bartender to supervisor.

But, Martin said, when word got out about his homosexuality, he started having problems at work and ultimately was forced to quit.

"It's ridiculous that in 2001 we still allow this hatefulness to exist," Martin said.

Most of the arguments against the bill focused on religious opposition to gay behavior.

Pat Harris, a New Orleans resident who said she was representing only herself, said she fears where Cravins' bill could lead.

Harris said she is concerned that such legislation could be a step toward recognition of homosexuals as a minority group.

Harris said she could see it leading to Louisiana schools teaching about the gay lifestyle to school children.

Reading from the Bible, Robert Breaud of Arabi said homosexual behavior is "an enormous sin" that should not be rewarded.

Breaud said he repented his own "unholy, unhappy" gay lifestyle at age 34 in 1994 and reconciled himself to what he called God's law.

Sens. Ken Hollis, R-Metairie; Lynn Dean, R-Braithwaite; and C.D. Jones, D-Monroe, voted for Cravins' bill. Sens. Noble Ellington, D-Winnboro, and Mike Smith, D-Winnfield, voted against it.

**Belgium government OKs gay marriage:**  
"Mentalities have evolved, there is no longer any reason not to open marriage to people of the same sex."

### Scout Council Allows Gay Leaders Officials Adopt Don't Ask-Don't Tell Policy

BOSTON, August 1, 2001 -- Officials of a Boy Scout organization in Boston said that they don't think their "don't ask-don't tell" policy violates a national Boy Scout ban against homosexuals.

The Massachusetts Minuteman Council, which oversees 330 troops in the Boston area, approved its new bylaw July 19. It allows gays to be scoutmasters -- and also prohibits excluding people on the basis of race or religion.

A spokesman for the council said that he doesn't think discussions about sexual orientation have a place in the Scouts at all -- with the boys or their leaders.

Eric Ferrero of the American Civil Liberties Union's Lesbian and Gay Rights Project applauds the action.

"It sounds like what the group has done is going to be difficult for the National Boy Scouts to oppose," Ferrero said.

There's no reaction from Scout headquarters.

# AT THE MOVIES

by Walter Lippmann  
walterlx@earthlink.net



I've seen fewer movies recently. Also, a number of movies reviewed last time are still playing in the theaters as this is written. The most prominent of these is *THE CLOSET*. If you haven't seen it yet, take yourself out to see it on the big screen.

## **LOST AND DELIRIOUS**

This was a fascinating movie which captures both the terrible power of the closet on young people and the ways they are unable to deal with their feelings when social pressure denies them an avenue. Lea Pool's latest picture begins when one teenaged girl is taken and dropped (or is it dumped?) at a private boarding school. The movie is told from her point of view.

She's assigned to room a pair of girls whom she soon discovers are having sex with one another. When the younger sister of one of the lovers enters her room and finds out by accident, the drama begins, since the "found-out" girl adamantly denies, first to her sister, and then to herself, that she's a "lesbian". She's just in love with the person, as she sees it. And then to prove the point, she begins dating a guy. The movie is about unrequited love, teen-age angst, and the closet as a vehicle for social pressure, and the closet as a place people enter to protect themselves from what others may think or say about them.

<http://www.jewishjournal.com/home/searchview.php?id=7121>

## **ALL OVER THE GUY**

This is a simple romantic comedy about a couple of young men who are drawn to each other, but whose fears of any actual intimacy prevent them from having the relationship each say they want. We've seen many movies recently in which gay characters are presented as the charming and well-spoken sidekicks of the straight characters (*FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL*).

Here the two guys are framed by their two straight friends who meet, have sex, and move happily along in life with no apparent relationship traumas of any kind.

## **THE DEEP END**

Visually beautiful in every way, and praised to the sky by all the critics I've read, this was one of the worst movies I've seen in ages. (I won't spoil it for you by giving away the plot conclusion.) This movie is said to be about what lengths a mother would go to in order to protect her son. This theme was emphasized in a recent issue of *The Advocate*, which put Tilda Swinton, the lead actress who plays the protagonist, on its front page.

Ms. Swinton, powerfully portraying a mother lost beyond her abilities in an out-of-control situation, is the apparent head of household where three generations live and in which everyone old enough to tell lies to one another does so. None of the family members seems able to ask a direct question of one another. Mom thinks her 17-year-old son is gay, but she never asks him. She goes to the gay bar where he's met a man and had some sort of relationship. She asks the man to stay away from her son, and he says he will - in exchange for \$5,000.00. The man doesn't keep his promise, however, and comes to see the son shortly afterwards. A fight occurs and the boy's unsavory lover is killed. When mom discovers the body, she doesn't ask her son "what's up with this body, dear". Instead, she *MOVES* the body, and proceeds to do one foolish thing after another, attempting to cover up what she assumes is the murder she assumes that her son has committed.

What I've given you is in merely the first ten or fifteen minutes of the movie. Numerous convoluted plot twists follow before the ultimate resolution. Tilda Swinton is a wonderful actress, but this story was

utterly non-credible, at least to this thriller-loving viewer. Beautiful to look at, but completely non-believable from a logical standpoint.

## **WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH**

(Esperando al mesias)

This Argentine movie screened but once at the Latino International Film Festival. There's a small chance that it might get a commercial release. It centers around the young son of an orthodox Jewish restaurant owner who decides to strike off on his own, breaking out beyond the Jewish community and the various plans his family has made for him (marry a nice Jewish girl, first of all.)

While he's employed at a large corporation doing temp work, he meets and falls in love with a woman who is not only not Jewish, she's bisexual. What's so pleasing about this movie is that she's an adult, and her bisexuality is presented matter-of-factly as if its significance were no more than the color of her eyes. Let's hope it gets at least an art-house release.

Some individual viewers comments can be found here:

<http://us.imdb.com/CommentsShow?0248001>

## **GLBT MOVIE REVIEW RESOURCES**

Here are a few resources with which you can check out movies in theatrical release and on video:

## **FILM REVIEWS AT WOMEN'S STUDIES DATA BASE**

<http://www.inform.umd.edu/EdRes/Topic/WomensStudies/FilmReviews/>

## **BRIGHT LIGHTS FILM JOURNAL**

<http://www.brightlightsfilm.com/gayandlesbian.html>

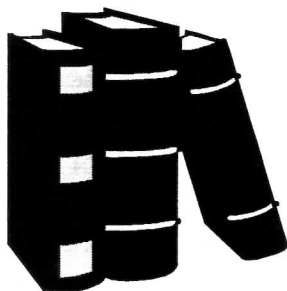
## **LESBIAN FLICKS**

<http://www.glweb.com/lesbianflicks/>

## **POPCORN Q AT PLANETOUT**

<http://www.planetout.com/pno/>

# OFF THE BOOK-RACK



## "Trans Forming Families: Real Stories About Transgendered Loved Ones"

Edited by Mary Boenke  
146 pages, \$13.95, paperback, ISBN 0-9663272-1-7  
Walter Trook Publishing

Mary Boenke is the mother of an adult FTM (female-to-male) son, founder of PFLAG's Trans Network (TSON / see "helplines" on page 2 of this newsletter), and a trans activist. She dedicated this book "To our own new son who has dared be true to himself and taught us so much, To all those brave, dedicated and pioneering transgendered persons who have risked so much for their own integrity and for those to come, and To all those courageous families, open to ambiguity and new frontiers, holding love more important than social custom."

While much has been written by, and about, the varieties of gender persons, their journeys, the current political process, even counseling, very little has been published about the corresponding journey, also often very difficult and painful, that parents, partners and other family members must make in order to maintain the relationship. The collected stories are about both male-to-female and female-to-male transsexuals, crossdressers, intersexed persons, children, youth and adults of all ages.

### Excerpts:

...Sarah tested my resolve to set her free in a way I had never imagined. On her third birthday, she tore the wrapping paper from one of her grandmother's gifts and discovered a pink velvet dress trimmed in ribbons and white lace. I knew she wouldn't want to wear it. She hadn't voluntarily put on anything but pants since turning two, and this dress was totally impractical for playing the way Sarah played. Nevertheless, I was surprised by her reaction. She looked up, not unhappy, but puzzled and confused, and asked, "Why is Grandma giving me a dress? Doesn't she know I'm not the kind of girl who wears dresses?" Then, with an air of great satisfaction at finding the solution to her problem, she added, "Just tell Grandma I'm a boy."...

...Ever since I can remember I've felt something was wrong, but it wasn't until about a year ago that I figured out what it was. Our firstborn son, Paul, home from his freshman year in college, began for us the painful and rewarding journey of being trans-parents and this is how we reacted. Our responses to our child were probably predictable, and probably less than praiseworthy. Are you sure (this is not just your overactive imagination)? Is it possible that you're gay (and just don't want to face it or think we'll accept it)? Is it because you haven't had any sexual experience or close male/female relationships (and are somewhat fearful of getting into them)? And so on. We came up with every alternative explanation we could think of in order not to have to deal with the unthinkable proposition that our intelligent, sensitive, highly talented firstborn son would have to spend the rest of his/her life coping with a condition only those who have it know much about. I certainly didn't. My image of transgendered people came from TV and movie images of transvestites; at the time, I didn't know the difference...

### HOW TO ORDER THIS BOOK:

You may order copies of this book from the editor, Mary Boenke. Make checks payable to her and send to her at: 180 Bailey Blvd., Hardy, VA 24101. For further information: (540) 890-3957, or maryboenke@aol.com  
The book is \$13.95, including shipping and mailing, for one through three books, within the United States.