



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

February-March 2003

Newsletter 221

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 7:15 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.

OUR NEXT SPEAKERS

February 18, 2003

Marc Adams of HeartStrong Inc. HeartStrong is a non-sectarian outreach established to provide educational resources, compassion and understanding to GLBT and allied persons adversely affected by the influence of religious educational institutions.

March 18, 2003

Jane Drucker, Ph.D. is a marriage, family, and child counselor in California. She holds two Master's Degrees in Special Education from Teacher's College, Columbia University, and a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Summit University of Louisiana.

Hooray! Thanks to Glynis we now have a support group specifically for the African-American community!

The group meets at Mount Carmel Treatment Center,
801 W 70th Street (off of Florence & Hoover)

The next meeting dates: Friday, February 14, 8-9:30pm & Friday, March 14, 8-9:30pm

For more information call Glynis at 323.270.5493

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: March 1
(April/May issue)

OTHER HELPLINES / RESOURCES

African American:

(323) 270 5493 (Glynis)

(323) 731 0888 (Shirley)

Asian Pacific Islander:

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

Spanish Speaking / Bienestar:

(323) 727 7897

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 & (866) 4 U TREVOR

www.thetrevorproject.org

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
(TSON):

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

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

PFLAG/LA Speakers Bureau / Contact Ron & Andy
andynron@adelphia.net

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What time could be better for re-evaluation and re-dedication than this New Year's Resolution time?

About 25 years ago, PFLAG was founded, right here in the LA area, as a response to a parent's concern about her child's gayness, and the lack of support available in the community to help a parent deal with the wide spectrum of trepidations this raised. So a few (mostly) moms got together and worked to support each other, then many others, until a nationwide organization was spawned.

Support remains a major function of our group today, although it seems that a friendlier atmosphere in general has made living a gay life, or having a gay kid, a little bit easier. There is still lots to do. My wife Rosemary recently represented PFLAG at a meeting run by new LA Police Chief Bratton, which dealt with gay issues and tolerance and support. The Chief has a gay sister, and is convincingly dedicated to gay tolerance in and out of his department. Can we do less than offer and give our support when it's needed?

Maybe life's a bit easier because society has been educated about the unthreatening, productive and proud place GBLT folk have in our world. Education is the second major PFLAG tenet. We are doing our part in an organized way. Remember that the most effective way of mind-changing education is repeated one-on-one conversation. The third principle of PFLAG is advocacy, and perhaps this is where our help is most needed. In a time when, as one example, the military dismisses translators because they are gay, despite their valuable and timely functions, there's still need for taking a stand and saying the right thing. So, perhaps there's a little room left on your and our resolution list? Have a great year!

Joel Hendler - Co-President, PFLAG Los Angeles

PFLAG's Oscar Wilde Award

(By Bea Bernstein)

At our February 18, 2003 membership meeting, Jim Brochu and Steve Schalchlin will receive PFLAG's Oscar Wilde Award for their warm, humorous, very entertaining musical "The Big Voice - God Or Merman?". Written and performed by the couple, the musical tells the true story of their early lives (Steve, an Arkansas Baptist and Jim, a Brooklyn born Irish Catholic who wanted to be Pope), how they met and their seventeen year relationship.

The musical was unanimously acclaimed by reviewers. The Los Angeles Times called it "Priceless! Inspiring! Witty, indelible!". Currently playing in New York, the Los Angeles run ended on December 29.

This is the second Oscar Wilde Award for this couple. The first in 1999 was for their fabulous production "The Last Session."

The award is given by PFLAG for "an outstanding production that also promotes understanding of our gay/lesbian children."

Other Oscar Wilde awardees include "Victor/Victoria" starring Julie Andrews, "Last Summer in Bluefish Cove" starring Jean Smart, and "Confessions of a Nightingale" written and performed by Ray Stricklyn.

Don't miss our February meeting!

Letter: Fear of discrimination (September 15, 2002)
Capitol Journal, Topeka, KS

My youngest child, a son, became the victim of a vicious anti-gay hate crime at the age of 16. Some of those who were beating him quoted Bible verses while they kicked him and his blood flowed.

I live in rural Arkansas, not in Topeka, but have been visited by a group of your citizens. I work with many other families who have been impacted by such bias-motivated violence called Families United Against Hate. Many of the families in our organization have also been visited by this group, so we watched closely how the city of Topeka chose to address such blatant discrimination, unfettered discrimination that fuels the hate that cost more lives annually than those lost on 9-11-01.

My family was truly saddened to once again read how "Christians" opposed any action that would ensure that all citizens in Topeka would be guaranteed their equal rights as provided for in our United States Constitution. It is unfortunate that a special interest group has coined the phrase "special rights" for any who simply seek the same equal rights we heterosexual Christians enjoy. We are also Christian; however, we follow the teachings of Christ, who never taught that homosexuality or gender identity was an evil or a sin.

It is a very sad time for our nation that we cannot ensure that all our citizens, regardless of their differences, must also fear discrimination and domestic terrorism from their fellow Americans.

As a child of the South during a very tumultuous time for another pursuit of civil rights, I well remember hearing the Bible used to justify segregation, even marriage being restricted to the same race. We know of untold thousands of Christians who do not support the words and actions of those in Topeka who used their Christianity to justify such hate and discrimination.

When the hate mongers from Topeka picket our homes, funerals and other events, it is my Christian faith that provides my ability to cope and prevail.

My question to the citizens of Topeka who opposed the non-discrimination ordinance, the city council members who opposed the anti-discrimination ordinance and especially the Christians who used their faith to justify their bias: How will you now look at your reflection in the mirror and face your conscience on a daily basis? The next time a life is lost or shattered in your area due to bias-motivated violence, what will you say to the grieving family?

As a mother of a hate crime victim, I am deeply grateful to The Capital-Journal for its honest and objective reporting of these developments, including its editorial that supported equal rights for all.

- Mrs. Carolyn Wagner, Boles, AR

Around the World - BELGIUM

Belgian senate OKs gay 'marriages'

November 27, Belgium's Senate approved what news agencies called "gay marriage."

The bill now moves to the lower house. This proposal is similar to the registered partnerships and civil union laws that have been enacted in numerous European nations.

Around the World - ARGENTINA

Buenos Aires Becomes the First Latin American City to Recognize Gay Couples

Gay-rights activists hailed a new law December 13 extending certain rights and protections to same-sex couples in Buenos Aires, the first Latin American city to adopt such a measure.

"For us, the law is the state's recognition of our right to be a couple and will allow us to access social benefits that we were excluded from," Marcelo Sunthein, a gay-rights activist said.

Around the World - SWITZERLAND

Switzerland introduces partnership measure

Switzerland's Federal Council unveiled gay partnership legislation November 29. "The recognition by the state of the partnership between persons of the same sex will contribute to ending discrimination, which hits homosexual couples particularly hard, and to lessening prejudice against homosexuality," the government said in a press release.

A non-Swiss partner would be granted residency.

SPREADING THE WORD IN THE COMMUNITY

- Rosemary Hendler met with LA Chief of Police William Bratton to discuss concerns about the GLBT community, their safety, and police attitude about GLBT's in the police force.

Thank you, Barbara Hartsfield!

Hello,

I am writing to you because I am a friend of a gay man who had an extraordinary encounter with someone who is not gay. I believe that your organization might be interested in recognizing this person.

My friend had a massive cardiac arrest in traffic on September 30, 2002. On October 2, 2002, the Los Angeles Times, California section, featured the incident. The reason it is so extraordinary is because of the circumstances. Here is what happened.

Jim was driving down the street in Silver Lake. He said the last thing he remembers was bubbles over his head and then everything went black. His doctor said the bubbles were the last bit of oxygen leaving his brain. It seems that a Traffic Officer (Parking enforcement person) drove up behind his truck that had stopped in traffic and got out to investigate. She found him blue lipped with no heartbeat. She laid him down on the seat and put her mouth to his and breathed into him, as well as doing chest compression. She gave him CPR. While she was doing this, she was also transmitting on her radio to her dispatch to send an ambulance. Finally, paramedics get there and she has brought him back. He now is breathing and has a heartbeat. The paramedics were quoted in the article as saying that if she had not been there he would be dead.

There was a picture of her in the paper and because of that, I was able to recognize her a few days later at the Coffee Bean in Los Feliz. I told her I was a friend of the man she had saved and that would be forever grateful. I asked her if she was aware that he was gay. She said that when she had pulled up behind the truck, she had noticed the bumper sticker about partner abuse as well as another identifying decal but that she did not understand what relevance his sexual preference had to do with him needing her. I asked her if she had used protection when she breathed into him and she said no. She said there would not have been time, he needed her immediately. She seemed almost hurt that I would suggest that she would have been deterred by Jim's being gay. She said she had learned CPR because of her children and friends. She wanted to be able to help if she could. What a wonderful woman. So many people who are not gay or lesbian talk a good game about not being concerned about sexual preference, but so few really put their actions where their mouths are.

I believe that this wonderful, selfless, giving woman should receive some sort of recognition for she is truly a 'friend' of the gay community.

I did some checking and she can be contacted as follows:

Traffic Officer Barbara Hartsfield
Department of Transportation / City of Los Angeles
Care of Wayne Tanda, General Manager
Post Office Box 514507
Los Angeles, California 90051-2507
213-485-4030

I wrote a letter to her but I think something from an organization in our community would be nice.

Thank you and God bless you at Christmas and throughout the New Year.

Yolanda Arzola

GAY HISTORY with LISA DIGUARDI

September 30, 1985:

A gay Australian man who had been living in the US with his partner, Richard Adams, for 11 years was deported by a federal court on the grounds that he was a homosexual. An Immigration and Naturalization Service official argued that a loving relationship cannot exist between "faggots."

Valentine's Day Blues

(By Chris Haiss)

Did you buy a nice Valentine's gift for the special person in your life, preparing to spend this lovers' day together? Guess what – some couples won't be together on Valentine's Day. Not that they wouldn't want to be together, they are not ALLOWED to be together. I'm talking about same-sex binational couples.

Knock, knock...

"Who's there?"

"The INS. We've come to deport your lover."

Yes, this happens in this "free" country. A country that forcefully separates loving, caring couples. Imagine that your husband/wife leaves you. Quite traumatic, because you still might be in love with him or her. And now imagine your husband/wife is forcefully separated from you though you both still love each other, is put on the next plane to the Hookakooka Islands and won't be allowed to ever come back to the United States. How would you feel about that? That's probably the most cruel thing that can happen to two people in love. But this won't happen to you since you are allowed to get married – same-sex couples are not.

How free are we if we can't choose who we spend the rest of our lives with? If gay/lesbian citizens fall in love with someone from another country, they would not be allowed to stay here in their own country with their foreign partners. And depending on the partner's nationality s/he might not even get a visa, any visa, to come here and visit you.

These are the options for gay/lesbian Americans:

- Be separated from their loved one
- Be forced to leave the United States and live in exile with their loved one
- Try to survive "underground" and live in constant fear of deportation once their partner's immigration status expires

Families are torn apart. There are grandparents who can't see their grandkids because their son/daughter had to move to another country which welcomes same-sex families.

Countries like Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom already recognize same-sex couples for immigration purposes. The number of supportive countries is growing. Those countries clearly understood that it is cruel to keep loving couples apart from each other. They've stopped this "human rights violation".

This Valentine's Day I will shed some tears with all those couples who can't be together because our cruel laws keep them separated, and with those couples who are forced to leave the country like my friend Tim Miller and his partner Alistair.

Note: If you or someone you know is in a similar situation, you can contact 'Immigration Equality', a social, support and advocacy group for LGBT binational couples in the Los Angeles area.
info@immigrationequality.net voice mail 323.526.2915 POBox 2329, Los Angeles CA 90078-2329
Check the web site! <http://www.immigrationequality.net>

TRANSGENDERED (TG): Having the gender identity or gender expression of the other sex.

Did you know?

PFLAG'S Transgender Network began at the 1995 PFLAG national convention in Indianapolis where a group of activist trans persons, parents and friends found each other. In September 1998, PFLAG voted to become officially transgender inclusive.

Transgender issues are still underrepresented and I want to take the chance to introduce you to a great video **"Just Call Me Kade" by Sam Zolten:**

"Kade Farlow Collins is a sixteen year old FTM (female to male transgendered person) residing in Tucson, Arizona. Kade's parents maintain a supportive and nurturing relationship to Kade regarding the many challenges facing their teenage child. However, it hasn't always been easy.

As Kade's body began to transform during puberty, Kade became nearly suicidal. Realizing that the issue was more complex than Kade being a tomboy or a lesbian, the family searched for information. Through a local support group and the internet, Kade's mother found books and other resources pertaining to transgenderism. Kade and his family agreed to have their lives documented in order to bring awareness to the subject.

Just Call me Kade begins during Halloween weekend, 1999. Kade (then "Kate") was fourteen years old and beginning the initial stages of transition. Kate and family share their concerns, and all embark upon the path toward Kate's new identity as "Kade." Just Call Me Kade concludes during St. Patrick's Day weekend, 2001 and Kade, having legally changed his name, is well into testosterone therapy. Friends and family candidly express their feelings about the transition, the changes in Kade and the impact on everyone involved."

This video is distributed by **FRAMELINE** (<http://www.frameline.org/distribution>) whose mission is to support, develop, and promote lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer visibility through media arts. Through a variety of programs and activities, Frameline provides access to films and videos dealing with a wide variety of issues related to sexuality and gender. Since 1981 Frameline has been the only national distributor solely dedicated to the promotion, distribution and exhibition of lesbian and gay film and video. Frameline's complete distribution collection has over 160 titles for rental and sale, from experimental to narrative, documentary and short fiction.

Frameline is a non-profit media arts organization.

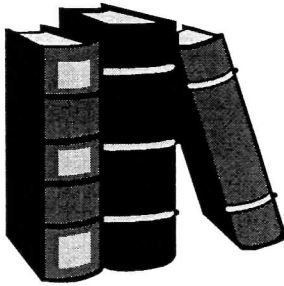
And here is the special deal for PFLAG members who are interested in ordering "Just Call Me Kade": Frameline agreed to sell this video at their K-12/public library VHS sales price (\$50.00) to PFLAG members!

Orders may be mailed/faxed/e-mailed to: Frameline Distribution, 145 Ninth Street, Suite 300,
San Francisco CA 94103-2632 Telephone: 415.703.8655 / Fax: 415.861.1404
distribution@Frameline.org

When ordering please don't forget to mention that you are a member of PFLAG to qualify for the K-12/public library rate!

THANK YOU, DESI & FRAMELINE TEAM!!!

OFF THE BOOK-RACK



"Letters in the Attic"

Bonnie Shimko

227 pages, hardcover, ISBN 0-89733-511-2

Academy Chicago Publishers

"*Letters in the Attic* is a gem! While coming to terms with her own budding sexuality, Lizzy poignantly and fiercely navigates the unsteady waters of her mother's complex pursuit of love." -Emily Saliers of the *Indigo Girls*

"A sensitive, touching coming-of-age novel" as well as a novel about coming to grips with one's own feelings towards someone of the same sex.

Set in the 60s, this is the story of Lizzy McMann, a feisty twelve-year old who lives with her immature mother and Manny, her father (she thinks), in a fleabag Phoenix hotel. One night, Manny's sudden announcement that he wants a divorce causes mother and daughter to move to upstate New York to live with Lizzy's grandparents. This is a story about unfulfilled dreams, lies, disappointments and conflicts in the adult world that surround Lizzy. Until one day she falls in love:

"Hey, kid. Want a drag?" - It's Eva, a dyslexic eighth-grader, who goes to Lizzy's school and looks stunning like Natalie Wood. 'I will never be the same again either, because when my hand touches hers, the deepest most private part of my body becomes the Fourth of July full of sparklers and firecrackers and I want this feeling, whatever it is, to go on forever...I know too that how I feel about this girl is a sin, but I don't know how to stop it.'

The two girls become close friends. But while it's only friendship for Eva it is a rollercoaster ride for Lizzy.

"You do know what a queer is, don't you?" Madeline asks like she has the key to a secret treasure chest. Her words catch me off guard. Is this a test? Have I been wearing my feelings for Eva like a new outfit for everyone to see? My brain comes screeching to a halt and I don't know what to say. Madeline is standing next to me with her hands on her hips. "It's a woman who likes to kiss other women." ...'

Accompany Lizzy in her struggle of dealing with a same-sex crush, being rejected by Eva and suffering, having her first "menstrual accident", buying her first bra, finding out who her real father is, visiting Eva in the hospital after a suicide attempt, her dreams of kissing Eva, their first party with the guys, Eva and her first boyfriend, Lizzy's mom going back to her abusive ex-husband Manny and then coming back, Lizzy meeting with her paternal grandma, mom's wedding with Mr. Stephens, and mom finally being able to share her secret with Lizzy and let go of the past.

TREVOR Crisis Line (toll-free / 24 hours / for GLBT & questioning youth in crisis): 1-866-4-U-TREVOR

Youth Crisis Line (toll-free / 24 hours): 1-800-843-5200