



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

June-July 2004

Newsletter 229

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

June 15, 2004

Orlly Szerman - Founder of Our Extraordinary Kids, Orly is a therapist who has worked with children and their families for the past 10 years as a mentor and a coach. Come listen to how she has interacted with the GLBT community, education administrators and faculty in our schools.

July 20, 2004

Ben Akerley - As a past faculty member at USC, Ben has been a longtime gay activist and PFLAG member who has worked with Madalyn Murray O'Hair as part of the American Atheist Association. Ben will speak on his views of the effect of religion on sexual orientation and mores.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE ANNUAL WEST HOLLYWOOD PRIDE PARADE

SUNDAY JUNE 20

Meet at 10:00am near the corner of Santa Monica Blvd and Crescent Heights Blvd.

We need all the participants we can get so PLEASE PLEASE join us.

Wear your PFLAG T-Shirt or any red shirt will do!

Hope to see you on Sunday, June 20!!!

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 & 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@earthlink.net, call me at (818) 985-9319, or just drop me a note at our PFLAG meetings! Regards, Chris Haiss

Deadline for submissions: July 1
(August/September 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 & 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

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

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Some days, things seem aligned. Today in Sydney, where I'm writing from, they do. The fall weather is bracing and beautiful. The news from the states is good, and my term as president of PFLAG is winding down.

Sydney is a special city, where our son came to understand and deal with his gayness, before he came out to us, 3 plus years ago. The open atmosphere here probably exceeds LA's and provided a nurturing and accepting environment that helped clear the air for him and, now on this trip in early May, us.

There is still and will likely be for some time the three things that PFLAG is built around: support, education and advocacy. Please keep them in mind as you come to us for what you need and give what you can. And the parade, (Gay Pride of course) comes soon. Be amazed and join the stick in the mud ordinary PFLAG folk who will attend.

And many thanks to you and PFLAG for all it has meant.

Joel Hendler - Co-President PFLAG Los Angeles

L i z A r m s t r o n g t o b e H o n o r e d

After working on and with the Los Angeles Board of PFLAG for the past 15 years, Liz Armstrong will receive an award from our Chapter at our monthly meeting on July 20th.

Please plan on attending and thanking Liz for all her tremendous support over the years.

**Adele and Larry Starr, founding members of PFLAG LA,
are happy to announce that a Bar Mitzvah ceremony for their grandson**

I s a a c S i m e n t a l S t a r r

will take place at Temple Kol Ami in West Hollywood on July 3, 2004.

Isaac is the adoptive son of Philip Starr and Michael Simental.

It's that time of year again. We've attached our membership envelopes to this issue of the newsletter. For those who contributed at the first of the year, we thank you. Please fill out the information for renewal or consider making a contribution or tribute for someone you care about. We'd also love to send our newsletter to someone you care about. All contributions go to help our operating costs and expenses. PFLAG Los Angeles is a 100% volunteer operation. We thank you for your continued support.

I'm glad to present this new column for you, written by Eve Lubalin. Eve is on the Board of PFLAG-San Francisco and serves as their Advocacy Chair. Here's what she said: "I think parents can play a powerful role in the fight for LGBT equality & justice. I hope this column can reach as many parents, friends & family as possible and encourage people to become involved in the legislative process in CA & Washington as it affects our families and friends."

Legislative Corner (By Eve Lubalin, Advocacy Chair)

California Makes Marriage History Again!

The Assembly Judiciary Committee made history by being the first state legislative body to approve equal marriage rights for gays and lesbians. By an 8-3 vote, the Committee approved Assemblymember Mark Leno's Marriage License Non-Discrimination Act, AB 1967, which amends the family code to define marriage as between "two persons." Gender-specific language was first added in 1977.

Critical in the debate, the committee's report on AB 1967 indicated the bill *does not violate Proposition 22*, the ballot measure approved in 2000. Anti-gay groups argue Prop 22 limits marriage to a man and a woman. But, concurring with the Judiciary Committee's report, Leno, the National Center for Lesbian Rights and Lambda Legal agreed that Prop 22 deals with a much narrower issue -- whether California must recognize out of state same-sex marriages -- and does not address the state's legal definition of marriage.

Next stop for AB 1967 is the Assembly Appropriations Committee, responsible for assessing the fiscal impact of the bill. Partly because of the state budget crisis, and partly because of election year politics, the Committee may take no further action and kill the bill. It faces a May 21st legislative deadline. If the Committee does approve AB1967, Assembly Speaker Nunez is unlikely to schedule a vote.

Equal Marriage Rights Asserted in California Courts

- The California Supreme Court is expected to hold hearings on two marriage-related issues in late May or early June: Did Mayor Newsom exceed his authority by issuing marriage licenses? Should the more than 4000 marriages performed in San Francisco be invalidated?
- A San Francisco Superior Court will conduct a trial later this year on the constitutional issues: Does California's family code violate the state constitution by limiting marriage to a man and a woman?

Attorney General Bill Lockyer has asked the California Supreme Court to invalidate San Francisco's same-sex marriages. Let him know you disagree! (800) 952-5225 California Department of Justice, P.O. Box 944255 Sacramento, CA 94244-2550

Supreme Court to hear SF gay marriage flap May 25

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) The California Supreme Court announced Wednesday it will hold oral arguments May 25 on the question of whether San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom had the authority to issue same-sex marriage licenses.

The seven-member court said it would devote two hours to the arguments. Under court rules, the **justices must rule within 90 days**. The cases, brought by Attorney General Bill Lockyer and the Alliance Defense Fund, a conservative group opposing gay marriage focus almost exclusively on whether Newsom could issue same-sex marriage licenses by unilaterally declaring that same-sex marriage, should be lawful. California family laws, however, define marriage as a union between a man and woman. The high court stopped gay marriages here at City Hall last month after 4,000 gays were wedded, pending the outcome of the challenges.

Lockyer and ADF said upholding Newsom's actions would give other government officials approval to subvert other laws. The justices this month asked the parties whether they should nullify the roughly 4,000 marriages if they side against Newsom. But the justices have not made clear whether they would invalidate the marriages even if they say Newsom erred.

Lockyer has taken no position on gay marriage, but told the justices the marriages should be invalidated because Newsom overstepped his authority. The Arizona-based ADF agreed with Lockyer but also disapproves of gay marriage.

For his part, Newsom said his interpretation of the California Constitution demanded that he issue the licenses. The justices, however, announced last month that they would not address that topic. That issue is not expected to be before the justices for at least a year or more, as that battle is brewing in the lower courts.

The San Francisco-based court will hear the two cases at 9 a.m. here in its courtroom. The cases are Lockyer v. San Francisco, S122923, and Lewis v. Alfaro, S122865.

SPREADING THE WORD IN THE COMMUNITY

- Joel Hendler, Rosemary Hendler, Josh Levin and Marla Weiss and spoke to 8th graders at Pressman Academy, a Jewish day school
- Maurie Davidson, Jane Drucker and Bahman Ghahremani spoke at Taft High School

LGBT Families - Don't miss this event!

Pop Luck Club is sponsoring its annual parenting Resource Day on Sunday, June 6, 2004, from 12-2PM at the West Hollywood Community Center in Plummer Park. The park is located at 7377 Santa Monica Blvd. in West Hollywood.

Pop Luck will have a large group of exhibitors assembled who are involved with helping LGBT people become parents, and support their families if they already have children. Examples of some of the exhibitors include Adoption and Foster agencies, Sperm Banks, Community Organizations, Surrogacy Agencies, and Legal Services, among others. This event is open to the entire community, and there will be exhibitors that will be of interest to both women and men, and to both prospective parents and current parents. Please email webmaster@popluckclub.org with any questions!

12 Reasons Same-Sex Marriage will Ruin Society

(By GatorGSA at www.12reasons.com)

1. Homosexuality is not natural, much like eyeglasses, polyester, and birth control are not natural.
2. Heterosexual marriages are valid because they produce children. Infertile couples and old people cannot get legally married because the world needs more children.
3. Obviously gay parents will raise gay children because straight parents only raise straight children.
4. Straight marriage will be less meaningful, since Britney Spears's 55-hour just-for-fun marriage was meaningful.
5. Heterosexual marriage has been around for a long time, and it hasn't changed at all: women are property, Blacks can't marry Whites, and divorce is illegal.
6. Gay marriage should be decided by the people, not the courts, because the majority-elected legislatures, not courts, have historically protected the rights of minorities.
7. Gay marriage is not supported by religion. In a theocracy like ours, the values of one religion are always imposed on the entire country. That's why we only have one religion in America.
8. Gay marriage will encourage people to be gay, in the same way that hanging around tall people makes you tall.
9. Legalizing gay marriage will open the door to all kinds of crazy behavior. People may even wish to marry their pets because a dog has legal standing and can sign a marriage license.
10. Children can never succeed without both male and female role models at home. That's why single parents are forbidden to raise children.
11. Gay marriage will change the foundation of society. Heterosexual marriage has been around for a long time, and we could never adapt to new social norms because we haven't adapted to cars or longer lifespans.
12. Civil unions, providing most of the same benefits as marriage with a different name are better, because a "separate but equal" institution is always constitutional. Separate schools for African-Americans worked just as well as separate marriages will for gays & lesbians.

LGBT Federal Workers Lose Job Protections

(Washington, D.C.) Gay and lesbians in the entire federal workforce have had their job protections officially removed by the office of Special Counsel. The new Special Counsel, Scott Bloch, says his interpretation of a 1978 law intended to protect employees and job applicants from adverse personnel actions is that gay and lesbian workers are not covered.

Bloch said gays, lesbians and bisexuals cannot be covered as a protected class because they are not protected under the nation's civil rights laws.

Bloch was appointed by President Bush to a five year term beginning in January.

China recognizes transsexual's marriage

In a first for China, a transsexual received a marriage certificate.

Zhang Lin, from Peng Township, Shuangliu County in Southwest China's Sichuan Province, obtained the certificate after being officially recognized by the state with a new ID card.

This was the first marriage certificate issued to a transsexual in China, the Yangcheng Evening News reported on Tuesday.

Zhang Lin, 37, and her husband, Yang Qicheng, planned to hold a marriage ceremony on May 1 with 500 guests.

Zhang had married a woman before her sex reassignment surgery and has a 12-year-old daughter from that marriage.

Smear Campaign Targets TX GOP xdresser

(Fort Worth, Texas) Sam Walls won't say what he was doing in the dress, but pictures of the 64 year old Republican candidate for the Texas House in full makeup, a wig, heels, and a dress, have been anonymously distributed to voters.

A leading businessman and former party chairman, Walls was the favorite to win, until the photographs surfaced.

Son of anti-gay politician Knight marries same-sex partner

David Knight, son of the California state senator who put a ban on same-sex marriage in the books, stood against his father's law and stood up for marriage equality by marrying his partner of 10 years, Joe Lazzaro, in San Francisco.

Knight's father is state Sen. William "Pete" Knight, R-Palmdale. In 2000, Knight authored Proposition 22, the law which declares, "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California."

(FYI - Sen. Knight passed away May 8)

"QUOTE - UNQUOTE"

"The people who would forbid gays from marrying in this country are those who would have made Rosa Parks sit in the back of the bus."

Mayor Jason West, New Paltz, NY

T H I N K !

Is an atheist allowed to legally get married?
Because if yes, it would prove that civil marriage
has nothing to do with religion!

Tennessee County's Vote to Ban Gays Protested

DAYTON, Tenn. - More than 400 people turned out Saturday May 8 for a Rhea County Gay Day celebration prompted by the county commission's vote to ban homosexuals and have them arrested for "crimes against nature."

A Friday demonstration against homosexuality in Dayton included preaching on the lawn of the courthouse where a jury in 1925 convicted John Scopes for teaching evolution.

On Saturday, same-sex couples holding hands joined heterosexual couples at the park in the town of 6,200 people. Russ and Jennifer Bridges of Ringgold, Ga., sat listening to activists speak. "I'm not gay," Russ Bridges said. "It's all about humans getting together for a common cause."

Politician Announces He's Transgendered

(Rapid City, South Dakota) South Dakota's only out politician announced that he is preparing to undergo sex reassignment to become a woman. Tom Murphy said that he had "pretended long enough." Murphy said he has identified with females more than with males since he was young.

He began visiting Internet chat rooms after he retired from a 22-year military career. "I found out I'm not alone," he said. "It's just amazing, the common bond we have."

It is believed the Murphy will be first sitting transgendered politician in the United States.

A child's worst nightmare – losing a parent due to our inhumane immigration laws Part 2

When I heard 15-year old Marina Gatto speak at a rally in Sacramento I was deeply moved. If we, as a nation, keep our inhumane immigration policy that does not recognize same-sex couples, this child will lose one of her moms soon. And so will many others.

MARINA GATTO

15 yr. old LGBT activist

I began being very active as an activist when I was about 8 or 9 years old. Mark Leno was my idol. He was a San Francisco Supervisor, and someone from my own community that I saw making change and fighting for our community. I wanted to be just like him!! At 14 years old I began working with Mark Leno who was now a California State Assemblymember, helping get bills like A.B. 205 passed.

When I speak about my family I get an amazing and positive response from people. I truly believe that most people simply just do not understand differences, and the issue of equality and how it applies to LGBT people and families. When they have a face to an LGBT family and a child of that family, and when they hear how discrimination and lack of rights affects us, they are touched and surprised.

The place that I found the least support was in school through my years up to high school. School is suppose to be a place where all children should feel safe, and have every opportunity to learn and know they are protected. In fact, this is usually not the case. Sadly, it was most often the teachers that I faced the most hate and discrimination from.

There are many things that I have experienced as a civil rights activist that have been traumatizing and terrible. From people constantly committing hate crimes to our house, vandalizing our car and our home, threatening us, throwing rocks and fruit at us over fences when we are in our backyard, driving by and yelling hateful remarks at us, and even trying to set the pride flag on our house on fire. I keep myself motivated to keep fighting passionately for equality and for civil rights because it is impossible to escape the injustice that we face and live with every single day of our lives. Sometimes it is extremely painful, frustrating, and overwhelming. But I see how hard it is for one of my moms to go to school full time simply to be

allowed to stay in this country, pay over 13 times the rate of a U.S. student, work so hard just to pay for her school, be a leader and an activist in the LGBT community, AND be a wonderful and loving mother and partner to my other mom. My family struggles so hard, never gives up, and we still manage to somehow keep up our passion to work for change. When I look at my moms sometimes and see how tired they are, how hard they work, and how they struggle to give me every opportunity and everything they can, how can I feel sorry for myself? I realize how lucky, how blessed I am. It makes me want to make a difference for them, make the world a better place for them, easier for them, and for so many countless other families and parents too! One of the main arguments I hear against marriage for gays and lesbians, or against LGBT families is that children need a mother and a father. All one has to do however, is to look around them at society today. There are countless kids who have a mother and a father who are unhappy, unsuccessful, and simply not doing well. There are also just as many kids who are being raised by just a mother, a father, a family member, or same sex parents who are well adjusted, thriving, happy, and are proud of the families and communities that they come from. It's less important for a child to have an example of a relationship with a man and a woman, than it is for a child to have an example of a relationship with two people who love, respect, and are committed to each other. I hear all the time the argument that children of LGBT parents will be deprived of good families, they will not be happy, well adjusted, or sure of who or what they are. I believe I am living proof that is simply not true. I am an honor student, sophomore class president of my school, a varsity athlete, a leader of the LGBT community, and an accomplished, and nationally recognized civil rights activist at the age of 15 years old! I love my parents deeply and am proud of the community that I come from.

Kansas Lawmakers Reject Gay Marriage Ban

TOPEKA, Kan. - A proposed constitutional amendment declaring that Kansas recognizes marriage as only between one man and one woman failed to win enough House support to submit it to voters.

The vote was 79-45 - five favorable votes fewer than the two-thirds majority needed to approve a proposed change in the Kansas Constitution. The Senate adopted the proposal on a 27-13 vote.

The proposal would have also denied legal benefits associated with marriage to other domestic arrangements, such as civil unions.

"QUOTE - UNQUOTE"

"Gay marriage--it's not about sex, it's about separation of church and state." Katha Pollitt

California Board Rejects Discrimination Code

WESTMINSTER, Calif. -- A small California school district has refused to recognize a state law banning discrimination against transsexuals, a decision that could cost it millions of dollars in state and federal funding.

Three of five trustees on the board of the Westminster School District in Orange County said they oppose the rules because they are Christians.

"I might take a lot of heat for it today, but the rewards are going to be great in heaven," said Judy Ahrens, one of the three.

Popular Clownfish Can Change Sex

By JOSEPH B. VERRENGIA,
AP Science Writer

Scientists could have written an R-rated, gender-bending plot twist to Disney's "Finding Nemo": Clownfish have a natural ability to change their sex.

Clownfish, the aquarium pet of choice since the release of the animated movie, live in such a rigid social structure in the wild that if one of the dominant breeding adults is removed, the size, status and even sex of the other clownfish change rapidly to return the group to the status quo.

"If the female of the group dies, the male changes sex and becomes the breeding female," said Cornell University evolutionary biologist Peter Buston, "while the largest non-breeder becomes the breeding male."

Some other species of fish are known to do the same thing.

Germany Expands Gay Partner Rights

(Berlin) A German court has ruled that the civil service and all government agencies must pay benefits to the partners of same-sex couples equal to those they pay to the married spouses of heterosexuals.

In their ruling, the judges said that there is no difference between a registered life partnership and marriage when it came to remuneration in the public service.

Thoughts On Same-Sex Marriage & Procreation (By Janis Walworth)

Those who believe that same-sex marriage will endanger the survival of the human species apparently haven't noticed that humankind is not at risk of becoming extinct through lack of reproduction. On the contrary, the greatest threats to 21st century civilization stem from overpopulation.

What would happen if everyone married a partner of the same sex, people ask. This is an absurd question. What if everyone became priests and nuns? No reproduction.

But we don't need a law against taking religious vows to prevent that from happening.