



PFLAG - LA

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

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

February-March 2005

Newsletter 233

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 15, 2005

Dylan Gailey, Director of Youth Services of the Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center will speak about the center's programs targeting the community's GLBT youth.

March 15, 2005

Representatives from Lambda Legal's Western Regional Office will be on hand to discuss their latest court cases representing GLBT individuals and their families as well as their community outreach program.

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)

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**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 HaissDeadline for submissions: March 1
(April/May issue)

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I want to wish everyone in the PFLAG family a Happy New Year.

PFLAG Los Angeles is starting the new year by embarking on a first time ever ad campaign in movie theaters around Los Angeles.

With the help of the Washington DC and New York chapters, ads were created to target specific groups and let them know that there are GLBT family members in all families and that keeping in close contact with those members benefits all families.

The ads are colorful and have celebrity participation as well. To see the ads visit the movie theaters at the Sherman Oaks Galleria and the Magic Johnson Theaters in Los Angeles. The ads run on the screens prior to each feature presentation.

These movie ads do a great job about getting the PFLAG name out in the public eye. We want to keep running the ads as long as feasible, and we would like to solicit some donations from our newsletter audience for this specific ad campaign. If you are interested in making a donation for this ad campaign and would also be interested in viewing the ads, please contact myself through the PFLAG website (www.pflagla.org) or call me at 323.871.4899.

I would like to thank my Co-President Steve Krantz for being the catalyst behind this ad campaign.

As we go to press, the details of the ad campaign cannot be disclosed; however, by the time you receive this newsletter, the ads will be available for viewing in the above mentioned theaters. Please take my word on it, they are beautifully done with a great message.

There is still a tremendous amount of work to be done in the community. As I am sure you are well aware, the age which a person "comes out" to friends and families is getting younger and younger. Much more work needs to be done educating the counselors, administrators and educators about the hardships GLBT youth face on a daily basis. I again ask anyone who would want to join our board of directors, your assistance would greatly be appreciated.

George Unger - PFLAG - Los Angeles

IN MEMORIAM OF ALVIN KAUFMAN

PFLAG has lost a dear member, and our community has lost a loving father of a gay son who saw his mission in educating society on GLBT issues and in fighting discrimination.

Alvin Kaufman was one of the founding fathers of our Los Angeles chapter.

He built up our library, represented PFLAG at conventions, and was part of our speaker's bureau. As a speaker, his main goal was to reach young people. His biggest challenge were high school students, a group that was very hard to reach.

Alvin never rejected his gay son Peter. Peter was part of the family. Even after Peter died of AIDS Alvin's fight for equality and justice did not stop.

Alvin will be missed.

Our condolences go to Alvin's wife Irene and their daughter Debra.

LEGISLATIVE CORNER (By Eve Lubalin, Advocacy Chair)

Leno Marriage Legislation Protects Religious Freedom

Traditional Values Coalition Sponsors Its Own Measure, Banning Marriage Equality and Domestic Partner Benefits

Marriage equality held center stage as the California legislature began its new session on December 6th, with Assemblyman Mark Leno introducing **AB19, the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act**.

Like last year's bill, AB19 will eliminate the discriminatory restriction prohibiting same-sex couples from obtaining civil marriage licenses by changing the criteria for eligibility to marry from "a man and a woman" to "two persons." However, this year the Leno bill also includes specific provisions protecting religious freedom by guaranteeing that every religious institution remains free to determine whether or not to perform religious marriage ceremonies, based on its own religious tenets.

"No priest, minister or rabbi of any religious denomination, and no official of any nonprofit religious institution authorized to solemnize marriages, shall be required to solemnize any marriage in violation of his or her right to free exercise of religion guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States or by Article I, section 4, of the California Constitution."

The bill's new title and explicit protection of religious freedom underscore that (1) AB19 safeguards the constitutionally protected freedom of religious faiths to solemnize only those marriages that are consistent with their own values and beliefs and (2) AB19's sole purpose is to provide same-sex couples with equal access to the secular legal institution of civil marriage. Hopefully, this restatement of First Amendment religious freedoms will remove barriers to extending civil marriage to all Californians.

Progress on Equal Marriage Rights

Despite the 2004 election, which saw ballot measures prevailing primarily in states which already discriminated against same sex couples, it is important to underscore that the fight for equal marriage rights continues. It is quite possible that marriage discrimination will be ended in additional states during 2005. Beyond California and Massachusetts, either courts or legislatures could establish equal marriage rights for same sex couples in Washington State, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland, Indiana or New York (which already honors legal same sex marriages performed in Canada, Europe, and Massachusetts.).

Internationally, Canada and South Africa have joined the Netherlands and Belgium in extending full marriage rights to LGBT couples and Spain is on the verge of doing so. At this point, most European Union countries have extensive civil union or partnership systems in place, if not "marriage," and Europe is moving to harmonize its laws to respect relationships established under different national laws. Eventually, the United States will have to face the issue of respecting legal same sex marriages or civil partnerships of the citizens of its allies living in the US or suffer the consequences.

Traditional Values Coalition Sponsors Discriminatory Constitutional Amendment

On the same day as the Leno bill was introduced, the Traditional Values Coalition, with Assemblyman Haynes and Senator Morrow, sponsored ACA3/SCA1, a state constitutional amendment limiting marriage to a man and a woman and prohibiting the extension of any of the rights, responsibilities, benefits and obligations of marriage to any civil union or partnership.

This constitutional amendment would repeal the new domestic partner law going into effect on January 1, 2005 – AB205 -- and deny California domestic partners and their families the protections they need and deserve.

To place this amendment on the ballot by legislative action, the TVC would need an affirmative 2/3 vote in both the California Assembly and the Senate. While it is clear the amendment will not be approved by the legislature, it is very likely that TVC will move to petition to place it on the ballot in the next statewide elections. Primary elections are now scheduled for June, 2006, but the Governor may call a special election in November, 2005, for other purposes.

RESOURCE: UNLEARNING HOMOPHOBIA DVD

The *Unlearning Homophobia Series*, a one-disc compilation of three groundbreaking films - *Straight from the Heart*, *All God's Children*, and *De Colores* is now available on DVD. Each of the documentaries tackles the emotional issue of discrimination's effect on American families, communities, and churches.

Academy Award-nominated *Straight from the Heart* brings stories of families across America who have had to answer the question: 'How do you cope when you learn that your child is lesbian or gay?' *All God's Children* takes a rare look at how the love ethic of African-American communities has opened hearts to gay and lesbian community members. *De Colores* brings the sometimes painful, but ultimately encouraging and inspiring stories of how the culture of love has overcome fear, prejudice, and machismo in numerous Latino families.

You'll find more information on the web site <http://www.UnlearningHomophobia.com>

Gay Couple's Sons Anger Catholic Parents

Some parents and parishioners have accused the Roman Catholic diocese in Orange County of violating church doctrine by allowing a gay couple to enroll their children in a church school.

The group demanded that St. John the Baptist School in Costa Mesa, California, accept only families that pledge to abide by Catholic teachings. Church doctrine opposes gay relationships and adoption by same-sex couples.

"The teachings of the church seem to have been abandoned," said John R. Nixon. "We send our children to a Catholic school because we expect and demand that the teachings of our church will be adhered to."

School officials rejected the demand, and issued a new policy stating that a family's background "does not constitute an absolute obstacle to enrollment in the school."

The parents' demand would presumably prevent two adopted boys whose parents are both men from attending the school's kindergarten.

The Rev. Gerald M. Horan, superintendent of diocese schools, said that if Catholic beliefs were strictly adhered to, then children whose parents divorced, used birth control or married outside the church would also have to be banned.

Note from the editor: I applaud Rev. Horan who applies reasoning and logic rather than prejudice. Thank you, Reverend!

Irish Lawmakers to Review Rights for Same-Sex Couples

Despite the influence of Roman Catholicism, Ireland, which legalized divorce only seven years ago, is considering more rights for same-sex couples.

A committee consisting of lawmakers from all political parties met in late October to discuss the possibility of granting same-sex couples the same rights as those given to married couples.

All political parties have agreed that the Irish Constitution, written in 1937, reflects outdated values for the 21st century. "If you look at the provisions for the family in the Constitution, they were written when women were seen as being tied to the kitchen sink," said committee chairperson Denis O'Donovan.

Members of the nation's two major parties - Fianna Fail and Fine Gael - continue to uphold conservative social values, but members have called for gays to receive equal rights.

A recent study in England conducted by the British Journal of Psychiatry indicated that mental health problems for gay adults are linked to past experiences of homophobic discrimination in schools, the British Broadcasting Corporation reported November 30, 2004.

New Zealand Passes Civil-Unions Law

New Zealand's Parliament passed a civil-unions law for gay and straight couples December 9.

Registered couples will receive the same rights and responsibilities as married couples.

The measure takes effect in April.

Ark. Judge Voids Ban on Gay Foster Parents December 29, 2004

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. - An Arkansas judge Wednesday declared unconstitutional a state ban on placing foster children in any household with a gay member.

Ruling in a case brought by the Arkansas chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, Pulaski County Circuit Judge Timothy Fox said the state Child Welfare Agency Review board had overstepped its authority by trying to regulate "public morality."

When Kathy L. Hall, lawyer for the state board, argued that social mores stand against homosexuals serving as parents, Fox noted that women were once prohibited from voting and racially mixed marriages were illegal in many states.

Fox cited the testimony of sociologists and psychologists that gay people can be as loving and caring foster parents as heterosexuals, and that the children of gay adoptive parents can be as well-adjusted as those raised by heterosexual couples.

At issue was a 1999 board regulation that said gays cannot become foster parents, and foster children cannot be placed in any home with a gay member under its roof.

Did you know?

Last year, the Hamburg Administrative Court (Germany) ruled that every student is mandated to participate in sex education. The Court based the ruling on a decision by the Federal Supreme Court that does not allow opting out of sex ed.

The Federal Supreme Court's reasoning:

The knowledge of human sexuality is a stipulation for responsible behavior towards one self, one's partner, one's family, and, thus, towards society in general. Participation in sex education is extremely important because it plays a vital part in combating prejudice against gays and lesbians and teaches tolerance. To combat hostility towards homosexual people in an effective way sex education cannot be forgone.

New European justice commissioner gay-friendly

The new nominee for European justice commissioner, Franco Frattini, said during European Parliament hearings Nov. 15-16 that same-sex couples who are legally coupled in any one of the 25 nations of the European Union must be recognized as a couple by all of the nations.

He said that it is required by the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. "That is an obvious principle."

Canadian Supremes OK Same-Sex Marriage

Asked for its thoughts on the matter by the federal government, Canada's Supreme Court declared unanimously December 9 that there are no obstacles to nationwide legalization of full same-sex marriage.

"Several centuries ago it would have been understood that marriage should be available only to opposite-sex couples," the court wrote. "The recognition of same-sex marriage in several Canadian jurisdictions as well as two European countries belies the assertion that the same is true today.

Our constitution is a living tree which, by way of progressive interpretation, accommodates and addresses the realities of modern life."

"QUOTE - UNQUOTE"

"For more than six months, same-sex couples in Massachusetts have been getting married, and nobody else's marriage has been affected. Massachusetts continues to have the nation's lowest divorce rate."

David Buckel, Lambda Legal Marriage Project Director

New Poll Shows Shift in Military Attitudes Toward Gays

WASHINGTON, DC - Fifty percent of junior enlisted service members say that gays and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly in the military, according to the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey.

The 2004 Annenberg poll follows a report last week from the Urban Institute which estimates 65,000 lesbian and gay Americans serve in the armed forces. "Despite the military's gay ban, service members have seen first hand the contributions of lesbian and gay Americans," said Sharra E. Greer, Director of Law and Policy for Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN). "Heterosexual service members serve alongside lesbian and gay colleagues every day and they are increasingly comfortable doing so."

Peru OKs gay sex in the military

Peru's Constitutional Court November 11 overturned a law that prohibited gays in the military from having sex, the Agence France Presse news wire reported.

The army had banned same-sex relations on or off military bases under threat of imprisonment or expulsion.

The court found the ban to be discriminatory and unconstitutional.

"QUOTE - UNQUOTE"

"The most obvious lesson from Sodom is that when you're attacked by an angry mob, the holy thing to do is to offer up your virgin daughters."

Nicholas Kristof, Columnist

AB 205 - The New California Domestic Partnership Law

Starting on January 1, 2005, registered domestic partners in California will be granted most of the rights and responsibilities of married couples under California law. Major changes include community property and financial obligations, parental rights and responsibilities, public benefits, and health care and end-of-life issues. However, registered domestic partners will still be denied the 1,138 rights and responsibilities conferred to married couples under FEDERAL law, and they still will have less security than married couples when they travel or move outside California.

According to *Equality California*, the responsibilities afforded by AB 205 will guide couples through nearly every complex legal situation faced by families – death, custody, disputes, illness, childbirth, divorce, and adoption. They include:

- Financial support during and after the relationship, and community property ownership protections.
 - Protections from threats and crimes against the family of public officials.
 - Child custody, visitation, and financial support of children.
 - Anatomical gifts, consent to autopsy and disposition of remains, and burial in family cemeteries.
 - Legal claims dependent upon family status, including claims for a victim's compensation.
 - Housing protections, including access to family student housing, senior citizen housing, and rent-control protections.
 - Bereavement leave, family care and medical leave, pension rights, and death benefits for surviving partners of firefighters and police officers.
 - Obligations to make disclosures regarding family relationships and to take other steps to avoid nepotism, conflicts of interest, and self-dealing.
 - Access to family court for dissolution of relationships for long-term partners, couples with children, and couples with significant assets.
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- Mutual responsibility for debts to third parties.
 - Government-regulated benefits, including workers' compensation, public assistance, transfer of licenses upon death, and the ability to apply for absentee ballots for a partner.
 - Communication privileges, including the right not to be forced to testify against a partner.
 - Moving expenses, membership discounts, travel benefits, and other benefits currently offered to spouses.
 - The same rights regarding nondiscrimination as those provided to spouses.

In addition, public employers will be required to provide:

- Public retirement plans and survivor benefits equivalent to those provided for a spouse.
- State government hiring preference for surviving domestic partners of veterans and disabled veterans.
- A public employee's domestic partner benefits and, in the event of an employee's death, eligibility for continued health insurance for an enrolled surviving partner and the deceased's children.

Insurance companies currently providing employers with spousal insurance coverage must offer health insurance to domestic partners of employees and their children on the same terms.

Partner Bill Passes Polish Senate

A bill granting registered same-sex couples some marriage rights passed Poland's Senate December 3, 2004.

Czech Parliament to Consider Partner Bill

The Czech Republic Parliament will again consider a same-sex registered-partnership bill. Since the last attempt to enact partnership registration, public opinion has shifted to favor recognition of same-sex unions. The proposal would grant registered couples most marriage rights.