



# 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>

April-May 2005

Newsletter 234

## 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

April 19, 2005

**M**elissa Havard of the Media Project will speak about how this LA based media group has affected the lives of youth with their education on sexual health through the entertainment industry. A short video presentation will be included.

May 17, 2005

**D**r. Daniel Fast, a practicing psychiatrist for more than 20 years, will discuss how the views of the psychiatric community have changed toward the GLBT community and the landmark classifications that have resulted.

# 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: May 1  
(June/July 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](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)

# CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

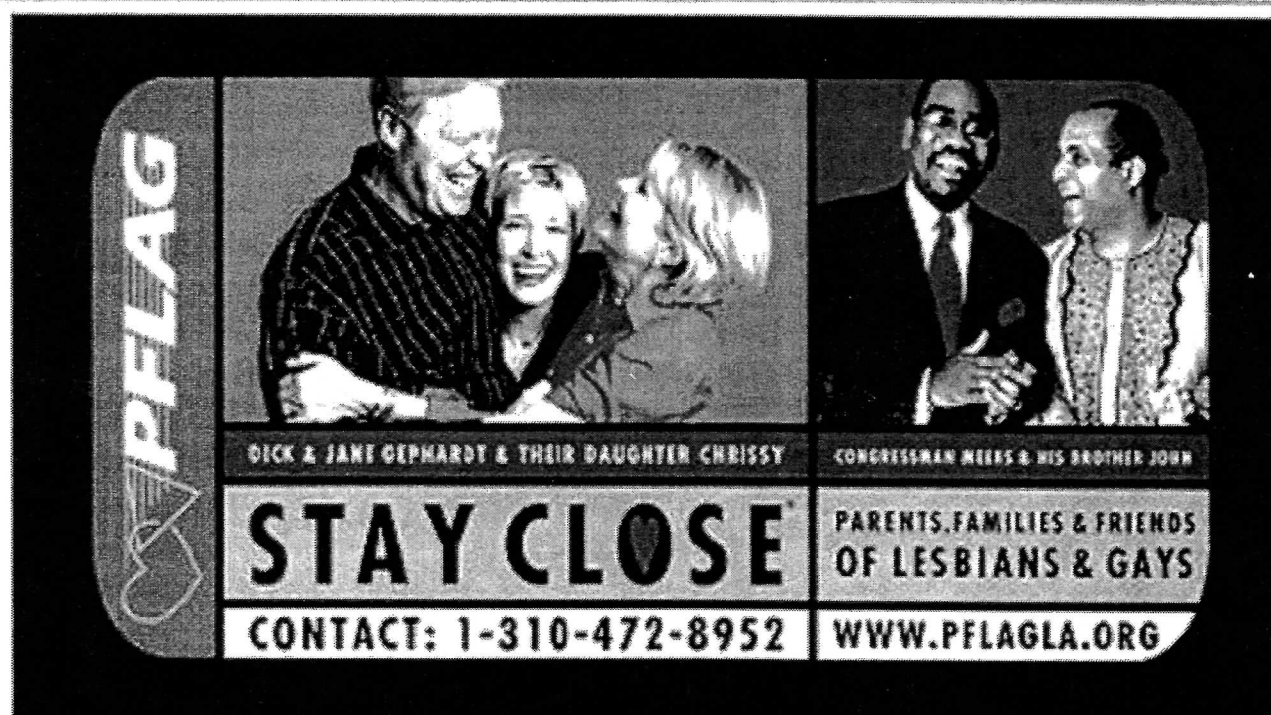
Our ad campaign is launched! On Sunday, February 20, our Board of Directors visited the Pacific Sherman Oaks Galleria theatre to see our theatre ad featuring a picture of former Senator Gephardt, his wife and their daughter Chrissy and a picture of Congressman Gregory Meeks and his brother John with the message "Stay close."

As many of you may already know, we joined forces with PFLAG DC and PFLAG NY to participate in this PFLAG "Stay Close" ad campaign (see [www.stayclose.org](http://www.stayclose.org) for details). Below is our wonderful new movie theatre ad. We have contracted with Screenvision to place this ad in two theatres in the LA area: Pacific Sherman Oaks Galleria at 15301 Ventura Blvd, Sherman Oaks (screens 3-10) and the Magic Johnson-Crenshaw theatre (screens 1,2,3,6,7) at 4020 Marlton Ave, Los Angeles. These ads will be shown before each movie on the respective screens in each theatre from February 18 through July 2005.

These ads TELL THE TRUTH through beautiful photographs and loving smiles - the truth that our GLBT family members are loved and cherished for ALL that they are. Wherever I go, I sneak that message into every conversation. I tell my co-workers, friends and neighbors how much my son is cherished for everything that he is. I hope that all of you will do the same for your GLBT family members.

We are very excited about the impact these ads will have on our community and we'd like to run them longer and place them in print media as well. But we can't do it without your help. About the same time this newsletter arrives, you should receive a separate letter requesting a donation. Any amount you can give will help get our message of support and encouragement to a larger audience.

Steve Krantz - Co-President PFLAG Los Angeles



The advertisement is a black and white graphic with rounded corners. On the left, a vertical banner contains the PFLAG logo and the word "PFLAG" in large, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The main area is divided into two columns. The left column features a photograph of a man, a woman, and a young girl smiling together. Below the photo, the text reads "DICK & JANE GEPHARDT & THEIR DAUGHTER CHRISSEY". The right column features a photograph of a man and a woman smiling together. Below the photo, the text reads "CONGRESSMAN MEES & HIS BROTHER JOHN". At the bottom, a large banner spans both columns with the words "STAY CLOSE" in very large, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Below this banner, the text "CONTACT: 1-310-472-8952" is on the left and "WWW.PFLAGLA.ORG" is on the right. To the right of the "STAY CLOSE" banner, the text "PARENTS, FAMILIES & FRIENDS OF LESBIANS & GAYS" is written in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font.

**PFLAG**

DICK & JANE GEPHARDT & THEIR DAUGHTER CHRISSEY

CONGRESSMAN MEES & HIS BROTHER JOHN

**STAY CLOSE**

PARENTS, FAMILIES & FRIENDS OF LESBIANS & GAYS

CONTACT: 1-310-472-8952

WWW.PFLAGLA.ORG

**LEGISLATIVE CORNER** (By Eve Lubalin, Advocacy Chair)***February was Freedom to Marry Month!  
Marriage Activists Criss-Cross California to Build Local Coalitions  
and Host Educational Forums***

During February, Equality California's marriage project sponsored a "Get Engaged" campaign in all 58 California counties, reaching out to local allies to help build a broad-based coalition for marriage equality and educate residents about the costs of marriage discrimination. According to the 2000 census, there are almost 100,000 same-sex couples living in California. The "Get Engaged" tour was designed to identify volunteers for marriage work and attract new supporters to the marriage movement.

As the scene of California's first same-sex marriages in February 2004, San Francisco hosted many events on the anniversary weekend of the weddings, which coincided with Valentine's Day. Mayor Gavin Newsom invited all the married couples to City Hall for an emotional reception and hundreds came. The San Francisco Public Library hosted an afternoon educational program and Equality California had a stunning and successful fundraiser at City Hall.

Couples all over California participated in celebrating the anniversary by requesting marriage licenses at their local county clerk offices. In most locations, the registrars responded sympathetically, indicating they could not issue licenses but wishing couples well. The "Get Engaged" tour attracted significant press attention, including coverage on National Public Radio. For more information on marriage events throughout California in February, go to [www.eqca.org](http://www.eqca.org) and click on "Get Engaged Statewide Tour."

**"QUOTE - UNQUOTE"**

"When the civil rights of an entire class of people are put in the hands of a misinformed and ignorant electorate, justice is not served and it is not healthy for our country."

Matt, Fort Wayne

**"QUOTE - UNQUOTE"**

"The basis of the opposition to same-sex marriage is that it goes against tradition. If tradition carried on, we would still have slavery."

Mariette Geldenhuys, Attorney

**Utah Amending Gay-Marriage Ban Problems**

SALT LAKE CITY - After rushing to write a ban on gay marriage into the state constitution, Utah legislators are stepping back to repair some of the damage the law could deal other kinds of domestic partners.

Taken literally, Utah's provision could deny hospital visitation or survivor's property rights to children being brought up by grandparents, or to senior citizens who live together but do not marry for financial reasons. Siblings living in the same household also could find themselves without customary rights.

Utah's Legislature - overwhelmingly Republican and Mormon, and one of the most conservative bodies in the nation - ignored warnings from the state's Republican attorney general that the amendment went too far. Utah voters ratified it with 66 percent approval in November.

## SPREADING THE WORD IN THE COMMUNITY

- Terri Fabris, Chris Haiss and John Maurer spoke to two classes of adolescents at the Alternative Education Work Center housed by A Place Called Home Community Center in South Central Los Angeles.
- The Bregman family (David, Nicky & son Ben), Maurie Davidson, and Steve Krantz spoke to students at USC's School of Social Work.
- Terri Fabris, Steve Krantz, George Unger, and Sylvia Weisenberg spoke at Milken Community High School.

### Keyes' daughter is a 'queer' activist

*The Washington Blade*

The openly lesbian daughter of former presidential contender and conservative firebrand Alan Keyes has recently become a gay rights activist. Maya Marcel-Keyes will headline a Feb. 14 Equality Maryland lobbying event in Annapolis.

Speculation on her sexual orientation began in the fall during her father's failed campaign for the Illinois seat in U.S. Senate. Around that time, Marcel-Keyes posted thinly veiled hints on her Internet journal that she was not heterosexual. Comments that her father made on an August radio call-in show, that the vice president's daughter was a "selfish hedonist" for being an out lesbian, were later posed to Keyes as a question regarding his own child. The well-known opponent of gay rights said, yes, his daughter, too, would be a "selfish hedonist" if she were openly gay.

Marcel-Keyes recently identified herself as a "young queer anarchist," according to an Equality Maryland statement. Her father has not publicly acknowledged her sexuality, despite continued prodding from the press. Reared in Maryland, Marcel-Keyes attended Catholic school, worked as an activist in India for a year and plans to attend Brown University this fall.

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*Something to think about:*

*Do you still believe that same-sex parents turn their children gay/lesbian, while straight parents ensure that they turn out straight? If that were true it would indicate that either Mr. & Mrs. Keyes are closeted homosexuals or they are unfit parents. After all, growing up in a very conservative family STILL didn't prevent their daughter from being who she is: a human being who happens to be attracted to someone of her own sex. — The editor*

### Israel Supreme court ruled that a lesbian couple can adopt

In a major accomplishment for same-sex couples in Israel, the country's supreme court ruled January 10 that a lesbian couple is able to legally adopt each other's children.

During the past 15 years that Tal and Avital Yaros-Hak have lived together, they have had a total of three children. The couple petitioned the Tel Aviv Family Court for the right to formally adopt each other's children in 1997, but the request was rejected because Israel's adoption law had no provisions for same-sex couples. The couple appealed and argued that adoption was in the best interest of the children if one of their natural mothers should die. On Monday, the Israel Supreme Court agreed, ruling 7-2 in favor of the couple.

The ruling comes after a big victory in December when same-sex couples in Israel won the same rights as common-law spouses when it comes to matters of property, taxation and inheritance.

### Teen sex increased after abstinence program Texas study finds little impact on sexual behavior

HOUSTON - Abstinence-only sex education programs, a major plank in President George W. Bush's education plan, have had no impact on teenagers' behavior in his home state of Texas, according to a new study conducted by researchers at Texas A&M University.

"We didn't see any strong indications that these programs were having an impact in the direction desired," said Dr. Buzz Pruitt, who directed the study. "These programs seem to be much more concerned about politics than kids, and we need to get over that," he said.

### "QUOTE - UNQUOTE"

"In America, sex is an obsession;  
in other parts of the world, it is a fact."

The legendary Marlene Dietrich



## Changing Sex in Iran

TEHRAN — In the Islamic Republic of Iran, gay male sex still carries the death penalty and lesbians are lashed, but hundreds of people are having their gender changed legally, bolstered by the blessings of members of the ruling Shiite clergy.

No Muslim society has tackled the question with the open-mindedness of Shiite Iran. That's probably because the father of the revolution himself, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, penned the groundbreaking fatwas that approved gender reassignment four decades ago.

Khomeini reasoned that if men or women wished so intensely to change their sex, to the point that they believed they were trapped inside the wrong body, then they should be permitted to transform that body and relieve their misery. His opinion had more to do with what isn't in the Koran than what is. Sex change isn't mentioned, Khomeini's thinking went, so there are no grounds to consider it banned.

## Did you know?

In a substantial shift from traditional policy, Juan Antonio Martinez Camino, spokesman for the Catholic Church in Spain, has said it supports the use of condoms to prevent the spread of AIDS. Martinez Camino said the church's stance was backed by the scientific world.

## Saudi judge rules for transsexual in family fight over inheritance

By Colin Freeman / [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk)

A judge in Saudi Arabia has provoked controversy within the strictly Islamic kingdom by ruling in favour of a transsexual, whose scandalised family tried to strip him of half his inheritance after he became a woman.

Although the ruling does not challenge Saudi men's superior status in law, the spectacle of the conservative judiciary grappling with legal issues of transsexuality has caused a furore in a country where sex is still a taboo subject.

## Canadian military approves gay marriage

By Kevin Bourassa and Joe Varnell

If one needs further assurance that same-sex marriage is going to become a reality for the rest of Canada, the Canadian military offers hope to the approximately 15% of Canadians still living in areas that maintain discrimination against gays and lesbians. Today Sun Media disclosed a Canadian Forces document that reveals the forces are implementing a policy that directs military chaplains to solemnize marriages for gay or lesbian military personnel.

Col. Stan Johnstone told the Sun that the military policy supports the objective of ministering to all forces members and their families.

"Today, there are many members of our CF [Canadian Forces] community who live openly and freely as gay men and lesbian soldiers, sailors airmen and women," Major John Fetcher, Chaplain, wrote to us in July 2002. "Their relationships with same-sex partners are accorded the same status in terms of military family support and benefits as are heterosexual common-law couples and married couples."

Major Fletcher and other Anglican Chaplains called upon the Chaplain General Division, and the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy to "affirm the presence and contributions of gay men and lesbians within the life of the CF" while working to build support for the recognition of same-sex relationships, including marriage.

Other churches represented in the forces include Roman Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian and United Church. Chaplains will not be required to perform a gay marriage if their religion insists on discriminating against homosexuals, however chaplains unwilling to marry a gay couple must find another member of the clergy who will conduct the ceremony.

Meanwhile, the Conservative Party, normally supportive of military policy and interests, is clearly out of step with this constituency, as the Conservatives have launched an anti-gay advertising campaign to promote discrimination. The Conservatives hope to lure recent immigrants coming from countries that devalue human rights, away from their traditional home in the Liberal party, by appealing to their old-world prejudices and superstitions.

## Israeli Court Stops Deportation of Gay Man

An Israeli court ruled on December 31 that the government couldn't send the Colombian partner of an Israeli man back to his country without violating federal laws.

In 1999, the High Court ruled that the Israeli government is not allowed to deport foreigners married to Israeli citizens. Judge Uzi Vogelmann, in his decision, extended the ruling to the gay couple.

Israel is one of 16 countries that recognize the rights of same-sex couples in its immigration policies.

*[Note from the editor: The United States still doesn't allow its citizens to sponsor their foreign same-sex partner for immigration purposes and enforces deportations, thus forcefully tearing apart relationships and families.]*

## Marriage in a loving family

By Keith W. Swain

She was 80 years old, stoop-shouldered, her face weathered from life as a farmer's wife in the San Luis Valley. She made her way down the aisle toward her grandson, a rosary in her trembling hands.

When she got to the altar, she nodded to the priest, who stepped aside as she turned to face the two young men who stood side-by-side in front of the church. In a soft, almost crumbling voice, she spoke.

"I was married to Jose Contreras on May 19, 1921, by a circuit priest. I remember how he took our hands and placed them together, like this ... " she said, turning to the young man on the right, her grandson, taking his hands and placing them into the other man's open palms. "Then, he took this very rosary, and wrapped them around our wrists, saying a prayer in Latin, explaining that from this point on, we were bound to each other, that we were tied to each other in the eyes of God. We were standing in a field. There was no church nearby; there was no town hall for us to go to. We were married in the eyes of God. That's all that counts."

She kissed each young man on the cheek, then slowly headed to a seat in the front pew. The priest wrapped the two men's hands with the rosary, said a prayer in Latin, and turned and announced to the congregation that Jeff and Richard had been bound to each other in the eyes of God.

I wept like a baby. I had never experienced such an act of pure love, familial acceptance, and social disobedience all rolled into one.

But was this marriage instead an act of social obedience? Richard had been raised in a large, loving Hispanic family where the primary rule was *la familia prima*, your family is foremost. And he couldn't have agreed more. His family also believed in a God who said, "Love one another as you love yourself."

At the reception afterward, I asked Richard's grandmother about her feelings toward her new son-in-law. "Well, he's gringo, but other than that ... ." Her black eyes twinkled at her joke. "My grandson loves him. He follows his heart. He is soft like me. He feels love deeply, so I love him, too. Jeff is now family."

I wanted to marry into this family. I wanted a grandmother, a father, a brother-in-law, a kid sister, all of whom were there, supporting me and trusting me to know what was best for me. In Richard's family, there was no disagreement over law or church doctrine. There was no need to head to city hall for a marriage license, because they all knew the truth: Richard and Jeff were married in the eyes of their God, their family and their community.

Recently, Focus on the Family and its leader, James Dobson, announced the need to better protect Colorado marriages, its families and its children through a constitutional amendment. I couldn't help but think of Richard's family. Would Dobson feel that the state was better off if Richard had not made a marriage commitment, and instead chose to live apart, disconnected from family and tradition?

Would Dobson feel that the marriages of Richard's parents and grandparents had been lessened in value by his own marriage? In his family's eyes, Richard's continuation of the family traditions, a marriage for life, in the eyes of God, was a nod of approval to the family he had been raised in. Richard's act of following tradition actually strengthened his family's values.

But here's a bigger question: Does Dobson think he knows what religious beliefs Richard and his family should follow? And, if so, who is James Dobson to be telling them how to practice their faith?

I suppose we could say that the larger church does not condone such marriages and that "allowable" marriages are simply questions of majority rules. But, if so, should we then disregard Jewish marriages performed in Colorado? The total population of Jews in Colorado amount to only around 1.7 percent, while gay men account for 4 percent.

But we do recognize marriages of various religious faiths and practices, regardless of the size of their membership. We do so as an act of respect. We believe that adults know what is best for them when it comes to their choice of religious beliefs. Can't we also trust each other to know whom he or she loves as well?

I can understand the confusion that the arrival of gay marriage has brought to our state. New things can be uncomfortable. I had never been to a gay wedding before the marriage of Jeff and Richard, and honestly I had two concerns: the "kiss" and what to bring as a gift. I did OK with both. And, as a state of good, decent people, we will do the same. We may be awkward at first, unsure of what is expected of us. But as we learn that gay marriages actually strengthen families, most Coloradans will be supportive of those gay men and women who want to support ongoing traditions of love and faith. These acts of social obedience are surely something all of us can support.

Keith W. Swain (drkswain@hotmail.com) is a psychologist, a professor at Front Range Community College, and a columnist for Out Front Colorado.

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