



Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

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

August-September 2002

Newsletter 218

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; 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

August 20, 2002

Bill Mochon, Ph.D., Psy.D., is a member of the Lesbian and Gay Psychotherapy Association of Los Angeles. Bill has counseled several hundred sexually abused patients and most recently presented at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Dallas. Come hear Bill discuss his work and the service he provides to the GLBT community.

September 17, 2002

As a director, Arthur Dong's award winning documentary work reflects his commitment to social activism through media. He has received numerous accolades from the Asian American, GLBT, and film communities. Arthur's films include "Licensed to Kill", "Coming Out under Fire", and most recently, "Family Fundamentals" which appeared at the 2002 Outfest Film Festival. Please join us as Arthur shares his passion for film and the thought provoking dialogue it produces.

**Don't miss PFLAG's NATIONAL CONFERENCE: Family Voices for Equality,
September 27-29 in Columbus, OH.**

Register now at www.pflag.org

**New this year: Family Voices for Equality is being held in conjunction with Family Pride and
COLAGE (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere).**

To register by phone or for information call 614-447-5105

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 or 981 2332

Colton: 825 8368 (Norma)

Redlands Chapter: 335 2005 (Kathy)

Area Code 949

South Orange County: 459 2834 (Karyl)

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! Gender bender greetings, Chris Haiss

Deadline for submissions: September 1
(October/November issue)

OTHER HELPLINES / RESOURCES

Spanish Speaking:

(310) 453 8506 (Angela)

African American:

(323) 731 0888 (Shirley)

(323) 305 1853 (Glynis)

Asian Pacific Islander:

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

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)

PFLAG National

(202) 467 8180 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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summer is here and with it comes numerous film festivals up and down the west coast.

I've always been impressed with power of this media to invoke thought and debate. It provides almost a "time capsule-like" look at the thoughts and feelings of a community or even a nation. For those of us who live in the Los Angeles area, the film industry affords us many opportunities to share this experience through numerous festivals and previews.

From the perspective of the GLBT community and its families, four films come to my mind as groundbreaking and hopefully timeless as well. I will always credit "Philadelphia" for being the first mainstream movie to present AIDS and to put some star power behind it. Ang Lee's "The Wedding Banquet" deals with many topics but most remarkably, how Asian parents react to their son's sexual identity. Less known but just as powerful is "Out of the Past", the emotional story of Kelli Peterson's struggle to start a gay-straight alliance in her Salt Lake City high school paralleled with snapshots of gay historical figures. If I had to rank my number one GLBT film, it would be "The Times of Harvey Milk", the Academy Award winning documentary. As I've said in the past, I'm still amazed today at how many people never heard of Harvey Milk. As part of the UCLA film preservation series, I was able to view a restored version of this documentary two years ago at the Directors Guild here in Los Angeles and was forever moved. If you haven't seen this film please make time to do so.

Finally, be sure to keep an eye in the paper for Arthur Dong's documentary "Family Fundamentals", coming to a local theatre in late summer.

George Unger - Co-President PFLAG Los Angeles

DON'T MISS IT!!! MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!!

Four gay couples. Six months. One goal. Marriage.

GAY WEDDINGS - an eight-part BRAVO original reality series featuring four gay and lesbian couples who are tying the knot.

Premieres Monday, September 2nd, at 7pm and 10pm E/P.
(Series runs September 2-5th. Please check your local TV guide.)

"Gay Weddings" features the daughter of our own NICKY and DAVID BREGMAN!

Nicky: "Eve called one day and said 'I proposed to Dale last night!' My immediate question was 'What did she say?' 'Yes!' - and that was the most wonderful news for me as a parent. They've been together for about five years. One day, they went to the Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center to gather information on domestic partnerships. There they were approached by BRAVO. First, they didn't want to do it, but finally they agreed to have a camera following them for six months. I'm so thrilled and happy for them."

Congratulations to Eve Bregman & Dale Melidosian!

A Tribute To Alan Bell, Pioneer In Homosexual Research

Alan P. Bell, a research psychologist who led a groundbreaking Kinsey Institute study two decades ago suggesting that homosexuality has a biological basis, died of a stroke May 13. He was 70.

A retired professor of counseling and educational psychology at Indiana University in that city, Bell was a senior research psychologist for 14 years at the Alfred C. Kinsey Institute for Sex Research, which is affiliated with the university. Bell led the Kinsey Institute study, published in 1981, that suggested that homosexuals are born with that predisposition and not influenced by traumatic experiences during childhood development. "We found homosexuality is deep-seated and not something that one chooses to be or not to be," Bell said at the time. "We looked at the biological underpinnings of sexuality."

The study, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, was based on five-hour interviews with about 1,500 homosexual and heterosexual men and women in the San Francisco area. Critics, however, questioned the study's controversial finding that there is almost no correlation between early family experience and adult sexual orientation, and the researchers' method of relying on participants' memories in answering researchers' questions.

"I expect to be condemned from both sides-by the radicals for even looking into the subject and by the analysts who may say we're trying to paint a glowing picture of homosexuality," Bell said. "But we are reporting what people say, and it's all very consistent."

Paul Robinson, writing in *Psychology Today*, said Bell and his co-authors answered the question of why some people become homosexuals while others become heterosexuals "more satisfactorily than any previous study." "One finished [the study] with the firm sense that much of the confusion about sexual identity has now been set aright," Robinson wrote. "Parents can safely rid themselves of the fear that their actions will somehow determine the sexual preference of their children, and psychotherapists can relax their fierce campaign to change adult sexual behavior by probing into early familial experiences."

Born in Newark NJ, in 1932, Bell earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, in 1952. He received a master's from General Theological Seminary in New York in 1955, and as an Episcopal minister helped found the parish in Denville, NJ. Bell obtained a doctoral degree in counseling from Columbia University in New York in 1964. During his doctoral internship at the Veterans Administration hospital in Northport, NY, he became interested in the dreams of a sex offender with whom he did extensive work. The result was the book "The Personality of a Child Molester," co-written with Calvin Hall.

In 1967, Bell became an assistant professor at Indiana University and senior research psychologist at the Kinsey Institute. He also served as a vice president of the institute for 12 years. While at Kinsey, he was senior author of "Sexual Preference: Its Development in Men and Women" and another landmark publication, "Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity Among Men and Women." In 1970, Bell co-founded the university's Center for Human Growth, which is a departmental training site for graduate students in counseling and offers therapy for campus and community clients. A charter member of the International Academy of Sex Research, Bell was the author of several books, including "Human Sexuality: Studies From the Kinsey Institute" and "The Mind and Heart in Human Sexual Behavior." After retiring from Indiana University in 1997, Bell continued his private practice in psychotherapy.

The book "Sexual Preference: Its Development in Men and Women" mentioned in this above obituary was co-written with Dr. Martin Weinberg and Dr. Sue Hammersmith. This work was a major break-through for the understanding of homosexuality, especially for parents of gays and lesbians.

At the invitation of Adele Starr, former president of PFLAG, Dr. Weinberg addressed an overflow meeting of PFLAG/LA in October of 1981.

SPREADING THE WORD IN THE COMMUNITY

- Betty DeGeneres and Justin Higgins spoke at the Accept and Respect Festival at North Hills Prep.
- Karen Mason and Mitch Grobson spoke at North Hollywood High School.
- Joel & Rosemary Hendler attended the Lavender Graduation Ceremony at UCLA.
- Marty Olson, Heather Mickelson and Mitch Grobson spoke at Verdugo Hills High School in Tujunga, California.
- Board member Rosemary Hendler donated some of her digital paintings to the Out Auction, benefitting the Gay & Lesbian Center. In the silent auction, there were many overbids for her work, which sold for a high price and was a donation to the Center from PFLAG.
- Larry Sperber, Lynette Sperber, Bahman Ghahremani, Loretta Amaro and Andy Birnbaum spoke to a teacher credentialing class at Polytechnic High School in Sun Valley.

"I have a deep life-long passion of making the world a better place."

PFLAG names first-ever gay executive director

The national office of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) has hired David Tseng, former White House senior policy advisor and staff director for the National Economic Council, as the organization's new executive director, making him the first gay man and person of color to lead the organization. Tseng will begin in his new position June 1.

"Hopefully what I bring to the table is not only my personal experience as an openly gay Asian Latino, but my leadership experience as well," Tseng said. "Part of the challenge of the GLBT community is to live up to the idea of inclusivity. We all need to do a better job of understanding people of other communities and including them in our leadership and policy agendas."

Tseng succeeds Kirsten Kingdon, who is retiring May 15 after four years as the group's chief executive. Under her tenure, PFLAG grew from 416 to 486 affiliates nationwide. "In PFLAG, our advocacy for GLBT equality grows out of our strong family values," said Kingdon. "David's commitment to these values coupled with his experience in politics and government will serve PFLAG well in our goal of changing hearts, minds and policies."

Tseng, 43, served as a White House senior policy advisor and staff director for the National Economic Council in the last year of the Clinton administration. A nationally recognized pension and health care expert, Tseng also served as chief assistant treasurer for the City and County of San Francisco, a benefits policy advisor for the U.S. Department of Labor and an attorney in private practice in Los Angeles. He and his partner of seven years, John Burnim, make their home in Washington, D.C.

Tseng's selection as PFLAG's executive director has drawn praise from a wide array of leaders in government, civil rights and public policy. "I am delighted that PFLAG has selected today an outstanding Californian, David Tseng, to be its next leader," said Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA). "David's exceptional skills and knowledge, combined with his perspective as a gay Latino Asian American, equip him well to lead PFLAG in its vital mission of securing full civil rights for all Americans."

Congressman Mark Foley (R-FL), echoed bipartisan support for Tseng, declaring "PFLAG has made a wise choice in selecting David Tseng to direct their national efforts on behalf of gay and lesbian equality. I know we'll be able to count on David to provide lawmakers with insight and thoughtful advice as Congress crafts policies affecting American families."

Bill Lann Lee, former U.S. assistant attorney general for civil rights, who has known Tseng for years, also expressed pleasure at Tseng's appointment, adding, "I have known David throughout his career to be an effective leader and coalition-builder in our communities, and in the halls of power in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. He is a superb choice to head a civil rights organization for a community whose time has come."

Fathers, Be a Lion!

(By James M. Pines)

When my son came out to me, I soon discovered that a lot of people hate homosexuals. I'd known that all along I guess, but hadn't thought much about it. The full impact of our society's pervasive homophobia becomes apparent only when it affects someone important to you.

Though I went through the usual denial, grieving, and other stages so familiar in the literature, another healthier reaction soon dominated my responses. The fierceness and violence of it astonished me. The way I had always imagined an angry lion, for example, defending cubs against the hunter, I found myself enraged that some people might attack my son, verbally or even physically, for something as private and unobjectionable as his sexual orientation.

Though I continue to mask my rage most of the time, I consider my fierce reaction to be the essence of what masculinity used to mean. Defending your Gay child is far tougher, consistent with, and appropriate to being a "real man" than lamenting his tilt away from heterosexuality.

I don't usually worry about my feelings and responses being masculine enough. I'm more concerned that they be human. However, I mention this reaction to my son's coming out because it may help some fathers whose responses are still tied up with the old masculinity myths. To fight for your Gay children is far more "macho" than ignoring them or throwing them out of the house. If you don't turn your back on friends, as "real men" don't, you certainly shouldn't be turning it on your children!

That's why I have so much difficulty understanding fathers who give their gay sons a hard time. What I or they think of homosexuality is irrelevant. Even if I thought of it as a sin, which I don't, my son is right even if he is wrong. He's right

because he's my son. If it has to be us against the rest of the world, then that's the way it will be.

To let down your Gay male or Lesbian child violates the most natural, fundamental, and intense human attachment any parent can have. As we became more civilized, we began to call it love, but that word just approximates a complex feeling that originated deep in our evolutionary past. Discovering my son's sexual orientation put me in touch with that feeling as nothing else had before.

I sometimes get impatient in support groups and other conversations with parents. There's often too much sophisticated analysis of subtle feelings and self-indulgent wallowing in the grieving process. Too many parents grapple with their ambivalence about homosexual orientation and practices, and struggle slowly toward understanding and "acceptance."

All of this may be useful and essential, but it neglects a crucial point that comes before everything else. Your child is your child, no matter what, and neither sexual orientation nor anything else changes that. When it comes to acceptance, there's nothing to be subtle or sorry about. Get in touch with the feelings you had when you became a parent. Stop moaning and start being a lion!

This essay is for Gay children and their mothers to show fathers who don't love and accept their homosexual offspring. No matter how those fathers feel about homosexuality, they should be out there standing up for their children. That's "natural," "normal," and "manly" thing to do!

From the February, 1995 newsletter of the Metro DC chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays).

"Mom, I Need To Be a Girl"

Now the book by Just Evelyn can be downloaded from the web at <http://www.transproud.com>

It's a 103-page book about Evelyn's transsexual child who transitioned -- including surgery -- with her help while still in high school.

It includes, at the end, sections with advice to trans youth and their parents, questions to ask in choosing a counselor, an endocrinologist, and more.

Mark your calendar!

The Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center presents
Dance Revolution
 on **September 21st**
 to benefit the homeless youth
 of Los Angeles.

See www.drevla.org
 for more details.

The following article was first published April 18, 2002, in **The Plain Dealer**, Ohio's largest newspaper
 © 2002 The Plain Dealer, All rights reserved, Reprinted with permission

The straight story on gay unions

By Regina Brett

Hallelujah. It's about time somebody did it.

On Monday, Cleveland Heights became the first city in Ohio to offer medical benefits to same-sex couples. But if the Religious Wrong gets its way, the decision could be reversed. Residents who oppose the benefits vow to circulate petitions to get the issue on the ballot for a vote.

It's the same old argument: Giving gays and lesbians equal rights is an attack on marriage.

News flash:

Gays aren't destroying marriage and family values - heterosexuals are.
 Gays don't cause heterosexuals to abandon their pregnant girlfriends.
 Gays don't cause heterosexuals to shirk child support payments.
 Gays don't cause heterosexuals to ignore the children they father.
 Gays don't cause heterosexuals to beat their wives.
 Gays don't cause heterosexuals to cheat on their spouses.
 Gays don't cause heterosexuals to give birth to crack babies.
 Gays don't cause heterosexuals to neglect and abuse their children.

You don't strengthen marriage by banning gay unions any more than you strengthen families by banning medical benefits for gay partners. If you want to fix marriage, start with

heterosexual couples, since homosexuals are not legally allowed to marry in this country.

But, no, the opposition to medical benefits has already rallied for a fight. It opposes the ordinance for reasons like . . .

It's an enormous price tag because gays are high health risks: Health insurance for partners of lesbian and gay employees will cost each Cleveland Heights resident about \$1 a year, according to Mayor Ed Kelley. He doesn't expect more than a handful to take advantage of the benefits. As for the worry about the high cost of AIDS, should women not be covered because they might get breast cancer or have a high-risk pregnancy? Should fat people not be covered because they have heart attacks and strokes?

Homosexuals want special rights and privileges: They simply want the same rights and privileges heterosexuals have. Since our society does not allow them to marry, they cannot get spousal benefits. That's why they seek domestic partner benefits.

Taxpayers shouldn't have to pay for something they believe is immoral: Our tax dollars go to make bombs that kill innocent people and support a legal system that executes people. Doesn't that violate the commandment "Thou shalt not kill?"

We don't approve of the homosexual lifestyle: What two consenting adults do in private is no one else's business. Heterosexual couples also engage in, shall we say, "creative" sex, but no one tries to legislate against that. What you do in your bedroom is your business. What others do in theirs is not.

We don't want to normalize homosexuality: Homosexuality is normal for homosexuals. Get to know and spend time with gays and lesbians and you might understand that.

The Bible forbids homosexual activity: The Bible also tells us to stone our rebellious children to death (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). Exodus gives instructions on how to sell our daughters and insists that anyone who curses a parent be killed. Play Bible bingo long enough and you can justify any injustice.

Mayor Kelley, a devout Catholic who reads the Bible with his children, found no conflict between his politics and his religion. "God loves all people," he said, "and all people are created equal."

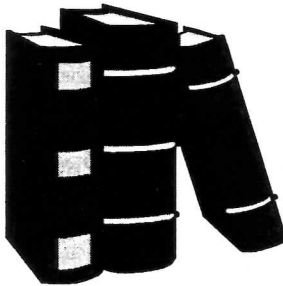
Contact Regina Brett at:
 rbrett@plained.com, 216-999-6328
 © 2002 The Plain Dealer, All rights reserved

GAY HISTORY with LISA DIGUARDI

June 24, 1895:

An article in the New York Times about intimacy between women stated that fidelity could not exist between women because "there are no Davids and Jonathans among women." The author claimed that fundamental antagonism existed between women, and it was in woman's nature to lack humanity.

OFF THE BOOK-RACK



"The Mayor Of Castro Street"

The Life And Times Of Harvey Milk

Randy Shilts

388 pages, paperback, ISBN 0-312-01900-9

St. Martin's Press

This book is one of the most fascinating and moving books I've ever read. It is the life story of Harvey Milk, whom I see as one of the last great leaders of the gay/lesbian community. Read about the injustice 17-year old Harvey experienced as a gay teenager growing up in a homophobic New York in 1947. That summer in Central Park was his first encounter with the police when they rounded up homosexual men who were guilty of indecent exposure by taking their shirts off, while nobody seemed to care about the bare-chested straight men. He learned fast how to keep his being different a secret during his school days and later in his job. Read about Stonewall and the riots; Harvey's move to San Francisco and his opening of a camera store on Castro Street with his boyfriend Scott; Harvey running for supervisor in a vivid, charismatic low-budget campaign; him losing his first supervisory race but winning the seat at the next election; his activism for gay rights; fighting the Briggs initiative and the Religious Right; the resignation of supervisor Dan White and later his push for reappointment; the news on November 27 that Dan White would not be reappointed and the tragedy that followed...

"Eleven A.M., November 27, 1978. A huddle of disbelieving reporters crowds around a locked door in San Francisco City Hall. A few feet away, down a narrow hallway and behind another closed door, the lanky body of Supervisor Harvey B. Milk sprawls face down in a spreading pool of blood.

The outer door is opened and closed by the police and city supervisors; reporters knock elbows trying to get a glimpse of any detail. They don't know what they're looking for, but it's their job to look anyway. A television crew bursts on the scene, adding to the confusion. The mayor's been shot. No, Harvey Milk's been shot. They've both been shot? Are they dead?

The small door opens again. Inside, the cadre of young aides Milk had gathered together fall into one another's arms crying, their eyes dazed with confusion. 'We've lost it,' says one. 'It's over.' Harvey had always told them it would end this way, with bullets in the brain. But only when they see the black rubber body bag, covered with a crisp, pleated sheet, being rolled to the waiting ambulance does Harvey's prophecy become the palpable reality that makes for bad dreams and bold headlines.

On the other side of City Hall, reporters mob another locked door. Behind it, a police officer picks the still-burning cigarette from between the fingers of Mayor George Moscone who, like Milk, was felled with shots in the chest and then coolly executed with two bullets pumped into the back of his head. Board of Supervisors President Dianne Feinstein must make the stunning announcement: 'Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk have been shot...and killed.' The gasps drown out her next words. Her voice breaks as she delivers the shocker: 'Police have a suspect. Supervisor Dan White.'

[On November 27, 1978, San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and openly gay city council member Harvey Milk were murdered. Massive protests followed when convicted murderer Dan White received a verdict of voluntary manslaughter and a sentence of seven to eight years. On January 6, 1984, Dan White was paroled after serving five years.]