



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

February-March 2002

Newsletter 215

## 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

February 19, 2002

**D**eputy Don Mueller is an officer with the West Hollywood Sheriff's Department and heads up the Sheriff's Community Relations Department in West Hollywood. Come listen to Don's personal journey and the changing attitude in law enforcement toward GLBT officers and the community they serve.

March 19, 2002

**T**BA - check out our WebSite later in January for details - [www.pflagla.org](http://www.pflagla.org)

**Special Thanks from the Co-Presidents - Thanks to all our readers who made a year end contribution to PFLAG - Los Angeles. We realize that we are one of many organizations that ask for your help this time of year so we thank you again for making PFLAG Los Angeles one of the oldest support groups for the family and friends of the GLBT Community. Joel Hendler and George Unger**

**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 &amp; 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 &amp; 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 &amp; 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

## Maybe Next Year The Whales

In years gone by, I was never that much of a giver to causes. Maybe a little money or time, here and there, but not that much of either really. If asked, I was a believer that one should give back to the community, and volunteer. And save those whales. But there was a little -- or big - something missing. Commitment.

Then came the nudge or shove I needed. And from what source. My family, of course. My wife, Rosemary, led me into Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, which I now do for two hours each week. Reading college level textbooks onto tape, with a large and appreciative audience. And, about a year ago, our son came out: a gay man. And while we live in one of the more forgiving places for gay people, there is still lots to do, lots to change.

George Unger, the Board and I are working to move this PFLAG chapter to better fulfill our triple mission of support, advocacy and education. One of my New Year's resolutions is to find and give something additional to the needs of the gay community, each month. I challenge you to do the same. Go to the Gay & Lesbian Center and check out opportunities. Give clothes and basics to the forgotten youths thru the Jeff Griffith Gay & Lesbian Center. Join a protest, write a letter, support a cause. And then, maybe next year we can save the whales. Or keep choosing the PFLAG cause.

Joel Hendler - Co-President PFLAG Los Angeles

## Dutch Gay Marriage Stats Released

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands (AP 12/12/01) - Dutch civil servants wed nearly 2,000 same-sex couples in the first six months after gay marriage was legalized this year, a government agency said Wednesday.

The gay marriage law that took effect on April 1 made the Netherlands the first country to grant gay couples the same rights as heterosexual couples, including the right to adopt children.

The Central Bureau of Statistics said 2,100 men and 1,700 women had married someone of the same sex by Sept. 30.

Gay marriages comprised 3.6 percent of all new marriages. In April, this figure was more than 6 percent as gays rushed to take advantage of the new law, but it gradually stabilized at around 3 percent.

Sixteen percent of the people who married someone of the same sex had earlier been in a heterosexual marriage. Most were divorced, and a few were widows or widowers.

## "QUOTE - UNQUOTE"

"I think they [gay couples] ought to be treated equally [by the federal government]. Period. I don't see why they shouldn't [get the same Social Security, tax and other federal benefits]. I think that's a proper goal."

Former U.S. President Gerald Ford  
to the Detroit News, October 29, 2001

## Need to look up GLBT-friendly resources?

Check out the Gay & Lesbian  
Community Yellow Pages at  
<http://www.gaycommunitydirectory.com>

In the directory you'll find almost everything from A-Z, like auto repair, bookstores, churches, dentists, estate planning, florists, gyms, hotlines, immigration, office supplies, pharmacies, religious & spiritual organizations, stockbrokers, thrift shops, wills & trusts, and much more.

CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE FOR PRIDE & EQUALITY (CAPE)  
Promoting Basic Rights for the LGBT Community & All Californians

P.O. Box 1172, Sacramento, CA 95812-1172 Phone: 916-929-6331, Fax: 916-646-1569 <http://www.calcape.org>

## CAPE's 2001 Year-End CA Legislative Update (By Eric Astacaan)

In contrast to the anemic environment of last year, 2001 gave us a number of legislative victories to celebrate. Several measures were enacted that positively affect lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Californians. Those bills that Governor Gray Davis signed into law will take effect on January 1st, 2002.

### Gay & Lesbian Families

Gov. Gray Davis signed into law **AB 25**, sponsored by CAPE and authored by Assemblymember Carole Migden. This bill expands current domestic partners law, giving registered gay and lesbian couples as well as senior opposite-sex couples a number of legal and financial tools to make critical decisions on each other's behalf. Another bill, **SB 410** (Speier), was also enacted, permitting San Mateo County to extend death benefits and survivor's allowances to the surviving domestic partners of county employees.

This year also marked the first time that a civil union bill was introduced in the California Legislature. **AB 1338**, by Assemblymember Paul Koretz, would establish civil union for same-sex couples that would provide comparable rights, protections, benefits and responsibilities currently afforded to different-sex couples by California's marriage laws.

### Employment Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policies

**AB 1015** (Wright) and **AB 1475** (Liu) received approval from the Governor as well. **AB 1015** expands existing prohibitions against discrimination to make employers aware that they cannot fire or refuse to hire an applicant on the basis of lawful activities that are not work related. Employees and applicants who engage in lawful conduct, occurring during non-working hours away from the employers' premises will be protected from discrimination. **AB 1475** extends the harassment prohibition to rank-and-file employees of religious-based hospitals.

Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg's gender nondiscrimination bill, **AB 1649**, was turned into a two-year bill and can be taken up for a Senate floor vote next year if need be. This bill has enabled CAPE, the Employment Law Center, Lambda Legal, NCLR, the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, and other advocates, in partnership with the offices of Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg and Senator Sheila Kuehl to work with the State Dept. of Fair Employment & Housing in crafting administrative procedures enforcing the prohibition on gender-based discrimination, in view of supportive case laws and other provisions of the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA).

### Transgender Rights

**AB 194**, authored by Assemblymember John Longville, would have extended California's ability to issue new birth certificates to post-operative transsexuals who were born in California but now live out-of-state. This bill was vetoed by Governor Gray Davis.

### Hate Crimes Prosecution

As approved by the Governor under **AB 276** (Migden), the Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) will now have two years, instead of one, to investigate a complaint alleging a violation of Civil Code section 51.7, the Ralph Civil Rights Act (pertaining to hate violence), before issuing an accusation letter.

### School Safety

The Governor also signed into law Senator Sheila Kuehl's two measures, **Senate Bills 225 and 257**, which strengthen our schools' anti-discrimination and harassment policies. Under **SB 225**, interscholastic athletic activities are prohibited from discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It also requires the California Interscholastic Federation to provide information to parents and students regarding the process for resolution of discrimination complaints arising out of interscholastic athletic activities. **SB 257** adds hate crimes to the list of issues to be addressed in interagency safe schools programs established under the School/Law Enforcement Partnership. This bill also requires comprehensive school safety plans to include development of an anti-discrimination and harassment policy, and the development of hate crime reporting procedures.

### HIV/AIDS

Assemblymember Carole Migden's **AB 1263** authorizes the State Department of Health Services to participate in a research project with the federal Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) to develop criteria for training non-laboratory personnel to perform a Rapid HIV test and provide counseling in a single visit. Governor Davis signed this bill into law.

Another bill we supported but was rejected by Gov. Davis was **AB 937**, by Assemblymember Paul Koretz. This bill would have required all health service plans to make adequate capitated reimbursement rates available to medical providers serving privately insured and Medi-Cal patients with HIV.

Dec. 12, 01

Dear Chris Haiss,

The PFLAG Newsletter deserves great commendation. It is simple and easy to read, concise, and informative. Even people who are in a hurry of their daily activities can find the time to read it. I use the information to educate some of my relatives who are opponents of Gays. Stories by some parents -especially this last one by Larry Sperber- gave me a great deal of emotional support. I wish I was as brave as he and his wife in supporting my son. Unfortunately I could not convince my husband to read your newsletter. My son came out to him last year. He is still struggling to reconcile his anti gay feelings with his love for his son.

Sometimes I receive much of the news about gays from the anti gay organizations! The enclosed newsletter was given to me by a friend. It has precise information on Bills which I had not heard anywhere else. I am enclosing it for you. Perhaps you could use the information in your next newsletter.

Unfortunately I have to remain anonymous. Two close family members are the only ones who know about my son, and have made repeated disturbing anti-gay comments to me and him.

I do not have support from anyone in my family and I do not see my son coming out in any near future. If you want to use the contents of this letter in your newsletter you have my permission.

Sincerely yours,  
A concerned mother

Dear concerned mother,

Thank you so much for your letter. In my opinion, you ARE brave. You have no support from anyone in your family, but still you try to educate your relatives. Furthermore, you are there for your son. It's good to hear that the Sperber's story gave you a great deal of support. This shows how important our newsletter is, sharing our stories, and, even more important, the existence of PFLAG.

As you can see, I used the suggestion in your letter to print an update on last year's California legislation (page 4). I also sat down and "investigated" parts of the "Focus On The Family" newsletter you received. I found out that, for example, AB916 is about expanding AIDS prevention instruction to include instruction in the prevention of sexually transmitted infections. Governor Davis vetoed this bill and said: "On the merits, I agree with greater inclusion of STI prevention information in the course curriculum. However, the vast majority of voluntary sex education instruction offered by school districts in the state already includes information on STIs."

And this is how Mr. Dobson presented it in his newsletter: "AB916 - Even though California law specifically tells instructors to "teach honor and respect for monogamous heterosexual marriage," this bill expressly forbids them from supporting it as normal. Davis vetoed this bill because it would cost the state too much to rewrite curriculum."

A good way to check on bills and what they really say is on the State of California web site at <http://www.sen.ca.gov> From there you can click on "Legislation" (at the bottom of the page) and look up each and every bill.

I don't know if you attend our PFLAG meetings. And I don't know if you have Internet access to connect with other parents of a gay/lesbian/bi/trans child. But what I do know is that you are a courageous caring mom! And although you have to stay anonymous right now, I hope that the day will come when you feel like you can come up to me and let me know that you were the concerned mother who send me this letter that, yes, moved me.

Thanks again!



## Study finds gays and straights equally happy

(Tom Musbach, Gay.com / PlanetOut.com Network  
Wednesday, January 2, 2002)

Researchers have learned that gay and straight adults in the United States are equally happy with their overall quality of life, Reuters Health reports.

Led by David L. Weis, a professor of family and consumer sciences at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, the research team wanted to test the idea that GLBT people in general are less happy than straight people due to discrimination and difficult life circumstances.

Data was collected from seven surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, and the results were published in the Journal of Sex Research.

"We found little support for the idea that as a group, gays and bisexuals face more serious problems than do other groups," Weis said. "Whatever affects quality of life is more complex than that."

Approximately 1,500 survey participants self-evaluated various quality-of-life issues, such as recent moods, overall life satisfaction and physical and mental health. They also had to identify themselves as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual or not sexually active.

The study did not ask GLBT participants if they were "out of the closet" or not, and the researchers noted that those who are not out may experience a lower quality of life.

Initial reactions from GLBT mental health professionals were mixed.

Dr. Robert P. Cabaj, a psychiatrist who is a former president of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA), expressed some reservation about the report.

"Quality of life is difficult to measure and does not exclude having problems," he said via e-mail. "People who are oppressed may believe that they have no other option and therefore report satisfaction with life. Also, many GLBT may expect to have barriers and discomfort as part of their lives and therefore do not factor that in when evaluating quality of life."

Another psychiatrist, Dr. Jerrold Polansky, who chairs the education committee for the board of GLMA, said: "If the methodology is solid, the conclusion that happiness is more complex than the gender of the person one has sex with certainly makes sense from my experience with treating heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual people."

## DID YOU KNOW?

The King James Version of the Bible has 142 references to "abominations". **Two** out of the 142 refer to "...lying with mankind as with womankind..."

It also names 61 situations where someone "shall surely be put to death." **One** out of these 61 refers to "...lying with mankind as with womankind..."

**None** of the Ten Commandments mentions homosexuality.

The list of Seven Deadly Sins **does not include** homosexuality.

Good to know! Don't you think?!

## GAY HISTORY with LISA DIGUARDI

November 8, 1995:

Representatives of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays approached television stations in four US cities to buy advertising time for two ads, one on the prevention of suicide among gay and lesbian youth and one about gay bashing. All stations refused to air the suicide ad, and only two cable stations and one network affiliate station would air the gay-bashing ad. They were told the ads offended community standards.

## TV TIP...TV TIP...TV TIP...TV TIP...TV TIP

If you haven't seen it yet, you might have missed something!

### "The Education of Max Bickford"

Sundays at 8pm on CBS

Starring Richard Dreyfuss as Max Bickford and Helen Shaver, as Max's friend Steve who returns as Erica Bettis after a sex-change operation.

The series is not about transsexuals, but integrates the character of Erica in a wonderful way.

Thank you, Liz, for sharing this articles! Though it's from 1996, its subject is more popular than ever before in regard to AB 1338\*).

October 30, 1996 LOS ANGELES TIMES

### THE MARRIAGE DANCE, TO A DIFFERENT TUNE

by Lydia A. Nayo

It's not just courts and legislatures, but married heterosexuals who are keeping gay couples from the altar.

Anybody who has been successfully married to the same person for any length of time has a theory about the dynamics of being married.

Mine is that marriage is a dance. The music and the rhythms are in the heads and hearts of the dancers. Lucky couples hear the same tune, often at the same time. The patient listen for points along the way where the melody of one complements the chorus of the other. The tolerant learn to adapt to the music emanating from a partner. The state, through its marriage laws, sells tickets to the dance.

A lot of us don't want same-sex couples legitimately on the dance floor. The majority of us take our matrimonial dance for granted. Any man is free to marry or not marry any woman and to stay married for the wrong, the frivolous, the most venal of reasons. As long as each partner is a member of a different sex, the law averts its eyes.

So the woman I know who married so that she could quiet the ticking of her biological clock could do so with the state's approval. A couple I know has been unhappily married for several years now; he has affairs, and she prefers not to know about them. My twice-married friend applied for and got a third license with no questions asked and celebrated in a lace dress like a first-time bride, bless her heart.

And there is no state law that stops men from ordering wives through catalogs, like they are buying canvas luggage.

But Congress has paved the way for any state to deny a marriage license to same-sex couples. A number of states, including California, took up the invitation. And those of us on the dance floor let that happen.

In my more cynical moments, I wonder if our collective objection to same-sex-couple marriages is grounded in the fear that those couples will dance better than we do. Maybe the absence of gender difference will cause less friction, and only 25% of all same-sex marriages will end in divorce. That would certainly make the current 50% rate for opposite-sex marriages look even shabbier.

In point of fact, there probably won't be much difference in the long run. Any two people who step into any marriage have as much chance as the next couple of succeeding at it. In some cases, it is the measure of success that, the parties determined to let go of one another before more major damage was done. In others, the divorce process is just the last nail in the coffin.

Most of the same-sex couples seeking to enter into a legally sanctioned marriage don't want to dismantle the institution of

marriage. They certainly aren't after your daughters or your sons or your spouse.

Some couples just want the law to recognize their style of doing the marriage dance as valid. A number of these couples have been practicing their steps in the privacy of their own homes. What else would you call moving to the city in which their partner had a great career opportunity? How about taking turns visiting each other's relatives at key holidays or deciding to have both families over and let the sparks fly? Fighting about money and negotiating to avoid being the one who always changes the litter box.

Sounds a lot like the marriage I have been in for 11 years.

It boggles my imagination that we would want to legislate to stop the next two people ready and willing to sign on to abide by the rules, to love, honor and cherish, through sickness and in health, for better or worse, because they don't look like me and Gene as a couple.

Here's what I know. Our daily calls to one another during the workday will be just as constant, the Friday nights in front of "Homicide" with sorbet will be just as fine. We will still have conflicting tastes in music, and our checking accounts will be just as separate, whether the married couple next door is gay or heterosexual. They will be doing their dance, and we will be doing ours.

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\*) AB1338 would establish the choice for same-sex couples in California to enter into a civil union.

A civil union is a comprehensive legal status parallel to civil marriage for all purposes under state law. All legal rights which apply to "family," "immediate family," "dependent," and "next of kin" would also apply to spouses in a civil union.

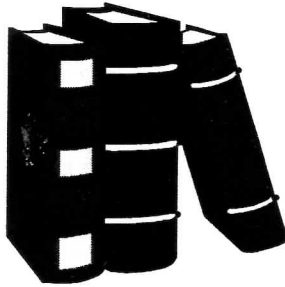
If marriage laws are supposed to protect children, then there is no reason why the children of gays/lesbians should be excluded from growing up in the safest family environment possible. And let's not forget that having children is not a marriage requirement for opposite-sex couples. Neither do couples have to prove that they are able to produce offspring.

And if this is seen as a "moral" issue rather than a "civil" issue (we're talking about tax laws, visitation rights, inheritance, child custody, property, etc.) it doesn't make sense to me why same-sex couples should be morally more inept than opposite-sex couples when it comes to those rights involved.

There is no logical reason why committed same-sex couples, many of them together for several years, should be denied the same rights and protection that straight couples obtain immediately through marriage, even if they have known each other only for a day.

If this bill would pass, same-sex couples are still denied the 1049 FEDERAL rights afforded to married heterosexual couples.

# OFF THE BOOK-RACK



## "Cootie Shots"

Theatrical Inoculations Against Bigotry For Kids,  
Parents And Teachers / Plays, Poems & Songs

Edited by Norma Bowles with Mark E. Rosenthal  
176 pages, \$18.95, paperback, ISBN 1-55936-184-0  
Published by Theatre Communications Group

This book is fresh off the press! Now you might wonder why I'm presenting this book to you since it is not exclusively about gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender issues. Let me tell you what "Cootie Shots" is all about. "Cootie Shots" is a delicious assortment of plays, songs and interactive performance pieces that promote tolerance and celebrate diversity by presenting role models of many different races, classes, genders, abilities, sexual orientations, religions, shapes and sizes. The book is richly illustrated in full color with artwork generously donated by professional artists and children. Together, these selections and illustrations make up a fun and constructive way to help children deal with bullying, name-calling and sissy-baiting.

Comprised of fifty 2-15 minute educational plays, songs and poems for young audiences (Kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade), "Cootie Shots" selections were created by "Fringe Benefits" (a Los Angeles-based educational theatre company), in conjunction with a coalition of elementary school teachers, parents, theater artists, therapists, administrators and students. "Fringe Benefits" has presented over 100 performances of "Cootie Shots", most of them in elementary schools throughout California. Members of the following PFLAG chapters contributed to this book: PFLAG Los Angeles, PFLAG South Bay, PFLAG South Orange, and PFLAG Ventura.

Since we all acquire certain beliefs throughout our lives, many of them already in early childhood, we might have forgotten where those beliefs came from and who taught them to us and why we were taught to believe certain things. Remember when there was a time when people believed the earth is flat and the sun rotates around the earth? And everybody who didn't share this common belief was persecuted? Beliefs are "judgments, freely made and maintained" and, yes, they can be changed.

Read about age discrimination in our own Bea Bernstein's piece "At Your Age?!" and her conversation with Malcolm: "Don't call me 'grandma'." "Sorry, I thought all old ladies liked to be called 'grandma'" "Not this one." "Why don't you like being called 'Grandma'?" "'Cuz I don't have grandchildren, for one. And 'cuz people usually call me that when they're trying to say I'm too old for something." "That's exactly how I feel about people calling me 'kid'. They say 'kid', but what they mean is I'm too young to think for myself."...

And read about 5<sup>th</sup> grader Tonia's struggle (based on a true story shared by our own Gutierrez family) she goes through at school just because her brother is gay. Her peers bully her and call her "Lezzie" and "Dyke" all the time. The teacher does nothing to stop the harassment in her case, but immediately steps in when kids make fun of Scott who wears glasses...

And then there is the Anglo family transforming their backyard into a haunted house for Halloween, while on the other side of the fence the Latino family is busy creating an altar to honor their deceased loved ones for Dias de los Muertos...

[For booking information on "Cootie Shots" please contact Artistic Director Norma Bowles at (323) 953-9036]