



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>

August-September 2005

Newsletter 236

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

August 16, 2005

Dr. Alan Goodwin, professor of Psychology, University of California, Northridge will discuss coping with the coming out process--for parents, other family members and/or for the individual coming out.

September 20, 2005

Brian Chenoweth - comedian/actor - will share his journey as being out on stage as well as his journey of acceptance amongst his family.

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)

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: September 1
(October/November 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

The next twelve months are the **MOST IMPORTANT** in California's history for GLBT families. If we work together (and we work hard), we can secure equal rights for our children forever. Now that I have grabbed your attention - read on.....

My wife and I drove up to Sacramento on May 14 for the PFLAG California Regional Conference, organized by Pam Woody, our Southern Pacific Regional Director. On Saturday evening, she hosted a reception in her suite where we met chapter leaders (41 in all) from across the state- Orange County, Ventura, Los Angeles, Stanislaus County/Modesto, Palm Springs, Fresno, Central Coast/San Luis Obispo, North Bay (Marin, Napa, Mendocino, and Sonoma Counties), San Diego, Sacramento, Ridgecrest, Peninsula/San Jose, Bakersfield, and San Francisco. On Sunday, the agenda was informative and inspiring. Sam Thoron, our National President kicked things off with a summary of PFLAG status and the great value of our work nationwide. Each chapter leader then stood up and summarized their challenges and activities. A common theme was reduced attendance at meetings, although PFLAG Sacramento seemed to be on the upswing. I was proud to mention our Stay Close theatre ad campaign and our plans to create a video for use in talks at schools, houses of worship and other venues.

Next, John Lewis and Stuart Gaffney, partners for over 18 years and litigants in the California Marriage Equality Suit, spoke of their experience getting married in San Francisco last year. They both stated that it changed them profoundly - they got a "glimpse" of equality that will not leave them. Stuart mentioned the challenges his parents faced as an interracial couple 50 years ago. They were able to marry in California due to our state's leadership in the 1948 Perez decision. However, when they moved to other states, such as Missouri, their marriage was not valid! It took until 1959 for the rest of the nation to catch. Now Stuart and John are dedicating themselves to work for equal marriage rights for all. They pointed out that there are a total of 1,480 rights denied to GLBT persons who desire to marry - 1138 at the Federal level and 342 at the state level in California.

The Traditional Values Coalition (Lou Sheldon) and other anti-gay groups are promoting a California Constitutional amendment to permanently prevent equal marriage rights in our state. We anticipate that this will be on the ballot by mid next year - a very serious threat to our children's rights.

Next year we must work together to defeat this pending ballot measure. To that end, Molly McKay, Field Director for Equality California, then kicked off our afternoon training session in grassroots campaigning. She introduced two representatives of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF, <http://www.taskforce.org>) who took us through the training session. They pointed out that despite losing 11 equal marriage ballot measures last year, we had some important victories and see positive trends occurring:

- In Massachusetts, supporters of same-sex rights were re-elected to their offices and it is becoming apparent that the few thousand of same-sex married couples are not posing any threat. The Massachusetts Democratic Party has formalized their platform position in support of equal marriage rights as a result.
- Fred Phelps was recently defeated in his home town of Topeka, Kansas in an effort to repeal a local gay right ordinance.
- The percentage of people who support gay civil unions (not marriage) remains at around 60% nationwide.

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The NGLTF campaign strategy is based on lessons learned from prior Defense of Marriage Act battles. We have limited time - less than 390 days and every day counts. While the Traditional Values Coalition is gathering their signatures we must gather our supporters and execute our plan.

1. We need multi-racial teams that clearly state that discrimination is wrong. In the past the opposition recruited black ministers to say that there was no discrimination in our case. The opposition has a "fish-hook" strategy - gain supporters in the inland CA counties and target people of color.
2. We need a massive field plan with broad grassroots voter contact. We must tell them our stories to engage and win them over.
3. We need to raise approximately \$20 million!!
4. We expect this to be a primary election - June timeframe - so it will be challenging getting people to the polls. One approach is to recommend absentee ballot voting.
5. Our message needs to appeal to people's fundamental values of fairness - this is a civil rights issue.

There are roughly 16.6M registered voters in CA. We can expect that only 45% will turn out for the election. So there will be approximately 7.5M votes cast and we will need 3.75 + one to win. The overall goal of our field campaign will be to solidify our base supporters and convert new supporters from our target demographics. The campaign will have 3 phases:

1. In the "identify" phase will contact 2.5 million people to increase our target supporters by approximately 1M.
2. In the "persuasion" phase will target those 1M with follow-up mailings and phone calls.
3. In the "GOTV" (or get out the vote) phase, we will focus on "non-chronic" voters (those who don't vote all the time) to get them to the polls with follow-up calls and mail.

Some specifics that we can do include:

1. Support voter registration at our meetings.
2. Canvas door-to-door in our neighborhoods
3. Volunteer for phone-banking
4. Work with other organizations who could become supporters, such as Democratic Party clubs, houses of worship, college campuses and unions.

After the training, we were fortunate to hear from California Assembly Member Mark Leno, who was shepherding AB 19, the Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act, through the Assembly. The bill would modify the California Family Code to specify that marriage will be between 2 persons (not "a man and a woman"). The bill was out of committee at that time and was expected to be voted on by the Assembly in early June.

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On Monday, May 16, 85 supporters of AB 19 - including representatives from PFLAG, HRC, NGLTF and COLAGE - fanned out to lobby the California Senate and Assembly members. Karen and Barry Mason, Maurie Davidson, my wife and I were part of an 8 person team that visited approximately 15 offices in the State Capitol. We thanked AB 19 supporters and we tried to persuade non-supporters. We told our personal stories - the most important thing we could do. One of our team told of his partner's family swooping down to take all possessions when his partner passed away. Another told of his fear that his partner from Guatemala could be summarily deported as he had recently lost his visa status. Maurie showed pictures of her beautiful grandson, the child of her daughter and her daughter's partner. The Mason's and the Krantz's told of how important equal rights were to our children.

Unfortunately, AB19 failed by 4 votes to pass the California Assembly in early June. Although, we had the majority of votes (37 to 36), 41 votes are required to pass a bill on to the Senate. A fallback plan is now in place to bring the bill to the California Senate in August by gutting an existing bill on their docket. Once again, Mark Leno is leading this charge for our children.

Through this lobbying experience, we learned a lot, felt like we made a difference and got **CHARGED UP** about next year's battle to defeat the anticipated ballot amendment to the California Constitution to define marriage as only between a man and a woman. To defeat the ballot amendment, Equality California (<http://www.eqca.org>) needs your support to build the largest volunteer force ever. Please go to their Web site - contribute your dollars, contribute your time, **GET INVOLVED**. The next 12 months will be the **MOST IMPORTANT** months for all GLBT friends and family in California to work together for equality. This is an **HISTORIC** time. If a state as large and important can be fair to its GLBT citizens in providing freedom to marry, it will send a shock wave that will be heard from coast to coast.

Let freedom ring (with wedding bells!).

Steve Krantz - Co-President PFLAG Los Angeles



Spain's Lawmakers Legalize Gay Marriages

June 30, 2005

MADRID, Spain - Spain became the third country to legalize gay marriage Thursday in a parliament vote that left gay activists blowing kisses to lawmakers and the powerful Catholic Church issuing veiled calls for defiance.

The new law increases the chances of happiness for "our neighbors, our work colleagues, our friends, our relatives," said Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero.

The 350-seat Congress of Deputies approved the measure to give homosexual couples the same rights as heterosexual ones, including the right to adopt children.

Outside the stately 19th-century chamber where other chapters of Spanish history have been written, activists jumped for joy and waved rainbow flags symbolizing the international gay rights movement.

"It is a historic day for the world's homosexuals. We have been fighting for many years," said Beatriz Gimeno, a longtime leader of the gay rights movement in Spain. "Now comes the hardest part, which is changing society's mentality."

The Roman Catholic Church, which held much sway over the government just a generation ago when Gen. Francisco Franco was in power, was left smarting from the vote.

"Marriage, understood as the union of a man and a woman, is no longer provided for in our laws," the Spanish Bishops Conference said after the vote, referring both to the gay marriage law and a bill passed Wednesday making it easier for Spaniards to divorce.

Gay couples can get married as soon as the law is published in the official government registry - as early as Friday or within two weeks at the latest, parliament's press office said.

The Netherlands and Belgium are the only other two countries that recognize gay marriage nationwide.

In debate before the vote, Zapatero said the dry language of the Spanish reform masks "an immense change in the lives of thousands of citizens. We are not legislating, ladies and gentlemen, for remote, unknown people. We are expanding opportunities for the happiness of our neighbors, our work colleagues, our friends, our relatives."

American Psychiatric Association, 1974:

"Whereas, homosexuality per se implies no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability or general social or vocational capabilities

therefore, be it resolved

that the American Psychiatric Association deplores all public and private discrimination against homosexuals in such areas as employment, housing, public accommodation, and licensing, and

declares that no burden of proof of such judgment, capacity, or reliability shall be placed upon homosexuals greater than that imposed on any other persons.

Further the [APA] supports and urges the enactment of civil rights legislation at the local, state and federal level that would offer homosexual citizens the same protection now guaranteed to others on the basis of race, creed, color, etc.

Further the [APA] supports and urges the repeal of all discriminatory legislation singling out homosexual acts by consenting adults in private."

American Psychiatric Association, May 2005:

Psychiatrists May Push for Gay Marriage OK

ATLANTA - Representatives of the nation's top psychiatric group approved a statement Sunday urging legal recognition of gay marriage. If approved by the association's directors in July, the measure would make the American Psychiatric Association the first major medical group to take such a stance.

The statement supports same-sex marriage "in the interest of maintaining and promoting mental health."

It follows a similar measure by the American Psychological Association last year, little more than three decades after that group removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.

The psychiatric association's statement, approved by voice vote on the first day of its weeklong annual meeting in Atlanta, cites the "positive influence of a stable, adult partnership on the health of all family members."

The resolution recognizes "that gay men and lesbians are full human beings who should be afforded the same human and civil rights," said Margery Sved, a Raleigh, N.C., psychiatrist and member of the assembly's committee on gay and lesbian issues.

The document clarifies that the association is addressing same-sex civil marriage, not religious marriages. It takes no position on any religion's views on marriage.

Massachusetts is the only state that allows same-sex marriage. Eighteen states have passed constitutional amendments outlawing same-sex marriage.

"QUOTE - UNQUOTE"

"Currently, it is possible for a man and a woman who have known each other for only a few hours to run up to Las Vegas and get married.

This couple would be afforded all the rights of marriage, no questions asked.

And yet, a same-sex couple who have shared a life, a home, a family for five, 10, 25 years or more are not afforded these rights.

How does that protect marriage?"

Patty Berg,
Assemblywoman (California)

Historic Church Resolution Embraces All Families

The delegates to the annual meeting of the **United Church of Christ** voted on July 4, 2005, to endorse full civil and religious marriage equality for same-sex couples.

Texas Governor Suggests Gays Leave Texas

Texas Republican Gov. Rick Perry insinuated at a press conference June 5 the state's lesbian, gay, and bisexual war veterans should leave the state if they are unhappy with a recent anti-gay marriage amendment introduced there.

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U.S. Judge Rejects Nebraska Gay-Marriage Ban

May 12, 2005

LINCOLN, Neb. - A federal judge Thursday struck down Nebraska's ban on gay marriage, saying the measure interferes not only with the rights of gay couples but also with those of foster parents, adopted children and people in a host of other living arrangements.

U.S. District Judge Joseph Bataillon said the ban "imposes significant burdens on both the expressive and intimate associational rights" of gays "and creates a significant barrier to the plaintiffs' right to petition or to participate in the political process."

California AG Urges Court on Gay Marriage

July 02, 2005

SAN FRANCISCO - California's attorney general on Friday urged the state Supreme Court to decide whether gay marriage is permitted under the state constitution.

Attorney General Bill Lockyer asked the justices to review a trial judge's decision in March that said state laws limiting marriage to heterosexual couples is unconstitutional; the ruling had been stayed pending appeal.

"Same-sex couples should be given a prompt determination as to whether they can marry, and should not have to put their lives and affairs on hold indefinitely while this matter works its way through several levels of court proceedings," Lockyer said.

"QUOTE - UNQUOTE"

"Florida allows even child molesters, wife beaters and murderers to apply to adopt -- provided they're not gay. Clearly, concern about children isn't the driving force behind the rules."

Deb Price, Writer