



Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

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

SPRING 2008

Newsletter 251

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 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.

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.

...Special Guest...You **DON'T** want to miss **THIS** one!...Special Guest...

February 20, 2008 (Wednesday)

*"Where Few Have Gone Before:
Coming Out in Hollywood and the Asian American Community"*

We are happy to announce that

G E O R G E T A K E I

(Lt. Sulu in the original Star Trek series)

will be our special guest speaker!



(read more on page 5)

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: 798 3794 (Brian)
linus_blanket_2001@yahoo.com

Area Code 661

Santa Clarita Chapter: 254 2177 (Dave)

Area Code 714

Orange County Chapter: 997 8047

Area Code 805

Ventura Chapter: www.pflagventura.org
647 0588
Thousand Oaks 498 4964 (Rita & Steve)
Ventura / Ojai: 646 5318 (Tom & Nanette)

Area Code 818

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

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

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) 595 1005 (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

NEW!!! Hablamos español!

Leonor 818 243 5306 (home)
818 378 6406 (cell)

Julio 310 500 8645
espanol@pflagpasadena.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

HELP!

As January draws to a close, leaders are busy giving their "state of" speeches. Governor Schwarzenegger has already give his State of California address, and President Bush has delivered his last State of the Union message. The Board of PFLAG-LA thought this would be a good time for the "state of the chapter report." Unfortunately, the chapter is in trouble. While financial support remains steady, attendance at monthly meetings has dropped dramatically. In November, December, and January attendance ranged between five and seven people. Since October, we have had only one or two people seeking support at each meeting.

This would be good news, if we thought that coming out was a positive experience for all LGBTQ people and their families. We know that's not true. While the population at large seems more accepting of gays and lesbians, each individual faces his or her own challenges. This is especially true for people in ethnic groups with strong traditional cultures, and for those belonging to more conservative religious communities. Our transgender members and friends still face tremendous prejudice.

Clearly, our message isn't reaching the people who need us. Karen Mason and I have begun to meet with people who can spread the word: Ian Stulberg of the Gay and Lesbian Center, Ronni Sanlo, Director of UCLA's Gay and Lesbian Center, and Vincent E. Vigil the Director of USC's LGBT Resource Center. We have created brochures explaining our services to "first responders": therapists, school counselors, teachers, and principals, who may be the first to learn of a young person's struggles with sexual orientation. These pamphlets have gone out to schools in an LAUSD sanctioned mailing.

We are also in the process of updating our Web site. We are developing new content, and, thanks to York Knowlton and Stuart Huggins, a beautiful new design--clean, easy to use, and welcoming. It's still in the construction and testing phase, but we're hoping to have it up and running in a few months.

We are reaching out, but we can't do it alone. We need YOU. What can you do? Talk about PFLAG-LA in your circle of friends, family, church, and neighborhood. Come to our monthly meetings—and bring a friend. Pick up some of our great newsletters and brochures and pass them out to people you know, especially GLBT persons, teachers, counselors, pastors and others who deal with people in crisis. You, our members, are our best spokespersons and advocates.

You can also come to a board meeting to offer your suggestions and help, or email me or a board member with ideas and support. You can reach us through the PFLAG-LA Web site, or email me at msawchuk-pflag@earthlink.net.

I walked into my first PFLAG-LA meeting in great distress—confused, sad, and struggling to deal with my sons' newly revealed gay identity. The support I received healed me, and transformed me. Let us make sure that this invaluable experience is available for other mothers and fathers, their children, relatives and friends.

Mariette Sawchuk

**When you don't need PFLAG any more
that is when PFLAG needs YOU!**

LEGISLATIVE CORNER

California High Court to Hear Oral Arguments in Historic Marriage Case on March 4

Same-sex Couples Ask California Supreme Court to Strike Down Marriage Ban

SAN FRANCISCO – The California Supreme Court announced that it will hear oral arguments on March 4 in the marriage cases challenging the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage.

Fifteen same-sex couples, Equality California, and Our Family Coalition will be represented at oral arguments by Shannon Price Minter, Legal Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, which is serving as co-counsel with Lambda Legal, the American Civil Liberties Union, Heller Ehrman LLP and the Law Office of David C. Codell.

The marriage cases were filed in March, 2004. San Francisco Superior Court Judge Richard A. Kramer ruled that the exclusion of same-sex couples from marriage violates the California Constitution. In a 2-1 vote, the California Court of Appeal reversed Judge Kramer's ruling. Shortly after the Court of Appeal's decision, the California Supreme Court granted review of the cases in order to consider the constitutional questions itself.

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger highlighted that the California Supreme Court should decide the constitutional questions posed by the marriage statutes when he vetoed two measures passed by the California Legislature in 2005 and 2007 that would have permitted same-sex couples to marry.

2008 marks the 60th anniversary of the California Supreme Court's historic 1948 ruling that found it unconstitutional for the state to restrict access to marriage based on the race of the spouses. That ruling was the first of its kind in the nation's history, and is now the law of the land across the country. The California NAACP, NAACP Legal Defense & Education Fund, Inc., and Howard Law School Civil Rights Clinic have urged the court to apply the reasoning from its 1948 decision to the present marriage cases.



Conservative Groups Attack Families Under The Guise Of "Family Values"

Signature Gathering Has Begun to Place Discriminatory Marriage Measure on California Ballot!

After failing multiple times to qualify an anti-marriage equality measure for the ballot in California, conservative organizations are now utilizing professional paid signature gatherers in another attempt to put this discriminatory constitutional amendment on the November 2008 ballot according to *Equality for All*, the statewide campaign to defeat such measures. In 2006, California became the first state where an effort to qualify such a discriminatory amendment failed.

Equality for All has confirmed that an out-of-state organization is backing this effort to permanently deny committed California couples the right to marry. "People should not be treated unfairly under the laws of our state," said Kate Kendell, Executive Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights and a member of the *Equality for All* executive committee. "This amendment to our state's constitution would enshrine discrimination for generations of Californians."

More information about the *Equality for All* campaign is available at <http://www.equalityforall.com/>

Special Guest Speaker **GEORGE TAKEI**

Mr. Takei is best known for his role as Lt. Sulu in the original Star Trek series, and has a recurring role on the television hit Heroes, playing Kaito Nakamura, father of main character Hiro Nakamura. He has played numerous roles in television, movies, and on stage in his acting career spanning five decades.

A member of the Human Rights Campaign, the largest national lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender political organization, George is a spokesman for HRC's Coming Out Project. In April 2006, he embarked on a nationwide speaking tour called "Equality Trek" in which he talked about the issues he faced as a gay Japanese American. Star Trek's Leonard Nimoy presented George with HRC's Equality Award at its San Francisco gala dinner in July 2007.

A community activist, George serves as chair of the council of governors of East West Players, the nation's foremost Asian Pacific American theater. He is chairman emeritus of the board of trustees of the Japanese American National Museum and a past member of the advisory committee of the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program.

J O I N U S F O R T H I S S P E C I A L E V E N T !

[Note from the editor: Although this event happened last fall, it is never too late to report on our PFLAG moms fighting for equality and justice. Thank you so much, Maurie, for sharing with us!]

A Straight Line on GLBT Equality

By Maurie Davidson, MSW, BCD and PFLAG Mom

On Thursday, October 25, 2007, The attendees of the biannual conference of Parents, Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) visited Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, to lobby for an inclusive Employment Non-discrimination Act (ENDA). It was our goal to encourage the passage of this piece of legislation to include all of our children. In an effort to pass the intent of this bill, there were some members of Congress and another GLBT advocacy group who were willing to offer a compromise by excluding the "T" (or Transgender) portion of this bill to insure passage in the House. It was the position of those of us in PFLAG that none of our children be left out, and that no bill go forward with an exclusion.

Ultimately, the House did pass the bill excluding our Transgender children. Considering today's political climate, it is most likely that this bill, with or without the "T" exclusion, will receive a veto. It was PFLAG's hope that Congress would wait until a more favorable future time to pass a bill that would truly be representative of the entire GLBT community.

As this is a time of change, we in PFLAG hope to encourage more straight allies, the Friends in PFLAG, to have a strong and powerful voice. With this in mind PFLAG has launched a program, Straight for Equality, to strengthen the voices of our Friends. In a time where the civil rights of GLBT families are at stake, we are taking a stand to speak out in support of Civil Marriage for all. Please go to the PFLAG.org website, or to the Straightforequality.org site to become involved in changing the course of history. PFLAG has printed materials, including A Guide To Being a Straight Ally, which will be a helpful training resource manual for our work places, religious organizations, schools and community groups.

Here in California, The Let Marriage Ring campaign is already underway with television spots sponsored by Equality California (EQCA.org). It is time to support these efforts with our voices, volunteer time and financial resources. No family needs to feel the pinch of second class citizenship with marriage laws that exclude GLBT couples and their children.

T r a n s A c t i o n

[Note from the editor: This is to show you how other countries are dealing with transsexuality. This is an excerpt taken from www.bloomberg.com]

Iran Sex Changes Get Mullahs' Money as Regime Persecutes Gays

By Ladane Nasser

Nasser didn't think much of Iran's Islamic regime -- until it paid for him to become a woman.

Growing up in the city of Mashhad, Nasser knew he was different from the other boys, sneaking around in his aunt's skirts and experimenting with makeup. At age 14, he told his parents he wanted to have a sex change.

"I realized that I had a problem and that I needed to solve it through an operation," Nasser, now 18, says at a downtown Tehran clinic two days after he became a she called Hasti. "Even if lots of negative things are said about the regime, they also do things that are good."

In Iran, where men and women are segregated, and homosexuality is punishable by death, the government plans to spend 6 billion rials (\$647,000) this year to help pay for sex-change operations. The policies aren't as contradictory as they seem, because in traditional societies there is more pressure to conform to standard gender roles, says Mahdis Kamkar, a Tehran psychologist who works with transsexuals.

"In closed cultures, a transsexual will be encouraged to clarify things, starting from his or her appearance," Kamkar says.

Hasti grew up in a religious family, shocking her parents by letting her curly hair grow, wearing tight pants and makeup.

At 14, she was expelled from an all-boys school in Mashhad, a city of 2 million in northeastern Iran, because her looks and behavior were deemed "immoral."

An article in a local magazine prompted Hasti to learn more about transsexuals. Then, like many Iranians seeking answers about issues not discussed at home, she turned to the Internet.

"Before that I thought I'm a homosexual, but fortunately I got more information and realized it wasn't the case," she says.

Hasti's transformation took four years. She worked at her uncle's clothing shop and then a candle factory to save money for the operation. At 15, she began 14 months of medical examinations and psychoanalysis to make sure she qualified for a sex change.

In May 2007, a panel of doctors gave Hasti permission for the surgery.

"It was very difficult," says Mahsoumeh, Hasti's mother, who like her new daughter spoke on condition their family name not be disclosed. "I would go pray all night: 'God, please don't let this happen, let him remain a boy.'"

Hasti, though, had made up her mind.

She applied to Iran's State Welfare Organization for financial assistance, and in November the agency agreed to pay 35 million rials toward the surgery.

Hasti's surgery, which involved removing the male genitals and creating a vagina from a section of intestine, lasted nine hours. Her doctor, Bahram Mir Jalali, is one of about 10 sex-change surgeons in Iran. He says he has performed more than 460 operations during the past 12 years.

Iran authorized such operations in 1984 under a decree issued by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The government considers transsexuals to be people who are "trapped" in a body of the wrong sex, says Mohammad Mehdi Kariminia, a cleric who wrote a thesis on the rights and duties of transsexuals.

"It's extremely enlightened thinking, and it's most welcome," says Bernard Reed, who founded the Gender Identity Research and Education Society in Surrey, England, which promotes transgender issues in the U.K. "Would you see President Bush or Tony Blair making such a statement?"

Huckabee Says Bestiality, Homosexuality Go Together

Presidential candidate Mike Huckabee said in an interview Jan. 17 with the website Beliefnet.com that the U.S. Constitution should be amended, but the Bible "was not created to be amended and altered."

He was also asked if he wanted to bring the Constitution into conformity with the Bible. "I don't think that's a radical view to say we're going to affirm marriage," he said. "I think the radical view is to say that we're going to change the definition of marriage so that it can mean two men, two women, a man and three women, a man and a child, a man and animal."

[Source: Frontiers Magazine]

"QUOTE - UNQUOTE"

"If America doesn't WAKE UP, it will soon become a big, dumb second-tier nation that values miracles over math and superstition over science. Thanks to the Republicans' embrace of anti-intellectualism and demagogic fundamentalism, we are already halfway there."

Wayne Besen, Author

Receive our newsletter electronically
and help us reduce costs

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.

We'd like to ask for your
email address
to ensure that if we ever have an
event on short notice
YOU WILL hear about it.

Please email your email address to
info@pflagla.org or to karehmason@yahoo.com.

THANK YOU!

(from www.gayintstraightamerica.com)

Biblical Marriage: A Bad Source For Debate? You decide. **By Vaughn Roste**

We've heard a lot about "biblical marriage" lately, largely as a defensive reaction against same-sex marriage. I read one letter to the editor written by a Lutheran pastor that claimed, "the Bible clearly teaches that marriage is the God-ordained covenantal union of one man to one woman." So I picked up my Bible, looked up over 800 references and was able to distill those 825 verse references into 12 general principles:

12 Biblical Principles of Marriage

FIRST

Marriage consists of one man and one or more women.

SECOND

Nothing prevents a man from taking on concubines in addition to the wife or wives he may already have.

THIRD

A man might choose any woman he wants for his wife, provided only that she is not already another man's wife or his [half-]sister, nor the mother or the sister of a woman who is already his wife.

The concept of a woman giving her consent to being married is foreign to the Biblical mindset.

FORTH

If a woman cannot be proven to be a virgin at the time of marriage, she shall be stoned.

FIFTH

A rapist must marry his victim - unless she was already a fiancée, in which case he should be put to death if he raped her in the country, but both of them killed if he raped her in town.

SIXTH

If a man dies childless, his brother must marry the widow.

SEVENTH

Women marry the man of their father's choosing.

EIGHTH

Women are the property of their father until married and their husband after that.

NINTH

The value of a woman might be approximately seven years' work.

TENTH

Inter-faith marriages are prohibited.

ELEVENTH

Divorce is forbidden.

TWELFTH

Better to not get married at all - although marriage is not a sin.