



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>

December-January 2007

Newsletter 244

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.



PFLAG Los Angeles will meet on the
3rd WEDNESDAY
of each month!

Our meetings are always held on the **3rd Wednesday** 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 - 3rd floor. There is also easy access from the north driveway. Doors open at 7:00 pm; general meeting begins at 7:30 pm.

OUR NEXT SPEAKERS

WEDNESDAY, December 20, 2006

Please join us for a very special evening with Norma Bowles, Artistic Director of *Fringe Benefits*, and a recipient of PFLAG/LA's 2003 "Oscar Wilde Award."

Fringe Benefits is a groundbreaking educational theatre company whose workshops and productions have earned the commendations of youth, educators, parents and community leaders. Its productions, workshops, institutes, residencies and books function as "theatrical inoculations against bigotry." All of their work promotes the idea that every man, woman and child deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. <http://www.cootieshots.org/index.html>

WEDNESDAY, January 17, 2007

To be announced; check with our website www.pflagla.org for details.

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: January 1
(February/March issue)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2007 could be an amazing year for the LGBT community of California. It could be the year of equal rights. We could be the state that says "ENOUGH" to the rolling tide of bigotry against our children that has already engulfed 19 states and likely several more on November 7 that passed a Constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage.

What gives me hope in this struggle? Well, on October 27, in the Wall Street Journal (of all publications), I read an op ed piece entitled "The Hitch." It reflected on our victory in the New Jersey Supreme Court which validated the worth of same-sex relationships. It cited statistics from the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark and Sweden that put the lie towards those who claim that same-sex marriage would damage opposite-sex marriage. "A decade after Denmark, Norway and Sweden passed their respective partnership laws, heterosexual marriage rates had risen 10.7% in Denmark; 12.7% in Norway; and a whopping 28.8% in Sweden. Divorce rates among heterosexual couples, on the other hand, have fallen." The authors went on to address the "slippery slope" argument - "that same-sex marriage would start a dangerous movement toward legal recognition of socially unacceptable relationships." In 17 years in Scandinavia, there are no calls for recognizing polygamy, incestual marriage or marriage to animals. "Danes ... realize that same-sex marriages serve essentially the same goal as opposite-sex marriages: lifetime commitment to your better half, the person who completes you."

Even more encouraging is that the long term trends are favorable after listening to a recent report on National Public Radio. I learned that our youth thinks globally, accepts diversity and are more tolerant than their parents' generation. This makes me optimistic as we approach another holiday season that our civil rights struggle may be reaching a tipping point in our favor.

For most of us at the holidays, it's a time to get together with family and friends and celebrate. For gay, lesbian and transgender youth who are still in the closet, it's a time of anxiety and reflection - "Is this the time to tell Mom and Dad?" "If I do, will this be my last Christmas (or Chanukah, or Kwanzaa) at home?" Tomorrow night, Joan and I go to the MCC Church in West Hollywood to speak to "The Tribe" - the gay youth group that assembles there for support and camaraderie. Our message will be, of course, the message of PFLAG's acceptance, love and support.

Please do your part in spreading this message to your friends, neighbors, colleagues and relatives to achieve equal civil rights for our children.

I wish all of you a happy and healthy holiday season.

Steve Krantz, PFLAG Los Angeles

Please support PFLAG!

We are enclosing an envelope for your TAX-DEDUCTIBLE annual dues and/or a year-end TAX-DEDUCTIBLE donation to PFLAG.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated. We are all in this struggle together, and every little bit you give goes a long way.

**Thanking you in advance!
Your PFLAG LA Board**

LEGISLATIVE CORNER

California court strikes down gay marriage

On October 5, 2006, a state appeals court upheld California's ban on same-sex marriage.

In reversing the March 2005 ruling of a San Francisco trial judge, the 1st District Court of Appeal in San Francisco ruled by 2-1 that it is up to the Legislature, not the courts, to change the traditional definition of marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

"We conclude California's historical definition of marriage does not deprive individuals of a vested fundamental right or discriminate against a suspect class," the court said. "The time may come when California chooses to expand the definition of marriage to encompass same-sex unions. That change must come from democratic processes, however, not by judicial fiat."

In March 2005, San Francisco Superior Court Judge Richard Kramer ruled that the state's existing marriage laws violated the civil rights of gays and lesbians by denying them "the basic human right to marry a person of one's choice" and by discriminating on the basis of gender and sexual orientation.

Following Kramer's decision, the Legislature last year became the first lawmaking body in the nation to legalize gay marriage. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed the bill, saying it was up to voters or the courts, not lawmakers, to settle the contentious issue.

The bill's sponsor, Assemblyman Mark Leno, plans to reintroduce the measure to allow gay marriage at the end of the year.

[Note from the editor: the "traditional" and "historical" definition of marriage as one between a man and a woman exists in California since 1977 when the marriage laws were changed to reflect that definition. In other words, this "traditional" and "historical" definition is barely 30 years old!]

Judge Rules Rhode Island Same-Sex Couples can Marry in Mass.

September 29, 2006

Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) hailed as another step toward marriage equality today's decision by a Massachusetts trial court allowing same-sex couples from Rhode Island to marry in Massachusetts. The judge found no explicit prohibitions in Rhode Island law that would prevent such marriages.

"At last the fence of discrimination has been removed at the border of Massachusetts and Rhode Island," said Michele Granda, the GLAD attorney who represented plaintiffs Wendy Becker and Mary Norton of Providence. "Loving, committed, Rhode Island couples can now affirm their relationships in the most public and respected way our society knows."

The decision from Judge Thomas Connelly came after the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decided in March of this year that only couples from states with no "express prohibition" against marriage in their home state could marry here.

Wendy Becker and Mary Norton, parents of two children, have been together for 19 years. When marriage became available to same-sex couples in Massachusetts in May 2004, they traveled to Attleboro, Massachusetts and filed a notice of intention to marry. Before they could actually marry, however, the Romney administration invoked an antiquated 1913 law and ordered town clerks to stop issuing marriage licenses to couples from other states.

[Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders is New England's leading legal rights organization dedicated to ending discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and HIV status. GLAD is active in all six New England states. www.glad.org]

Win in New Jersey: Court Calls Denial of Marriage Rights and Responsibilities Unconstitutional

October 25, 2006

Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (www.glad.org) said today's New Jersey Supreme Court ruling opens the door to ending marriage discrimination against same-sex couples in the state. All seven of the Court's justices found a constitutional violation in denying same-sex couples the rights and responsibilities of marriage. Four of the justices said that the legislature must take the next step in deciding how best to end the discrimination.

The court gave the legislature six months to either amend the state's marriage statutes to include gay people, or write a new law in which same-sex couples "would enjoy the rights of civil marriage."

SPREADING THE WORD IN THE COMMUNITY

- Steve Krantz represented PFLAG Los Angeles at an event for the Matthew Shepard Foundation. (www.matthewshepard.org)

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

Just send an e-mail to sjcgeo@rocketmail.com, list name and address under which you currently receive our newsletter by snail mail so that we can delete that address from our mailing list, and we'll make sure that you'll receive the next newsletter by e-mail.

Did you know?

...that Kellogg's corn flakes and the Graham cracker were both designed to inhibit lust and masturbation?!

Great News!

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

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

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

PFLAG would like to acknowledge the following local businesses for their generous donations, outstanding community outreach and commitment to diversity, which enabled us to provide food for our Southern California Regional Conference on September 16, 2006.

PFLAG encourages its members, families and friends to support these businesses.

- **Trader Joe's** - 8611 Santa Monica Blvd. West Hollywood 90069 / 310-657-0152
- **Pizza Hut** - 8613 Santa Monica Blvd. West Hollywood 90069 / 310-289-6555
- **Subway** - 8617 Santa Monica Blvd. West Hollywood 90069 / 310-659-4225
- **Pavilions Market** - 8969 Santa Monica Blvd. West Hollywood 90069 / 310-273-0977
- **Whole Foods** - 7871 Santa Monica Blvd. West Hollywood 90046 / 323-848-4200
- **Starbucks** - 8595 Santa Monica Blvd. West Hollywood 90069 / 310-659-1856
- **Koo Koo Roo** - 8250 Santa Monica Blvd. West Hollywood 90069 / 310-657-3300
- **Ralphs Market** - 7257 Sunset Blvd. West Hollywood 90046 / 323-512-8382
- **Urth Café** - 8565 Melrose Ave. West Hollywood 90069 / 310-659-0628
- **Wolfgang Puck Catering** - 6801 Hollywood Blvd. Hollywood 90028 / 323-491-1300

T r a n s A c t i o n

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, December 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.

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

The Transgender Youth Leadership Project

invites all

transgender youth ages 13-24

to participate in weekly educational workshops!

You will be \$\$\$ compensated \$\$\$ for your time.

When: Every Wednesday
Time: 6:00pm - 7:30pm
Location: 5000 Sunset Blvd,
4th floor conference room

For more information please contact
Alexis Rivera at 323-660-2450 ext. 5983
or e-mail at arivera@chla.usc.edu

Gwen Araujo Justice for Victims Act Becomes Law!

Sep. 28, 2006

San Francisco, CA – The nation's first bill to address use of panic strategies, the Gwen Araujo Justice for Victims Act (AB 1160), was signed into law today by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Authored by Assemblywoman Sally Lieber and sponsored by Equality California, the bill puts California firmly on record as opposing a defendant's use of societal bias against their victim in order to decrease their own culpability for a crime.

"I'm overjoyed that the Governor saw fit to recognize that our state is one in which every person, including my daughter and other transgender people, must be valued," said Sylvia Guerrero, mother of Gwen Araujo. "My family and friends received a life sentence when Gwen was murdered. This victory means that our loss is making a difference, though, because we're helping to prevent any other family from going through the same pain and misery."

Gwen Araujo, the bill's namesake, was a 17 year old Newark, CA transgender teen who was murdered by four men in 2002. Three of the men utilized panic strategies when on trial for her murder in 2004. A 2005 Fresno County case against the killer of another transgender person, Joel Robles, ended in an alarming 4 year plea bargain. Newspaper reports quoted an Assistant District Attorney as attributing the light sentence, in part, to threatened use of panic strategies.

PFLAG's Top 10 Tips for Parents of Children Expressing Gender Variance:

1. Continue providing your child with unconditional love.
2. Your child has every good chance of growing up to be an exceptional and successful person.
3. Your child does not experience their gender as others may see them.
4. If you feel overwhelmed, get support. You are not alone!
5. It's not important right now where your child is going to "end up" related to gender.
6. Don't think GAY.
7. This isn't about anything you've done "wrong."
8. This is significant and your child takes it very seriously.
9. Place your child's needs above your concerns about what others will think.
10. Research indicates that gender identity

Sodom, Sodomy, Sodomite, Sodomize

By: Dr. Rembert Truluck

<http://www.whosoever.org/v4i1/sodomy.html>

Whosoever - An Online Magazine For Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Christians

Sodomy, sodomite, and sodomize are words that never appear anywhere in the Bible.

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS ARE WRONG.

In the original text of the Bible, a sodomite is simply someone who lived in Sodom, including Lot and his family. Where the King James Version uses the term "sodomite" in Deuteronomy 23:17; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7, there is no mention of Sodom or the word "sodomite" in the original text. The "sodomite" hoax is an infected blister on the Bible. Words that mislead and offend and destroy need to be cut out so that healing can happen.

The New Revised Standard Version translation (1989) used "sodomites" in 1 Corinthians 6:9 for "arsenokoitai" where the 1971 "second edition" used "sexual perverts". Many famous Greek scholars challenged the use of "sodomites" in 1 Corinthians 6:9, but the New RSV still appears in plain texts and in study Bibles (such as The New Oxford Annotated Bible) with the incorrect "sodomites" glaring painfully and inaccurately from the page.

Giving a homophobic twist to "Sodom" to create the verb "sodomize" took great care and deliberation. The abusive anti-gay slang language that modern scholarship has imported into Bible translations is "the abomination that makes desolate" for millions of closeted homosexual Christians who love God and follow Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life.

Homophobia is based on fear, which is based on ignorance. Ignorance about sexual orientation is based on distortions and perversions of biblical words and phrases. John the Baptist said concerning abusive oppressive religion: "The axe is already laid at the root of the trees" (Matthew 3:10). Jesus said the same things in Matthew 7:15-23, where he cried out: "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves." Then Jesus called abusive religious leaders "rotten trees bearing bad fruit." A lot of rotten religious timber has to fall before our community will be free from the perverted use of the Bible and religion against us.

From the editor:

Another year comes to an end. It's a time of celebration and it's a time for families to come together. While you are (hopefully) enjoying Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Solstice, or another special event with your loved ones, I'd like to remind you of the plight of same-sex binational couples who might not be so lucky to spend ANY day together here in the United States.

"There are no immigration benefits available to [gays] based on their relationship.

With that said, there's certainly nothing that says a U.S. citizen cannot move to another country."

--Chris Bentley spokesman for the Department of Homeland Security's
Citizen and Immigration Services, LA Weekly, January 9, 2004

Nothing has changed since January 2004. No, not true. Many more lesbian/gay U.S. citizens have been forced to leave this country in order to stay together with their same-sex loved ones. Others broke up because they couldn't deal with the intense stress, hopelessness, and financial burden of keeping a binational relationship alive.

Please keep in mind that, no matter HOW many laws we pass in regard to domestic partner benefits, none of those help same-sex binational couples because **they are already denied the simple right to live together here in the U.S.**

These holidays I'll be thinking again of Scott, a 61-year-old U.S. citizen who had to move to China (!!!) in order to be with his partner. He moved eleven years ago, leaving his two adult sons behind. Isn't it shameful for this country that stands for freedom, liberation, and democracy to force its own citizens to choose between country and life partner?

Please take a look at the heart-wrenching stories – **Family, Unvalued** - collected and compiled by the Human Rights Watch in collaboration with Immigration Equality. You can read it online or download the publication for free as a pdf at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/us0506/index.htm>

Wishing all of you a happy New Year!