



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

August-September 2006

Newsletter 242

## 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 the 405 Freeway to the 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 7:00 pm; general meeting begins at 7:30 pm.

PFLAG starts each meeting with one or two rap groups where individuals can share their concerns, questions, and understanding about and with the gay person or persons in their families. Additionally, if there is sufficient interest, an advocacy group will meet simultaneously and discuss how to effectively influence change in GLBT civil rights. After these sessions, there is a short refreshment break followed by a speaker or panel of speakers whose topic includes subjects pertinent to the families, gays and lesbians.

## OUR NEXT SPEAKERS

August 15, 2006

**M**onica Olague, the director of DisneyLEAGUE, the lesbian and gay employee group at the Walt Disney Company, will be our guest. She will talk about her background, being out at a Fortune 500 company, and the work she does for DisneyLEAGUE.

September 19, 2006

**M**arc Adams, Founder and Executive Director, of Heartstrong (see [www.heartstrong.org](http://www.heartstrong.org)), will be our speaker. Heartstrong is a non sectarian organization established to provide outreach to GLBT persons adversely affected by the influence of all denominations of religious educational institutions.

# 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: 546-2721 (Dick)

## Area Code 562

Long Beach Chapter: 403 1234

## Area Code 626

Pasadena Chapter: 914 1241 (Denny)

450-9279 (meeting info)

## Area Code 661

Santa Clarita Chapter: 254 2177 (Peggy)

## Area Code 714

Orange County Chapter: 997 8047

## Area Code 805

Ventura Chapter: 647-0558

498 4964 (Rita or Steve)

## Area Code 818

San Fernando Valley: 788 8678 (Lynette)  
Lynette114@aol.com

SF Valley Chapter: 342 3769 (Amber)

Woodland Hills: 340 8945 (Irene)

## Area Code 909

Redlands Chapter: 335 2005 (Kathy)

Colton: 825 8368 (Norma)

## Area Code 949

South Orange County: 459 2834 (Karyl)

## OTHER HELPLINES / RESOURCES

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

Asian Pacific Islander:  
(818) 368 2008 (Ellen) HKameya@juno.com

Transgender: (818) 985-9319 (Chris)

PFLAG's Transgender Special Outreach Network  
(TSON):

Karen Gross (216) 691 HELP / KittenGr@aol.com  
www.transfamily.org

LA Gay & Lesbian Center:  
(323) 993 7400

Straight Spouses:  
(510) 525 0200 (Amity Pierce Buxton)

The TREVOR PROJECT  
24-hour nationwide suicide prevention line for  
GLBT and Questioning youth.  
(866) 4 U TREVOR / (866) 488 7386  
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.  
(562) 435 8184 www.nccjla.org

PFLAG National  
(202) 467 8180 www.pflag.org

## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

If there is anything you would like to see in the newsletter,  
please e-mail me at haichi87@sbcglobal.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)

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Support, education and advocacy for the GLBT community are what PFLAG is all about.

We do our *support* month-by-month at the rap sessions at our meetings and through our telephone support lines.

We do our *education* as we speak at schools, businesses, and public forums telling the truth about what it means to be GLBT in an adverse society.

We do our *advocacy* in various ways:

- **Marching in the West Hollywood Pride Parade.** We were there on June 11 with our signs for marriage equality and support for our GLBT loved ones.
- **Communicating to the media.** In early June, my wife and I went to the Independent Film Channel's studio in LA as part of an open invitation to community leaders to speak about same-sex marriage. Of course, I spoke about why marriage equality is so important. It will be broadcast on the Henry Rollins show on the cable IFC channel in July and August.
- **Lobbying our elected leaders to support equal rights.** On May 31, with George Unger, Rosemary Hendler, my wife and I representing PFLAG LA and Jane Drucker, Connie Kaplan, Rabbi Stephen Julius Stein, Rabbi Zachary Shapiro, and Cantor Ron Galperin representing Jews for Marriage Equality, we met with Senator Dianne Feinstein's staff in her LA office. On June 27, with George Unger, my wife and I representing PFLAG LA and Sylvia Weisenberg representing Jews for Marriage Equality, we met with Senator Barbara Boxer's staff in her LA office. In both cases, our goal was to convince the Senators to publicly support equal marriage rights in the US Senate. While we didn't change their public positions now, we told our truths and we have right and reason on our side. I remain optimistic that over time we will be successful.
- **Enlisting our membership in getting out the vote for equal rights in November.** This year's national and state elections are crucial to advance our cause for equal rights for our children. With supportive candidates in the State Senate, Assembly and Governor's office, we can look forward to a 2007 equal civil marriage rights bill just like last year's - but with a difference - it will become law. With supportive candidates in the US Congress, we will continue to defeat attempts to pass the heinous Federal Marriage Amendment. **Please go to the PFLAG National Web site at <http://www.pflag.org> to learn how you can get involved!**

Steve Krantz, PFLAG Los Angeles

## LEGISLATIVE CORNER

### **Senate rejects amendment on gay marriage**

*By LAURIE KELLMAN, AP Writer, June 7, 2006*

WASHINGTON - The Senate rejected a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage by a wide margin Wednesday, delivering a stinging defeat to President Bush and other Republicans who had hoped the issue would rally GOP voters for the November elections.

The senators' vote was 49-48 to limit debate and bring the amendment to a yes-or-no decision. That was 11 short of the 60 needed, killing the measure in the Senate for this year.

### **Oklahoma Anti-Gay Adoption Law Struck Down**

*By 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff, May 19, 2006*

(Oklahoma City, Oklahoma) A federal court Friday struck down an Oklahoma law described as being so extreme it had the potential to make children adopted by same-sex couples in other states legal orphans when the families are in Oklahoma.

Although single gays may become the parent of adoptive children, same-sex couples are barred from adopting and law allowed the state to invalidate adoptions where couples have been awarded joint parenting rights in states where co-adoption is legal.

In a 31 page ruling the court was highly critical of the state legislature for passing the law.

"The very fact that the adoptions have occurred is evidence that a court of law has found the adoptions to be in the best interests of the children," wrote U. S. District Judge Robin Cauthron.

"To now attempt to strip a child of one of his or her parents seems far removed from the statute's purpose and therefore from [the state's] asserted important government objective."

The Adoption Invalidation Law, hastily passed at the end of the 2004 Oklahoma legislative session, had said that Oklahoma "shall not recognize an adoption by more than one individual of the same sex from any other state or foreign jurisdiction."

### **NY High Court Nixes Gay Marriage**

*By 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff, July 6, 2006*

(Albany, New York) The Court of Appeals, the highest court in New York State, ruled Thursday that the state "Constitution does not compel the recognition of marriages between members of the same sex."

In a 4 - 2 decision, the court said that "Whether such marriages should be recognized is a question to be addressed by the Legislature."

### **Georgia Supreme Court Upholds Anti-Gay Marriage Amendment**

*By 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff, July 6, 2006*

(Atlanta, Georgia) The Georgia Supreme Court Thursday overturned a lower court ruling and reinstated the a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage.

In a unanimous ruling the court said that the ban did not violate the state's single-subject rule for ballot measures.

The amendment was passed in 2004 by 76 percent of voters. Lambda Legal filed suit alleging the question put to the electorate was itself unconstitutional.

In May, Superior Court Judge Constance Russell, of Fulton County, agreed and tossed out the amendment.

The state appealed to the high court.

Even if the court had upheld the lower court ruling it would not have meant same-sex couples could marry in Georgia. The state has a so-called Defense of Marriage Act, enacted in 1996.

#### *Note from the editor:*

*Although the U.S. Senate voted pro-family by rejecting the vicious anti-family federal marriage amendment, the House of Representatives will be voting on it this summer.*

*What is wrong with our "leaders" who purposely want to DENY children of same-sex parents equal rights and protections?! These kids deserve the same safety net as any other kids. They did not choose their parents. Still, our "leaders" want to punish them along with their same-sex parents.*

*If this country is in need of a constitutional amendment, we only would need one that would require our politicians in charge to have an annual mental check to evaluate if they do uphold the U.S. Constitution or if they hear voices telling them to start a hysterical witch hunt contrary to everything this country stands for...*

## SPREADING THE WORD IN THE COMMUNITY

- On Friday, June 23rd, George Unger met in Los Angeles with Linda Liang from the Beijing ZHIAIXING Information & Counseling Center, a private institute that works with the Gov't of China in the areas of health and AIDS prevention. They discussed the history of PFLAG LA and how our meetings here in Los Angeles are run, protocol for rap sessions as well as tips for setting up similar meetings in China. Linda was presented with several PFLAG booklets she hopes to have translated to Mandarin.
- Steve Krantz, Joan Krantz, George Unger, and Sylvia Weisenberg, representing both PFLAG Los Angeles and Jews for Marriage Equality, met with Vincent Jones on Senator Barbara Boxer's staff on June 27 to discuss the importance of equal marriage rights for GLBT citizens.

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## Great News!

Now you can read  
our **newsletter**  
**online** at

<http://www.pflagla.org/resources.html>

## CASTING CALL!

LOGO Network is casting a new show and is looking for people who might be interested in being a part of this show.

The show they are casting is called  
**RECONNECTION.**

They are looking to cast people who are local to the Los Angeles area.

It is about those people who have come out and, as a result, have been estranged from relatives and friends but would like to reconnect.

Those interested, please contact  
Harriet S. Mauro, Casting Director, at:  
[hmauro@grbtv.com](mailto:hmauro@grbtv.com) 818/728-4109

### **Exxon Rejects LGBT Inclusion**

By 365Gay.com Newscenter Staff, May 31, 2006

(Dallas, Texas) For the seventh consecutive year shareholders at ExxonMobil's annual meeting have voted down a proposal to include LGBT workers in the company's anti-discrimination policy.

ExxonMobil is the only major U.S. company to rescind a non-discrimination policy covering sexual orientation.

## Did you know?

In 1990, Paulette Goodman in her capacity as the president of PFLAG National writes to First Lady Barbara Bush asking for her support.

Mrs. Bush stated in her response:

"I firmly believe we cannot tolerate discrimination against any individuals or groups in our country."



# TRANSACTION

## Free support group!

If you are the **parent/guardian/caregiver of a transgender child**, please join this support group which is a project of FTM Alliance of Los Angeles and Childrens Hospital Los Angeles.

**Next meeting: Saturday, September 16, 1p.m. - 3p.m.**

Conference room, 4th floor  
Children's Hospital Los Angeles  
5000 Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90027

This free, confidential group is for parents and guardians and other caretakers (grandmothers, foster parents) whose children identify as transgender or gender-questioning, or who just express their gender in ways you have trouble with.

Come to share your story and find support among other adults whose children are exploring and struggling with the difficult issue of gender identity. **Please do not bring your children with you**; this is a group for parents, caretakers and family only.

Upcoming Meetings:  
Saturday, December 16

For more information, please call  
323-669-2390.

## Spain supports transsexuals

By RICHARD WATTS, SX News, Australia  
Thursday, 22 June 2006

The Spanish government has recognized that a person's gender is not determined by their genitals, in the latest move to liberalise the formerly conservative Catholic country. "Transsexuality, understood as a change in gender identity, is a social reality that requires a legislative response," Spain's Deputy Prime Minister Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega said.

The new bill, passed earlier this month, allows transsexuals to change their gender listing and name in Spanish civil registries without undergoing surgery. Medical certification stating that an individual suffers from gender dysphoria is one of the conditions required before such changes can be made. Spain is home to 7,000 to 9,000 transsexuals. The European nation's state-funded health care system is run by regional governments, two of which pay for gender realignment operations.

## Korea's top court recognizes transgendered sex

The Associated Press, June 22, 2006

SEOUL - South Korea's Supreme Court ruled Thursday that people who have sex change operations should be legally recognized by their new gender -- the first such ruling by the country's top court.

The Supreme Court reversed earlier lower court decisions and ruled in favor of a 51-year-old transgender plaintiff seeking to legally change his gender to male. The identity of the plaintiff, who underwent a sex-change operation at age 41, was not revealed due to privacy concerns.

"If it is obvious that a person has acquired the physical characteristics of the opposite sex, not the sex at birth, through a sex change operation ... it is proper to recognize (his or her) changed sex," the court said in the ruling, endorsed by eight of the ten justices.

## Doc tells patients: Soon I'll be a she

By Dave Wedge, Boston Herald, June 16, 2006

A beloved Somerville family doctor has dropped a bombshell on his patients by revealing he is transsexual and will begin seeing patients as a woman.

"After almost 18 years of practicing medicine in Davis Square, I am looking forward to many more years as your family physician. There will be only one major change that will occur in July - I will begin practicing medicine as a woman," Dr. Roy Berkowitz-Shelton wrote in a letter to patients.

Berkowitz-Shelton, the married father of two, said in the letter that he will return from a hiatus "to live my life as I believe it was meant to be lived" and will change his name to Deborah Bershel.

## Fraternity opens its arms to transgender students

Sigma Phi Beta made a bold move May 14, when the fraternity's national board of directors voted to allow transgender students to join its ranks.

The new policy allows any individual who identifies as male—regardless of the legal recognition of their gender—to seek membership in Sigma Phi Beta. The policy also allows members to maintain their membership if at a later date they decide to change their gender to female. (AP)

## Columbia University & Dartmouth College add "Gender Identity"

Columbia University added "gender identity and expression" to its Equal Employment Opportunity and non-discrimination statements in May, following Harvard University in April and Princeton University. Dartmouth College followed suit on Monday, June 12, leaving Yale University as the last Ivy League school which does not protect its transgender students, faculty and staff.

[[www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)]

**Gays a threat to institution of marriage? Get real!**

By Stephanie Salter, June 12, 2006

TERRE HAUTE, Ind.—I'm rarely lifted by some occurrence under the Capitol dome, but 48 members of the Senate provided an exception last week: They spared us the protracted and dangerous distraction of a federal battle over gay marriage.

That even five minutes was spent on this issue - let alone all the words poured out about the need for a constitutional amendment to "protect" marriage - illustrates how far our nation is from getting its priorities in order and its act together.

You know, the act we need to perfect so we can seriously deal on the global stage with real political, economic, security and environmental threats to our well-being?

Now, before some of you rev up the e-mail and phone trees - I have a few things to say that might save you the trouble.

No. 1: I have no "gay agenda." I am a lifelong heterosexual, born and raised in Indiana, who developed my advocacy for gay rights here in the heartland. The first gay person I knew I met in high school.

During my four years at Purdue - a stand-up, state-supported university chock-full of white-bread kids like me - I got to know many more gay women and men. I learned at an early age that homosexuals are people who are much more like heterosexuals than they aren't.

We laughed at the same jokes, danced to the same music, struggled similarly through algebra or English lit, worried equally about our post-graduation employability and made sure we got home for our parents' birthdays. Sometimes, late at night, as we shared a beer or a walk across campus, we confided the same personal dream: to love and be loved.

No. 2: As Vice President Dick Cheney can and will tell you, truly knowing and loving a gay man or lesbian makes you look at discrimination against homosexuals in a whole different way.

Denying two adults the legal, social and economic benefits that come with a state-sanctioned union is flat-out, unequivocal discrimination. Deliberately meting out injustice - with a constitutional amendment, no less - won't protect the institution of marriage. But it will eat away at the democratic, egalitarian values that made this country different from any other on Earth.

The preamble to the Declaration of Independence says Americans have certain inalienable rights - among them life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness - that are endowed by our Creator. Which brings me to my next point.

No. 3: In addition to being straight, I am a practicing Christian. If somebody managed to prove tomorrow that God does not exist, I would go on using Jesus as my guide.

So, how important was the issue of homosexuality to Jesus? How many times did he speak about it, make certain his disciples were clear on the subject, construct a parable for the masses so they could grasp the significance of it in their lives?

Zero. None. Never.

Of all the statements attributed to Jesus, not one includes same-gender sleeping arrangements. If homosexuality is such a threat to humankind's communion with God, wouldn't you think his son might at least have mentioned it?

What is most important to God is no mystery. Over and over Christ said to take care of the poor, to visit the sick and imprisoned. He told us to be quiet about our charity, not advertise it, and to ignore class and ethnic barriers and be good Samaritans to all in need.

Lest we be so thick-headedly human and forget, in Matthew, Mark and Luke he drew a line under and around his top priorities: "This is my first commandment: Love God with all your heart and soul and mind. And love your neighbor as yourself."

In John, he made it sublimely simple: "This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you." Period. No exceptions for gays.

No. 4: In the three decades I lived in San Francisco, I got to know lots more gay men and lesbians. They were my neighbors, my co-workers, my fellow parishioners, my elected leaders, my dear friends.

Some of the gay couples I know have been together for most of their adult lives. Many have children upon whom they dote, over whom they worry and for whom they provide, plan and dream.

Like millions of Americans, these committed gays earn a living, pay their taxes, borrow money to fix up their homes, take medicine for their hypertension, watch "Survivor," cash in air miles for vacations, volunteer their spare time, walk their dogs and, once in awhile, surprise their longtime partner with a romantic anniversary card after all the years.

What exactly in that behavior is dangerous to marriage? The heterosexual U.S. divorce-marriage ratio is 1-to-2. When is the last time you heard anybody cite "gay Americans" as the reason their marriage busted up?

The only thing that will protect the institution of marriage is more good marriages. If we really wanted to reinforce and defend marriage, we as a society would go after the real enemies of healthy, responsible, respectful relationships. And we would say, "Hooray!" to any couple willing to commit themselves to a life together.

Then maybe we could get on as a people - and a government - with combating bona fide abominations.

You know, abominations such as ignorance and fear? Prejudice and poverty? Waste, greed, hunger, war and - the ultimate abomination, according to Jesus - hatred?

*[Reprinted with friendly permission of the author. Stephanie Salter writes for The Tribune Star in Terre Haute, Ind. She can be reached at (812) 231-4229 or [stephanie.salter@tribstar.com](mailto:stephanie.salter@tribstar.com)]*