



Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

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

June-July 2005

Newsletter 235

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 21, 2005

No Speakers, just our usual rap group.

July 19, 2005

Please join us as we make a special presentation to longtime PFLAG member and Los Angeles Board Member Nancy Zaun.

Please join us on **Sunday June 12** for the annual Christopher St. West Parade to celebrate Pride Weekend in West Hollywood.

Please plan to line up near the corner of Crescent Heights and Santa Monica Blvd at 10AM. Parade steps off at 11AM.

Please contact George Unger at 323.871.4899 or at sjcgeo@rocketmail.com if you have any questions. Wear a red t-shirt if you can.

This is a wonderful event you will not soon forget!!!

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

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is difficult to find a day when there isn't any news affecting GLBT's in this country. From recent court decisions to state initiatives, the rights and responsibilities of our community are being written and rewritten each day. A recent announcement from the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) reminded me of a bumper sticker I saw that read "if you ignore your rights long enough, you won't be surprised when they're taken away" The FDA's announcement was that they would no longer accept sperm donations from gay men. Discrimination comes in many forms.

I hope you will join us at our monthly meeting on July 19 as we pay tribute to our long time member and friend Nancy Zaun. Nancy has been such a wonderful volunteer for so many years that we cannot thank her enough. Please join us to say thanks!

The West Hollywood Pride parade is the second Sunday in June this year (June 12). We hope you will join us in walking in this wonderful event. Our PFLAG section is always very well received and welcomed!

I want to thank everyone who has made donations to our "Stay Close" movie ad campaign. Because of the generous contributions, we are able to keep our ad in the movie theatres another 30 days.

And finally, twice yearly we send out our membership envelopes and ask for your support. If you've already contributed in 2005 we thank you for your support. If you haven't contributed yet, we ask that you would. I would also like to thank those members who have made recent contributions to our chapter in the memory of our longtime PFLAG friend and board member, Alvin Kaufman.

Find out in our next issue how the latest Lobby Day in Sacramento was received. If you would like to be part of our email list and receive the newsletter electronically, or hear about our next Lobby Day or other event, let me know at sjcgeo@rocketmail.com. Let's keep up the good fight!!

George Unger - Co-President PFLAG Los Angeles

**Please help us reduce costs
by signing up to receive our newsletter
electronically!**

Just send an e-mail to sjcgeo@rocketmail.com
listing the name and address under which you currently
receive our newsletter by snail mail.

We will delete that address from our mailing list
and make sure that you'll receive the next newsletter
by e-mail.

Something to think about:

"Since any pro-gay study being authored by a gay person must be a conflict of interest, I have the utmost confidence that people will wholeheartedly agree that pro-christian 'studies' put together by christians should be regarded as tainted by conflicts of interest and, in turn, of no validity whatsoever."

Katrina C. Rose, Lawyer

LEGISLATIVE CORNER (By Eve Lubalin, Advocacy Chair)

ON THE VERGE OF HISTORIC MARRIAGE HEARING, STATE ASSEMBLY PASSES BILL TO PREVENT LGBT DISCRIMINATION IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Bipartisan Support for LGBT Legislation Signals Shift in Political Opposition

Sacramento, CA – April 25, 2005 A Code of Fair Campaign Practices Bill (AB 866) by Speaker pro Tem Leland Yee (D-San Francisco / Daly City) passed the California State Assembly today on a bipartisan 47-27 vote. AB 866, sponsored by Equality California, prohibits the use of any negative appeal based on prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people by candidates or campaign committees who sign the voluntary pledge provided for in the Code of Fair Campaign Practices.

"With today's vote, we move one step closer to ending anti-gay rhetoric in political campaigns," said Speaker pro Tem Yee. "Candidates should not discriminate and victimize the LGBT community for political purposes, and fostering campaigns that create fear and intimidation only incite a potentially dangerous situation for the LGBT community."

Bipartisan support for EQCA-sponsored legislation continues to grow as the discussion of marriage equality gains momentum. Tomorrow, Assembly Bill 19, the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act, will be heard in the Assembly Judiciary Committee following last year's historic vote when the committee became the first in the country to pass a marriage equality bill without a court order.

"The public should have responsible candidates and elected officials discussing the key issues and not hateful rhetoric," said Executive Director Geoffrey Kors of Equality California. "Californians need a fair playing field, and using anti-gay appeals to divide voters is unfair and unnecessary. As we look ahead and find support from across party lines, equality and fair treatment will not be in short supply."

In 1996, then Assemblymember Sheila Kuehl introduced nearly identical legislation (AB 2283), which failed in its first hearing in a 3-4 vote. The Registrar of Voters is required to provide the candidate a blank form on which to subscribe to the Code of Fair Campaign Practices, and a copy of the Elections Code provisions at the time a declaration of candidacy, nomination papers, or any other paper evidencing an intention to be a candidate for public office are issued. Subscription to the Code of Fair Campaign Practices is voluntary. Completed forms are to be filed with the Registrar of Voters, and are retained for public inspection until 30 days after the election.

AB 866 will now head to the State Senate for further consideration.

Founded in 1998, Equality California (EQCA) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots-based, statewide advocacy organization whose mission is to ensure the dignity, safety, equality and civil rights of all lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Californians. Equality California is one of the largest and fastest growing statewide LGBT organizations in the country. We can be contacted through our website at www.eqca.org.

SPREADING THE WORD IN THE COMMUNITY

- Harry Drasin, Sylvia Weisenberg, and Marla Weiss talked to 8th graders at Pressman Academy, a Jewish day school in Los Angeles.

California Court Upholds Domestic Partner Law April 05, 2005

SACRAMENTO, Calif. - A California law granting domestic partners nearly identical legal rights as married couples does not conflict with a voter-approved ban on gay marriage, a state appeals court ruled.

California's domestic partner law represents the nation's most sweeping recognition of domestic partner rights short of Massachusetts, where gay marriage is legalized, and Vermont, which recognizes civil unions for gay couples. It grants registered couples virtually every spousal right under state law except the ability to file joint income taxes.

The 3rd District Court of Appeal said Monday that the law did not undermine Proposition 22, the 2000 initiative that defined marriage as between a man and a woman. That measure was "intended only to limit the status of marriage to heterosexual couples and to prevent the recognition in California of homosexual marriages," the three-judge panel said.

The ruling upheld a trial judge's decision in favor of the domestic partner law, which was signed by former Gov. Gray Davis. There are now about 29,000 couples registered as domestic partners, according to the secretary of state's office.

The Campaign for California Families had challenged the domestic partner law. Randy Thomasson, executive of the Campaign for California Families, said the group would appeal and move for another ballot initiative that would end domestic partnerships.

"This ruling gives impetus to the push for a constitutional amendment to protect marriage from the clutches of judges and politicians," Thomasson said.

But Jenny Pizer, senior counsel for the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, a pro-gay rights group, said the ruling "confirms the common-sense understanding that people in California have that domestic partnership and marriage are different."

Last month, a San Francisco County Superior Court judge ruled that laws limiting marriage to one man and one woman were unconstitutional, as was Proposition 22.

The ruling was appealed and will likely go to the California Supreme Court.

Group Calls For Calif. Amendment To Ban Gay Marriage By Mark Worrall 365Gay.com San Francisco Bureau April 28, 2005

(Sacramento, California) A day after a bill to legalize same-sex marriage in California passed a key committee opponents have formed a group to gather signatures to have a gay marriage ban placed in the state Constitution.

At a Sacramento news conference organizers of the petition said they represented a coalition of pro-family organizations, churches, and individuals. The umbrella group is calling itself ProtectMarriage.com but those spokespersons appearing at its press conference in Sacramento Wednesday appeared to be the same people already involved in opposing law suits being waged by same-sex couples to obtain marriage through the courts. The coalition includes the California Family Alliance, Focus on the Family of Colorado Springs, Colo., and the Family Research Council.

Their chief concern is a fear Proposition 22, a voter initiative passed in 2000 which was intended to block same-sex marriage could be overturned by the courts. They want the Prop 22 language enshrined in the California Constitution and they want the amendment to undo the state's landmark domestic partner law.

Sen. Dennis Hollingsworth (R-Murrieta), who also is a leader of the Prop. 22 Legal Defense and Educational Fund, said that the will of voters is being attacked by "public officials hostile to it and runaway courts."

"The blatant disregard for this law now requires the voters to defend, once and for all, the authentic definition of marriage by amending the California Constitution so that judges and legislators can't tinker with the language or intent," Hollingsworth said.

"We've known this was coming," Shannon Minter the lawyer for the National Center for Lesbian Rights told 365Gay.com.

"Unfortunately, in California it is very easy to put an initiative before the voters. There is a serious history of these initiatives and they are often presented in misleading ways to voters."

Minter said that this should be a major concern for the states LGBT community.

LGBT advocacy groups are predicting a nasty fight similar to the one over Prop. 22 five years ago.

On Monday, the Assembly Judiciary Committee passed legislation to allow same-sex marriage by a vote of 5-3. The bill now goes to the Assembly Appropriations Committee for financial review.

By SUE NULL

Advocacy chair for PFLAG's Houston chapter
Friday, April 15, 2005

LAST SATURDAY MORNING (April 9), I had three possible political/service projects on my calendar. I thought of ignoring them all and staying at home to catch up on other things. But at the last minute, I headed off to the town hall meeting of U.S. Rep. John Culberson (R-Houston) at River Oaks Elementary School.

What could possibly be accomplished there? After members of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) had already had a most unfruitful meeting with him, and a previous town hall meeting, I had no illusions of being able to influence Rep. Culberson in any way. So why bother? I rationalized that maybe I could talk with and influence some of the attendees.

I was able to speak from the floor:

"Representative Culberson, you have spoken at length in both this meeting and a previous one about your total devotion to your eight-year-old daughter. Like you, I am also a parent who passionately loves her children and wants only the best for them. But two of my four children are homosexual, and are represented by a Congressman (you) who co-sponsors second-class citizenship for them with your support of the Federal Marriage Amendment."

I went on, "I do not understand how someone who professes conservative values of non-intrusion into private lives feels it appropriate to intrude into my children's lives and limit their opportunities in life. Conservative values should support love and commitment wherever they can be found.

"You refuse to support new programs that cost the government money. Marriage equality costs the government nothing; in fact, the GAO has found instances where marriage equality represents a savings to the government.

"You spoke of the need for the judiciary to protect the rights of minorities. My children are sexual minorities and instead of protection, you are sponsoring discrimination against them.

"As a mother, it is very painful for me to see discrimination against my children just as you would find it painful if your daughter were discriminated against.

"Surely there many more important things for Congress to deal with than to deny civil rights to my children."

AS I TURNED TO SIT DOWN, many in the audience erupted in applause. This was a total shock, since I had expected a more conservative group. It turned out that many who attended were not pleased with Rep. Culberson's stand on various issues.

Rep. Culberson began a long convoluted answer that of course, he supported equal rights, but that "activist judges" were a major problem and that it wasn't appropriate to write legislation for a special group, (having conveniently forgotten

about legislation written for one special person, Terry Schiavo) because then there would be more and more special groups demanding special legislation.

The woman next to me shouted, "But you're not answering her question! She's not asking for special legislation." He continued his explanation, which made no sense to most of us, and again, people started to grumble noisily, "You're not answering her question."

I stood up to explain that I certainly was not asking for special legislation, and that I was only asking him not to promote the FMA. The disgruntled audience saw that he was trying to worm his way out of a difficult situation and began shouting at him; the meeting got in quite an uproar!

About 40-50 people attended and I was able to easily get 20 cards signed that support marriage equality. Afterward, people gratefully thanked me for speaking up, and I thought how strange! This was the meeting I was not going to attend. I left with a rather giddy feeling of having found some momentary success.

The moral of all this? Obviously the telling of personal stories makes an undisputable point, even with those generally opposed to your point of view. So seek out opportunities, get out there, speak up, talk to anyone, talk to everyone, and don't be cowed into silence. You might achieve more than you ever dreamed.

Texas House Bill Bars Gay Foster Parents

April 20, 2005 12:54 PM EDT

AUSTIN, Texas - Texas could become the only state to bar gays from becoming foster parents under legislation passed Wednesday by the House.

The ban is part of a bill to revamp the state's Child Protective Services agency. It passed 135-6 with two abstentions and now heads to the Senate.

"It is our responsibility to make sure that we protect our most vulnerable children, and I don't think we are doing that if we allow a foster parent that is homosexual or bisexual," said Republican Rep. Robert Talton, who introduced the amendment.

DID YOU KNOW?

Studies suggest that most rape offenders are **married** or in consenting relationships.

<http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov>

Only homophobic myths deny gay rights

By David Conard

I'm getting tired of the gay marriage debate in this country. There are no intelligent reasons to deny gay people the right to marry, only homophobic myths. These include: The Bible says homosexuality, and thus gay marriage, is wrong. Gay marriage is harmful to the institution of marriage. It will promote homosexuality, and "turn" young people gay. And gay people don't need to be married, because civil unions provide the same legal rights as marriage.

First, evidence that the Bible condemns homosexuality is shaky. According to Yale professor John Boswell's book, "Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality," "The New Testament takes no demonstrable position on homosexuality." In the Old Testament, Boswell writes that only two passages in Leviticus clearly forbid homosexuality, calling it an abomination that is punishable by death. However, Leviticus also punishes adultery, cursing one's parents and being a wizard with death. We better hang Bill Clinton, Gandalf and any kid who swears at mom and dad. Not everything in the Bible should be held up as how society should be.

Second, two NIU sociology professors don't think gay relationships have caused the decline in the number of heterosexual marriages. According to Kei Nomaguchi, assistant professor in sociology, more gay families haven't caused a decline in heterosexual marriage at all, but are instead a result of it. Marriage is declining because of changes in gender roles and a tolerance of divorce, which isn't all bad. Many women won't put off a career for marriage or tolerate abusive marriages.

Chet Meeks, assistant professor in sociology, reminded me that the tradition of marriage once included polygamy, arranged marriages and legally-recognized spousal battery. Change is often better than tradition. Not all change is good, though. Meeks said marriage is also declining because popular culture reduces relationships to superficialities. When "Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire" or "The Bachelor" links America's wedding vows with dollar signs or hairstyles, gay marriage is not the institution's real problem.

Third, homosexuality or gay marriage won't "turn" anyone gay. A 2002 American Academy of Pediatrics report stated that children raised by couples in a non-traditional relationship do as well as those in traditional marriages. Quoted in U.S. News and World Report, the report found "no increase in depression, anxiety, gender identity problems or adjustment problems" in such children.

Finally, civil unions do not provide the same rights as marriage. The 1996 Defense of Marriage defines marriage as between a man and a woman, for purposes of federal law. It also lets states refuse to recognize same-sex marriages from other states. So gay couples can't file jointly on their federal taxes or have their union recognized if they move to the wrong state.

These ideas don't stand up to scrutiny. Myths cannot be allowed to deny people fundamental human rights, like marriage. What is truly pathetic is that I'll probably get more responses to this column than the ones I did on murder or genocide. If you need something to protest, I'd suggest the ethnic cleansing occurring in Darfur, which has killed more than 100,000 people. But if you still need to worry about someone's consensual sex life, feel free to hook me up with Angelina Jolie.

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*Reprinted by friendly consent of the author David Conard
DConard@northernstar.info*

Spokane mayor accused of molesting boys decades ago May 5, 2005

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Mayor James West, a Republican foe of gay rights, was accused in a newspaper story Thursday of molesting two boys decades ago and was caught by the paper using the trappings of his office to try to court a young man on a gay Web site.

West on Thursday denied the molestation allegations, but acknowledged he "had relations with adult men."

West, a conservative with an abrasive style and a fierce temper, rose to become majority leader of the state Senate during a two-decade legislative career. He consistently opposed efforts to expand civil rights protections for gays and voted for the Defense of Marriage Act, a ban on gay marriage, in 1998. During a 1990 hearing on AIDS education, West proposed that teen sex be criminalized.

In 1990, he proposed marriage from the floor of the Senate to Ginger Marshall while she was visiting the Capitol. Their marriage ended five years later.

Senator backing marriage amendment getting divorce April 14, 2005

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- A state senator sponsoring a constitutional amendment aimed at "solemnizing the relationship of one man and one woman" is accused in a divorce case of cheating on his wife.

State Sen. Jeff Miller, a Republican from Cleveland, is accused of "inappropriate marital conduct" in a divorce complaint filed Feb. 25 in Bradley County.

"He is very hypocritical, fighting for the sanctity of marriage and not keeping his own," the senator's wife of 15 years, Bridgitte Suzanne Miller, said in a report in the Chattanooga Times Free Press.

I AM POEM

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Sometimes I wish people could see the faces of everyone who is hurt by the discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity. I would like to break down the "safe" abstract position they have when preaching about "the homosexual agenda" and "family values" and whatnot, and simply show them the all-too-human suffering that touches so many people.

I am the student afraid to go back to school. The teasing and shouting "Kill the faggot!" has gotten worse, and none of the teachers are doing anything about it.

I am the girl kicked out of her home because I confided in my mother that I am a lesbian.

I am the prostitute working the streets because nobody will hire a transsexual woman.

I am the sister who holds her gay brother tight through the painful, tear-filled nights.

We are the parents who buried our daughter long before her time.

I am the man who died alone in the hospital because they would not let my partner of twenty-seven years into the room.

I am the foster child who wakes up with nightmares of being taken away from the two fathers who are the only loving family I have ever had. I wish they could adopt me.

I am one of the lucky ones, I guess. I survived the attack that left me in a coma for three weeks, and in another year I will probably be able to walk again.

I am not one of the lucky ones. I killed myself just weeks before graduating high school. It was simply too much to bear.

We are the couple who had the realtor hang up on us when she found out we wanted to rent a one-bedroom for two men.

I am the person who never knows which bathroom I should use if I want to avoid getting the management called on me.

I am the mother who is not allowed to even visit the children I bore, nursed, and raised. The court says I am an unfit mother because I now live with another woman.

I am the domestic-violence survivor who found the support system grow suddenly cold and distant when they found out my abusive partner is also a woman.

I am the domestic-violence survivor who has no support system to turn to because I am male.

I am the father who has never hugged his son because I grew up afraid to show affection to other men.

I am the home-economics teacher who always wanted to teach gym until someone told me that only lesbians do that.

I am the man who died when the paramedics stopped treating me as soon as they realized I was transsexual.

I am the person who feels guilty because I think I could be a much better person if I didn't have to always deal with society hating me.