



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

February-March 2004

Newsletter 227

### 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 7:15 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 17, 2004

**B**rian Wyatt - Executive Director, Los Angeles Gay Men's Chorus. This amazing singing group is celebrating its 25th year anniversary. Come hear about the history of this group and the message it provides throughout the world. PFLAG members in attendance this evening will receive a special gift.

March 16, 2004

**H**oman, The Iranian GLBT Organization, is a support group that helps people of Middle Eastern descent with their hopes for recognition, asylum, and dignity. Come meet with representatives of Homan's Los Angeles Chapter as they discuss their current struggles and needs.

### Happy Valentine's Day to all of you!

My heart goes out to those couples who won't be allowed to be together on Valentine's Day because their loved one is from another country. Be reminded that under current U.S. immigration law binational same-sex couples don't even have the basic right to LIVE together here in the United States, let alone benefit from any legislation pertaining to same-sex unions.

"There are no immigration benefits available to gays based on their relationship. With that said, there's certainly nothing that says a U.S. citizen cannot move to another country." —Chris Bentley, Dept. of Homeland Security – Citizen & Immigration Services

**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 (Joyce)

**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

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!      Regards, 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:

(818) 243 5306 (Leonor)

LA Gay &amp; Lesbian Center:

(323) 993 7400

Straight Spouses:

(626) 449 3267 (Onnolee)

The TREVOR PROJECT

24-hour nationwide suicide prevention line for  
GLBT and Questioning youth.

(866) 4 U TREVOR

[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://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](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](mailto:KittenGr@aol.com)Mary Boenke (540) 890 3957 / [maryboenke@aol.com](mailto:maryboenke@aol.com)[www.transfamily.org](http://www.transfamily.org)

PFLAG/LA Speakers Bureau / Contact Ron & Andy  
[andynron@adelphia.net](mailto:andynron@adelphia.net)

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## HOLIDAY RAMBLE

The holiday time, as I write this but not as you read this, will always be a special PFLAG time for me. Some things change and yet much is the same and the holidays mark this dichotomy. (Dichotomy is one of those words I always want to use in a sentence, so I threw it in, even if it's not exactly what I mean, in this context. Ellen Degeneres would have put all this funnier, but that brings me back to the gay issue.) Our son's birthday is in late December, and he came out to us three years ago, on his birthday. Which is pretty common. He's still gay, which is very common, and unchanged, and we're still waiting for the serious relationship to appear. Which is closer maybe, in past weeks. We're excited that it may be a nice man he recently met, and our willingness and ability to think of our boy having a boyfriend is almost second nature now. That has changed: it wasn't part of our original set of images and expectations.

Our son told us more recently about when and how he knew he was gay. It was very early, way before high school, but he consciously pushed this reality far under the mental rug, where it remained for some years, while he proved to himself and others that he was straight, until it just kept popping out. And did so definitively when he was in college. When there was no way he could keep this out of his own consciousness, and when -- thankfully -- there was a much more forgiving climate for such an orientation, he wrestled with the meaning to him, his friends, classmates and parents. And he told himself and others, with his parents last. Which is common.

Things are easier, a little, in the gay rights struggle, which is a change. And the backlash is looking more active, from the president on down. (No big change here.) Which calls for our (your and my) diligence in supporting the basic rights that PFLAG and others know are truly right.

There is an exhibit now in the downtown LA Library of historic United States documents from the National Archives. Let's be sure a constitutional amendment restricting marriage to heterosexuals only never is part of our national heritage. It would be a sorry sight.

What certainly has not changed is my proclivity to wander, apparently but not really aimlessly, over the issues in this ongoing business of the gay rights challenge and the joy of having a gay son, who reminds us always of the warm, loving, and RIGHT way of viewing the gay issue. Support, education and advocacy. Still a darn fine triumvirate. (Which makes fancy word #3; did you catch #2?)

Joel Hendler - Co-President PFLAG Los Angeles

**There are some things in life you don't want to miss!  
Our February meeting should be one of them!**

**Come celebrate with us when we will be giving an Oscar Wilde Award to the  
G a y M e n ' s C h o r u s L o s A n g e l e s !**

Gay Men's Chorus Los Angeles (GMCLA) – it all started with the simple aim of creating a fun social outlet for gay men who had grown weary of the bar scene. When GMCLA was founded, the gay "community" was a smaller place; fewer organizations spoke for a less diverse crowd. Fear ruled many lives. Some lesbians and gay men joined local organizations only if those organizations promised never to disclose the names of members, for fear of losing jobs, child custody, health benefits, you name it. Meanwhile, since its first concert in 1979, GMCLA has pursued its mission of producing excellent music, using that music to draw those communities and organizations together. Hear more about this outstanding group at our February meeting!

**Congratulations, GMCLA, to your 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary!**

<http://www.gmcla.org>

**Brazilian Government Moves to Recognize Same Sex Partnerships for Immigration Benefits**

In a surprising move, the Brazilian Government led by President Lula Da Silva resolved to recognize same-sex unions for immigration benefits on December 12, 2003. Brazilian citizens and permanent residents will soon be able to sponsor their same-sex partner for full immigration benefits and Brazilian citizenship.

Brazil joins 15 other countries that currently recognize same-sex unions for immigration benefits and highlights this growing international trend. Nations that grant same-sex immigration benefits are Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Israel, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Brazil is the first Latin American country to recognize same-sex unions for immigration benefits.

Similar legislation in the United States is stalled in Congress.

**China's First Reassigned TG Marries**

Dec. 31, 2003 (Beijing) The first Chinese man to undergo sex reassignment surgery has tied the knot and received a government recognition.

The man underwent female to male reassignment surgery several years ago at a hospital inside China. The 29 year-old was in the southwestern city of Chengdu, the Chengdu Commercial Daily reports. The official government newspaper said Beijing has issued a marriage certificate and given the man documentation in his new sexuality.

The transgendered have ceased to be taboo in urban China in recent years, and a total of 500 Chinese have so far had their sex changed surgically, according to previous reports in China's state media.

**Wisconsin governor vetoes marriage ban**

On Friday, November 7, Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle vetoed AB 475, a bill that would have defined marriage in Wisconsin as being only between a man and a woman.

Doyle said the state already prohibits same-sex marriage and in a prepared statement declared the marriage bill as "another example of the Legislature focusing its time and energy on divisive, mean-spirited bills that do nothing." Conservatives have threatened to override the veto.

**Massachusetts' Court Strikes Down Gay-Marriage Ban**

BOSTON - Massachusetts' highest court ruled Tuesday that same-sex couples are legally entitled to wed under the state constitution, but stopped short of allowing marriage licenses to be issued to the couples who challenged the law.

"In this case, we are confronted with an entire, sizeable class of parents raising children who have absolutely no access to civil marriage and its protections because they are forbidden from procuring a marriage license. It cannot be rational under our laws, and indeed it is not permitted, to penalize children by depriving them of State benefits because the State disapproves of their parents' sexual orientation."

-- The Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, November 18, 2003

## SPREADING THE WORD IN THE COMMUNITY

- Terry McIntyre, Heather Mickelson, Bill Mochon, Marty Olson and Sylvia Weisenberg spoke at Granada Hills High School.

### Note from the editor:

This is election year. I am almost certain that we'll see and hear more ugly things that might hurt GLBT people and their families. A major issue seems to be how to prevent GLBT people from getting the right to marry their partner. The reasoning is based on biblical teachings, so they say. Have you ever heard the same people be as adamant about children cursing father or mother, who, under Leviticus, must be put to death? Did you hear if they applied Leviticus to "Ms Cleo", the psychic? Or that they insisted on following Leviticus regarding discharges causing uncleanness in the fight against STDs? Have you heard them advocating the procedure of cleansing from mildew, as listed in Leviticus? Ever wonder why you don't, but always hear about how abominable homosexuals are?!

And in regard to the sanctity of marriage, can someone please explain to me what's "sacred" about the benefits/securities and obligations of civil marriage such as taxes, inheritance, property, immigration, etc.? Can someone please explain to me what's "sacred" about this institution when Britney Spears has the right to marry her childhood friend 'just for the hell of it' and then has her two-day-old marriage annulled? Can someone please explain to me what's "sacred" about this institution when acclaimed actress Elizabeth Taylor has enjoyed this "sanctity" eight times? Can someone please explain to me what's "sacred" about this institution when America enjoys marriage GAME shows such as "Married By America" and "Joe Millionaire"? It can hardly be that the real reason for denying same-sex couples the right to marry is based on "sanctity", but it surely sounds better than "we don't like it".

Did people forget (or, maybe they never knew?!) that the early Christian church fathers were OPPOSED to the institution of marriage?

I am glad to see that more and more people seem to be educating themselves on this issue of justice and equal protection and refuse to be misled any further. California just achieved another small victory:

### **Judge Denies Preliminary Injunction in Lawsuit Challenging California Domestic Partnership Law AB 205**

SACRAMENTO—Today, December 18, 2003, a Sacramento Superior Court refused to stand in the way of a new state law that offers same-sex couples legal protections and imposes many responsibilities for their relationships. Judge Thomas M. Cecil denied requests by Senator Pete Knight and Randy Thomasson of Campaign for California Families to issue a preliminary injunction, which would prevent the state from putting the law into effect.

Judge Cecil ruled that Knight and Thomasson, who have brought legal challenges to the law claiming that it violates Proposition 22, had not shown that it was "reasonably probable" that the challenges would succeed.

"We are extremely relieved that the Court did the right thing," said Johnny Symons and William Rogers, one of the 12 couples who intervened in the lawsuit to defend the new domestic partnership law. "As parents, we are doing everything in our power to protect our two young children."

"This lawsuit puts our family in harm's way. I've been with my partner for more than 20 years, but if this lawsuit succeeds, I'd be seen as a legal stranger to the woman I love in all kinds of tough situations," said Kay Smith from Riverside, Calif., who is participating in the lawsuit with her partner. "The people of California believe in this legislation and in fairness for everyone, but a small and vocal group of extremists insists on trying to take that away. We need and deserve to be able to get married, but this law doesn't give us marriage; it just gives us some basic protections other families take for granted."

### UPDATE:

A proposed referendum to force an electorate vote on AB205, the Domestic Partner Rights & Responsibilities Act of 2003, failed to qualify for the November 2004 California ballot.

**Ron Oden new mayor of Palm Springs**

On November 4, Ron Oden had become California's first openly gay and first African American mayor. Oden's 51 percent victory over incumbent Mayor Will Kleindienst, along with the election of openly gay Steve Pougnet and lesbian Ginny Foat to the five-member City Council, portends a significant shift in the traditionally conservative Republican retirement and resort community.

**LA County & Hate Crimes**

On December 17, the Los Angeles County Commission of Human Relations released a report stating that hate crimes based on sexual orientation or gender perception increased by about 7 percent, but crimes against gay males increased by 14 percent.

The report showed that hate crimes against transgendered people had the highest probability of violence of any victim group: 88 percent of the hate crimes against transgendered people involved violence, compared to 59 percent for hate crimes against gay or lesbian people.

**Openly gay Episcopal bishop V. Gene Robinson consecrated November 2**

Conservative Anglicans said they will cut or loosen ties with the U.S. diocese that has consecrated the church's first openly gay bishop, but supporters of V. Gene Robinson said his elevation had sent a powerful message of love and tolerance.

In a statement issued Monday, Nigerian archbishop Peter Akinola said Robinson's consecration in New Hampshire demonstrates that parts of the U.S. Episcopal Church "consider that their cultural-based agenda is of far greater importance than obedience to the word of God."

"The overwhelming majority of the primates (Anglican leaders) of the global south cannot and will not recognize the office or ministry of Canon Gene Robinson as a bishop," Akinola's statement said. Resistance to gay bishops has been particularly strong in Africa.

In a separate statement, the Anglican Church of Uganda said it will cut all ties with the New Hampshire diocese. Thomas Kogo, bishop of the town of Eldoret in neighboring Kenya, said his diocese will not recognize Robinson as a bishop but will maintain its ties to the New Hampshire diocese.

"The admission of homosexuals in the church ... is unacceptable to the church," said Stanley Ntagari, a spokesman for the Ugandan Anglican church, with 8 million members Africa's second largest. "We do not recognize that man as a bishop."

The Episcopal Church is the U.S. branch of the international Anglican Communion, which encompasses 77 million believers.

**Re: The first openly gay Episcopal Bishop and the backlash this has created:**

"The actions taken by the New Hampshire Episcopalians are an affront to Christians everywhere. I am just thankful that the church's founder, Henry VIII and his wife Catherine of Aragon, his wife Anne Boleyn, his wife Jane Seymour, his wife Anne of Cleves, his wife Katherine Howard, and his wife Catherine Parr are no longer here to suffer through this assault on traditional Christian marriage."

**Germany honors gay victims of Holocaust**

(Berlin) On November 13, the government of Germany has approved the construction of a memorial for the thousands of gay men killed by Nazis in the Second World War.

The memorial, which is funded by Germany's government and will be placed in the Tiergarten Park area of the city, is the result of fierce arguments between gay rights groups and conservative politicians.

Last year the country gave a formal pardon to the 50,000 gays convicted under the Nazi regime, in what was seen as the first recognition of the level of persecution.

As well as being convicted and labeled degenerates, up to 20,000 gay men were sent to concentration camps from which they didn't return.

"Homosexual victims of the Nazi regime were mostly shut out of Germany's culture of remembrance in the past. That is now over," the Green Party's Volker Beck said.

## More about the sanctity of marriage, family values, and man & woman:

### Government Shouldn't Decide Who Can Marry

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR / L.A. Times / November 23, 2003

As a married man enjoying the profound commitment shared with my wife, I commend Massachusetts for extending this privilege to everyone. I'm confused by the conservatives panicking that this move will deprive them of any rights. No one is saying that a man and woman can't bond and raise children, just that now a man and a man, or a woman and woman, can too. With more couples forming stable relationships, extended families of all kinds should only grow stronger. The right-wingers need to stop hoarding membership to their exclusive club of marriage and let others join in.

Todd Olson, San Marino (Todd is the son of our PFLAG parents Marty & Peggy)

(Editor: This should clarify WHO REALLY has the "special" rights!)

Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney called Tuesday for the Legislature to pass an amendment to the state Constitution enshrining marriage as a heterosexual institution. "We must provide basic civil rights and appropriate benefits to non-traditional couples," said the Republican. "But marriage is a special institution that should be reserved for a man and a woman." (Nov. 18, 2003)

### Colorado 'Family Values' Governor Separates From His Wife

Bill Owens, the Republican governor of Colorado who signed the state's Defense of Marriage Act in 2000 and pressed for legislation to slow down divorce rates, announced he and his wife are separating after 28 years of marriage.

In an elegant decision, Chief Justice Margaret Marshall, who grew up fighting apartheid in her native South Africa, echoed the reasoning that permitted interracial marriages:

**"The right to marry means little if it does not include the right to marry the person of one's choice."**

## DID YOU KNOW?

Intersexuality constitutes a range of anatomical conditions in which an individual's anatomy mixes key masculine anatomy with key feminine anatomy. You can view statistics and further information on the Intersex Society of North America's web site at [www.isna.org](http://www.isna.org)

### Excerpt:

Not XX and not XY chromosomes:	one in 1,666 births
Klinefelter (XXY):	one in 1,000 births
Ovotestes:	one in 83,000 births

Total number of people whose bodies differ from standard male or female: **one in 100 births**

Editor: Our marriage laws only refer to "one man and one woman." But who defines what makes a man a "man" and a woman a "woman"? What "proof" would be required? Would intersex people be entirely excluded from the right to marry?

## "The Gender Frontier"

Photographs and text by Mariette Pathy Allen, with essays by Grady Turner, Riki Wilchins, Jamison Green, and Milton Diamond, in English and German, ISBN 3-936636-04-4 / Kehrer Verlag Heidelberg

The closet is neither plush nor womblike  
It is caustic  
Lined with sandpaper  
And you will erode yourself  
And you will disappear.  
-- Colleen Mullins, in *"The Gender Frontier"*

**Mariette Pathy Allen** has been photographing gender outlaws since 1978, when she befriended a group of crossdressers who happened to be staying in her hotel. Her first book, *"Transformations: Crossdressers and Those Who Love Them,"* is a thoughtful, stereotype-busting collection of portraits that offer rare insight into the reality of who crossdressers really are, what motivates them to lead their lives as they do, and how those decisions affect their most intimate relationships with others.

Allen's new book, *"The Gender Frontier,"* extends that perspective and insight from crossdressers to transsexuals -- the wider, rapidly-growing community of people who are increasingly asserting their right and desire to define gender for themselves -- and who, as a result, profoundly call into question the traditional notion that gender is a polar issue -- male or female -- defined at birth by the shape and nature of a person's genitals.

When we look at the photos in *"The Gender Frontier,"* we are vividly aware that the people in these images do not conform to the fixed notions of man and woman, male and female, that are the staples of our daily diet of gender confirmation and reassurance. As we turn the pages, we are gradually but powerfully inundated with images -- sometimes striking, sometimes quite mundane -- of people we cannot easily identify, classify, sort, and file into the well-worn categories of our severely limited gender vocabulary. And yet, on another level, we cannot help but notice that these uncategorizable photographic subjects are simply people pursuing the same joys, suffering many of the same frustrations, asking for the same basic satisfactions from their lives as everyone else.

Cas, a female-to-male transsexual who has had to endure the refusal of most of his family to accept his transsexuality, plays affectionately with his infant grandchild while his daughter smiles her appreciation and love. Marla, a painter, sculptor, and writer who used to be an undercover narcotics agent named Mike, paints with her perhaps-10-year-old daughter, both of their attentions riveted to the canvas. Maxwell and Corissa, both transgender, share an affectionate kiss in a suds-filled bathtub.

Each photo is a testament to the possibility of experiencing life's most basic joys, even if one dares to violate some of society's most basic expectations and dictates. Each photo affirms the universality of certain human experiences, no matter how atypical a person's sense of self may be.

Other photos in *"The Gender Frontier"* document experiences, struggles, and issues that are specific to the transgender community -- often issues of fighting against injustice and inequality. Robert Eads says farewell to hundreds of fellow transsexuals two months before dying of ovarian cancer that twenty doctors and three hospitals refused to treat because Robert did not fit into their notions of male and female. A transgender woman dissolves into tears while speaking at the memorial for her friend, Amanda Milan, a male-to-female transsexual viciously murdered in New York while a line of cab drivers watched and cheered.

People whose natures call up other people's fears and biases have to deal with issues that more conventionally-oriented individuals are privileged to ignore. But the issues that each transgender person must face in deciding to honor their internal sense of gender are issues that other people must deal with as well, albeit in substantially less wrenching ways. How much do any of us give up aspects of who we are in order to accommodate the expectations and comfort needs of the people around us? How much do we limit our sense of self and of life to avoid potential hostility, condemnation, or even disapproval of our friends and family? How much do we insist, explicitly or implicitly, that the people around us fulfill our detailed expectations of them, lest they force us to examine uncomfortable issues and feelings within ourselves?

These are the sorts of questions that Mariette Pathy Allen raises with *"The Gender Frontier."* One section of the book, devoted to political activism around transgender issues, documents the growing movements to extend equal rights to transgender people, and to protest the extreme violence that transgender people so often encounter. The other three sections of the book -- dealing with youth, portraits, and more extensive narratives of selected individuals -- focus on more personal expositions of what it means to live one's life outside traditional gender definitions.

Excerpts printed with friendly permission from *COMES NATURALLY #142* Copyright © 2003 David Steinberg  
David Steinberg, P.O. Box 2992, Santa Cruz, CA 95063, (831) 426-7082, [eronat@aol.com](mailto:eronat@aol.com)

[If you'd like to receive Comes Naturally and other writing by David Steinberg regularly via email (free and confidential), send your name and email address to David at [eronat@aol.com](mailto:eronat@aol.com). Past columns are available at the Society for Human Sexuality's "David Steinberg Archives": [www.sexuality.org/davids.html](http://www.sexuality.org/davids.html). Three books edited by David -- "Erotic by Nature: A Celebration of Life, of Love, and of Our Wonderful Bodies," "The Erotic Impulse: Honoring the Sensual Self," and the just-released photo anthology, "Photo Sex: Fine Art Sexual Photography comes of Age" -- are available from him by mail order. Descriptions and ordering information are posted at [www.sexuality.org/l/davids/en.html](http://www.sexuality.org/l/davids/en.html), [www.sexuality.org/l/davids/ei.html](http://www.sexuality.org/l/davids/ei.html), and [www.sexuality.org/l/davids/ps.html](http://www.sexuality.org/l/davids/ps.html).]