

*PFLAG, True Colors & the Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective
Scholarship Presentations & Reception*

June 17, 2009, 7:00 p.m. (prior to our regular 7:30 meeting)

All are welcome to stay for our monthly meeting.

Refreshments will be served.



The Voice of PFLAG Hartford

Caring

Volume 18, No. 3

May/June 2009

IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

THANK YOU to all of our volunteers at the True Colors Conference on March 13 & 14. Special thanks to Larry Pysh for setting up and “minding the store” all day, both days. Our volunteers were: John B., Jim W., Jean C., Le Anne.

SINCERE CONDOLENCES to Jo Nelson on the passing her husband, Paul, on April 6, just a few months after their son’s passing in January. Jo & Paul were loyal and hard-working members of PFLAG Hartford for many years. You may contact Jo at: 2950 State Street, #22, Hamden, CT 06517-1715

PFLAG is a welcoming place for parents and friends of lesbians & gays, but we are much more than that. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are also encouraged to attend our meetings. GLBTI people come with or without their family members, and parents and friends come with or without their GLBTI loved ones. PFLAG is for YOU!

PFLAG HARTFORD MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP MEETS: Third Wednesday of each month, 7:30 p.m., Immanuel Congregational Church House, 10 Woodland Street (Just North of Farmington Ave.), Hartford. For more information, please call Marie & Bob Calvin at (860) 633-7184 or Becky & John Glezen at (860) 633-5111.

REFRESHMENT REMINDER:

May 20 – Le Anne

**June 17 – Scholarship Presentations
& Reception**

July 15 – John B.

August 19 – Connie G.

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Student/Limited Income: \$10

Household Membership: \$40

Individual Membership: \$25

*Please make your check payable to **PFLAG Hartford** and Send it to:
Joan Jansen, 12 Colchester Commons, Colchester, CT 06415*



Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and their families and friends through:

SUPPORT: To cope with an adverse society

EDUCATION: To enlighten an ill-informed public

ADVOCACY: To end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

UPCOMING /ONGOING EVENTS

- **RAINBOWROOM:** (a program of the **Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective**) -- a Welcoming place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning "LGBTQ" teens (13-21 years old). RainbowRoom meets the third Sunday of every month, 3-6 p.m., 1841 Broad Street (Health Collective building), Hartford. For more information please visit our website at <http://www.hglhc.org/> or contact lizy@hglhc.org or call 860/278-4163.
- **HGLHC TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP:** This group is currently not meeting. Updated information will be posted as changes are made. For more information please visit our website at <http://www.hglhc.org/> or contact lizy@hglhc.org or call 860/278-4163.
- **TRANS SOFFA SUPPORT GROUP IN CONNECTICUT:** This is a group specifically for Significant Others, Family, Friends and Allies of Transgendered, Transsexual and Gender Variant people (SOFFAs). Trans people who are SOFFAs are welcome. Meetings will be held on the second Sunday of each month and are facilitated by Kristal Barnes and Kasha Ho. Contact Kristal - u2kristal@yahoo.com (860) 878-5256 or Kasha - kho@afsc.org or call (860) 523-1534 for more information.
- **SAVE THE DATE** The **2009 PFLAG Convention** will be held in beautiful San Diego, California from October 9 to 11 with pre-convention institutes being held October 8th. The convention will be at the beautiful Marriott Mission Valley. Look for more information in upcoming issues of *Caring*.
- **RAINBOWROOM LGBTQIA PROM** Join us for the most amazing LGBTQIA prom EVER! We hope you will join us on Saturday, June 6th at 7pm. Queer Prom will be held at the West Hartford Town Hall. Queer Prom is an "alternative prom" open to youth of all gender identities, ethnicities, sexual orientations and backgrounds and anyone under 21 can attend. Join us for an evening of music, dancing, food and prizes! If you want to help decorate, set up, or do anything at the prom, please call at 860-278-463 or email our organizers: detap27@gmail.com; MatthewB@hglhc.org or argazza@att.net.
- **LET'S ALL GO TO THE WEDDING** of The Rev. Canon Dr. Richard T. Nolan and Robert C. Pingank, both age 72 (and a couple since 1955), **on June 4 at 4:00 pm, Trinity College Chapel, Summit Street, Hartford, CT.** Canon.Nolan is a retired priest-in-residence and chaplain at Integrity Palm Beach Church (Lake Worth, FL). He is also a retired honorary Canon at Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford. Robert Pingank is a retired Thomaston, CT, secondary school educator. Please, no gifts and comfortable attire.

A QUEERER THAN QUEER OSCAR NIGHT

Task Force Creating Change Director Sue Hyde talks personally and poignantly about the acceptance speeches of Dustin Lance Black and Sean Penn, who received Oscars for their work in the film *Milk*.

"Beyond fashion, this year's Oscar presentations hit new thresholds of significance for me and for every queer in America. Bookended by an emotional message of support and love to LGBT youth and a firm and unwavering commitment to equality for all, Dustin Lance Black and Sean Penn won my heart forever."

STATEMENT OF ANNE STANBACK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LOVE MAKES A FAMILY, ON GLAD'S LEGAL CHALLENGE OF THE FEDERAL DOMA

We applaud our legal partners at Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) and the plaintiffs in *Gill et al. v. Office of Personnel Management* for today's announcement of their legal challenge to the discriminatory "so-called" Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

Since November 12th of last year, we have joyfully witnessed the marriages of hundreds of loving, committed same-sex couples in Connecticut. Yet, because of DOMA, each of these couples—from the retired Groton couple married after 30 years together to the teachers in New Haven married on New Year's Eve—is still unfairly denied all the protections that their married, opposite-sex counterparts enjoy.

Marital status is a factor in 1,138 federal laws, and married same-sex couples are denied *every single one* of these critical federal protections, including social security survivor benefits, the right to file taxes jointly, and federal employees' and retirees' benefits.

This is about real people's lives and basic fairness. We stand with GLAD in calling for equal treatment under the law for the thousands of married same-sex couples who are woven into the fabric of their communities in countless ways and simply want to take care of each other and their families.

The following excerpts were chosen by John K. Currie for use in CARING, the newsletter of PFLAG Hartford.

SOMETHING TO TELL YOU: THE ROAD FAMILIES TRAVEL WHEN A CHILD IS GAY

Authors: Gilbert Herdt and Bruce Koff, Copyright: 2000

Paul Beeman, then President of PFLAG National, wrote in the Foreword: Our lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered children live in a system that tends to dominate, control, and tyrannize them. Thus it tyrannizes all our families as well. It is a system the authors call the Heterosexual Family Myth. It teaches every child—falsely—that heterosexuality is the only normal sexual orientation. Few parents realize just how devastating this set of beliefs can be for children who are discovering themselves to be homosexual.

From the Preface: Many of the stories parents tell in this book suggest that we should think of how families cope with having a gay child as a long process—as if they are embarking on a difficult voyage in very stormy seas. To negotiate the trip successfully requires a map and a very sturdy vessel—solid and stable family bonds. There are many travails on such a voyage, but if all goes well, the vessel can hope to arrive safely in port and, perhaps, even be better off for the passage.

Page 5: We all grow up with a variety of notions about what it means to be gay and lesbian . . . All of these derive from the pervasive idea around which our society is organized, an idea we call the Heterosexual Family Myth. By “Myth” we do not mean an ancient story or a deception so much as an ideal theme that embodies our culture and guides us in organizing our beliefs and actions. The Heterosexual Family Myth is thus a cultural ideal. . . It insists that only through heterosexual union and the bearing of children within such a union can all happiness and positive meaning be achieved. It implies that deviation from this path is less meaningful, less worthy of social approval, less fulfilling, and, ultimately, less happy.

Page 9: As surely as the gay son or daughter exits a “closet” by coming out to parents---so this very act of disclosure creates a “closet” for the parents.

Page 11: The challenge to parents ought never to be whether to love your gay or lesbian child, but how.

Page 22: It is also ironic that the parents may immediately experience the news that their child is homosexual as a repudiation of themselves or their parental role. The parents may feel rejected because they believe their child is distancing or alienating herself from them. Yet, this is the moment when many gay and lesbian offspring may feel closest to their parents and most real.

Page 24: Parents often feel that they are alone or even unique in having a gay son or a lesbian daughter.

Page 31: We came to discern a path on which all (families) seemed to embark. Initially, families encountered a period of **disintegration** characterized at various points by guilt and recrimination, secrecy, impaired relations with others, and shame. Some families moved on to a period of **ambivalence** involving continued discomfort but with a modicum of hope, often informed by successful disclosure to others. Finally, a number of families entered a state of **integration** in which the relationships between family members appeared enhanced, the bonds of family and friendship were strengthened, and the families displayed great confidence in themselves and the future. [emphasis added]

Page 41: [interview response involving disintegration] When he came out, we told [our son] Rick that we didn’t understand; that we were hurt and disappointed, but that we accepted him and we were sure we would come to terms with it. Those were the things we said in his presence. But behind his back, we were in a state of hysteria. I really think I went into the closest thing to a nervous breakdown I’ve ever experienced. I was hating Rick for what he was doing to himself and to the family. I felt humiliation—what if others find out, such as members of the family? I thought he was destroying our entire family. --Betty Stein, 61 year-old mother of a gay son



DONNA’S MOVIE REVIEW

by Donna Gore

14 Hours (1951) - Starring Barbara Bel Geddes, Paul Douglas, Richard Basehart

At face value, you might think this movie is about suicide, as we find Richard Basehart on a ledge high atop New York City for much of the movie. However, it is a little known classic really about exploitation of the media and probable homosexuality when it was a “taboo topic.” I especially liked the character of the traffic cop, Paul Douglas. Richard Basehart’s character lacks depth, and the women steal the show! Agnes Moorehead (also one of our LGBT community members) as the histrionic mother and a beautiful Barbara Bel Geddes can’t quite figure out why her boyfriend is so troubled. A subplot about a chance meeting and a potential romance featuring Jeffrey Hunter is a nice touch. A sad topic, but a fascinating movie.

THANK-YOU TO JOHN & BITTANY MERZ, OUR MARCH MEETING SPEAKERS

John, together with his partner, Bill Starkowski, their 13 year old daughter and their 3 Pomeranian dogs, live the ideal suburban "gay" lifestyle in Simsbury. Since his time at Yale Divinity School ('86), John has been active in AIDS services and was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1992 for his work in AIDS ministry. Bill has been working in the conservative world of insurance for the past 20 years. Brittany is a freshman at Simsbury High School and also attends CREC's School for the Performing Arts.

Because of their involvement with Love Makes a Family, John, Bill and Brittany were participants in the video, Marriage Makes a Word of Difference. They were also featured on the cover of Simsbury LIFE (town monthly paper) and in a feature article in The Hartford Courant. They were even part of an American lifestyle segment for an Italian TV program similar to "60 Minutes."

John and Bill had a private civil union ceremony in Vermont in July 2003, a large festive ceremonial (non-legal) wedding the following month at their home, and then a legal wedding on January 7, 2009. Thank-you for sharing your inspiring life stories with us.

THANK-YOU TO PETER FRANCEL, OUR APRIL GUEST SPEAKER. Peter is the Head of Sales, Product Group, at Aetna. Peter began his career with Aetna in 1984 in the health and financial services arena and, after many steps up the corporate ladder, including one brief stint with another company, he is now primarily responsible for membership growth across all product lines at Aetna.

Peter spoke about his experiences as a gay man in positions of leadership in major corporations and how he reconciles his high-powered job with his life with his partner, Peter, and their son, Matteo.

We enjoyed hearing Peter's inspiring story of success in corporate America.

FROM PFLAG NATIONAL

Dear PFLAG Family and Friends,

Even as our nation looks forward to progress on long-delayed issues like employment non-discrimination and a federal hate crimes bill, there are other pieces of important legislation that directly impact our families, but will face significant obstacles from anti-equality activists in the months ahead. At PFLAG, however, we have always understood that, when it comes to equality for *every* family, *all* of our families must build the foundation today that makes progress possible tomorrow. That's why, over the past month, we've been proud to provide important support on two issues with far-reaching impact for many of our loved ones: Passing the Uniting American Families Act (UAFSA) and repealing the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" ban on lesbian, gay and bisexual service members.

In February, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Congressman Jerold Nadler (D-NY) re-introduced UAFSA, which would update U.S. immigration law to treat heterosexual and same-sex families equally. The proposal would add 'or permanent partner' to parts of the Immigration and Nationality Act which currently only allows straight U.S. citizens to sponsor spouses for green cards. And, by recognizing our families as part of the larger American family, the legislation also sends an important message that, regardless of sexual orientation, loving couples should not be forced to choose between their country and their loved one. ...

Jody M. Huckaby

Executive Director

PFLAG NATIONAL'S NEWEST PUBLICATION PROVIDES SUPPORT FOR TRANS FAMILIES

For decades, PFLAG has been proud to serve as a resource for transgender and gender non-conforming people, their families and friends. We were the first national LGBT organization to include trans people in our mission statement and we were proud to lead the way in adopting a groundbreaking policy of only supporting legislation that protects our entire family – a family that includes our trans loved ones. *Welcoming Our Trans Family and Friends* - PFLAG's most recent trans resource – continues that tradition of unconditional support.

This new publication includes insights from the parents of trans children, professional viewpoints from experts on gender issues, and information on terminology. Additionally, it has a terrific list of other resources and unique advice on how to embrace our trans family and friends by helping them feel more comfortable as they strive to live openly, honestly and authentically as who they are.

In the spirit of this supportive resource, we encourage every PFLAG Chapter to better support the parents, families and friends of trans people.

THINK THERE'S NO LONGER A NEED FOR GAY SUPPORT? THINK AGAIN.

By Stephanie Salter, The Tribune-Star, Terre Haute, Indiana

Only a few hours before I met with Jeremy Turner and a handful of folks who are forming the Terre Haute chapter of PFLAG, I listened in amazement to a local college student brag in public about beating up a couple of gay guys in a bar. It is 2009 in the United States of America, and a young man on his way to a college degree still believes it is funny — and commendable — to use his fists like hammers on the faces of homosexuals.

Talk about work to do. PFLAG Terre Haute can't get rolling soon enough.

PFLAG stands for Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Based in Washington, D.C., with about 500 chapters across the country, the organization was founded in 1972 by a New York mother whose son had been beaten during a gay rights rally.

According to Steve Ralls, the director of communications for PFLAG, several factors have led to a recent increase in membership and the founding of new chapters in places such as Terre Haute: The Academy Award-winning film, "Milk," about slain gay rights leader Harvey Milk; a Lifetime Television film, "Prayers for Bobby," starring Sigourney Weaver as a real-life mother whose 20-year-old son committed suicide when his family and church tried to "cure" him of his homosexuality; and the passage of Proposition 8 in California, which overturned a court ruling that had allowed same-sex couples to marry in civil ceremonies. The combination, Ralls said, has led to a stepped up "mobilizing of straight allies." "If we learned anything from the unfortunate experience in California, it was that we need to be able to rally our straight allies in our communities," he said. As one of those straight allies, I have long believed in the power of PFLAG. That is because the organization is based on personal relationships — familial, collegial, among friends. It is always the personal level at which the most effective consciousness raising occurs.

Despite the loud hue and cry against homosexuality from the religious right, the reality is that few families in the United States are without a gay or lesbian member — or two. As more gay people come out of their societal closets, many homophobic men and women are forced to make a choice: Deny their love for the child, sibling, niece or grandson they have always known, or drop the blanket condemnations and dehumanization that it takes to keep feeding the fear and hatred of gays. Some people make a terrible choice, but, so often, love is too big. "A lot of the hurt you get is from your own flesh and blood," said Turner, a Sullivan County native and a travel agent. "It's not intentional — they're as afraid as we are. They have nowhere to turn for support or accurate information. That's why education is so important." Turner said he saw much of himself and his family in "Prayers for Bobby." Out as a gay man for more than a decade, he still does not have an easy time of it with his parents. They are deeply religious and receive a steady stream of preaching about the sin and evil of homosexuality. Although Turner has been in a committed relationship for seven years with Brondall Huntsinger, a construction worker, his partner is not invited to family get-togethers or accepted as Turner's "other half." In contrast, Huntsinger's parents, who live in the Muncie area, experienced their breakthrough several years ago when Huntsinger was nearly killed by a drunk driver. They realized, gay or straight, their son was precious to them. Turner is welcome in their home as part of a bonded pair.

Family bonds seem to be growing stronger for the Turners. On Jan. 20, Jeremy and his mother watched the Lifetime broadcast of "Prayers for Bobby" together at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation here in Terre Haute. His mom was visibly moved, he said, and mother and son have since been able to talk about things they previously could not. "When I saw that change in my mother, I thought, 'This is important,'" Turner said. "I've been out for 11 or 12 years, but I was not necessarily that active. What was I doing?" That is when he contacted PFLAG national and asked what he needed to do to start a chapter in Terre Haute.

...

"The people who came before me gave me what I have," Turner said of the freedom to live and work openly as a gay person. "I can't let those that come after me down. I feel like, now, it's almost my duty. You look at the city of Terre Haute — there are a lot of families going through what mine is. We all just need some place to be able to relate to each other."

CONNECTICUT PRIDE 2009 - Your Rights Our Rights Human Rights.

The 2009 Connecticut PRIDE Rally and Festival will be held Saturday, June 6, 2009, in Hartford's Bushnell Park. We're looking for volunteers! Want to help produce Connecticut's largest LGBTI event? Email us at info@connecticutpride.org or call 860.225.5122 for more information.

PFLAG Hartford will have a booth at the Festival. Please volunteer to staff the booth for an hour or two. Sign-up sheets will be available at our May 20th meeting. Don't miss it! It's a great time! See you there!

EQUALITY ON THE MOVE- IOWA & VERMONT GRANT SAME-SEX MARRIAGE RIGHTS!

Four days after Lambda Legal's unanimous marriage equality victory in Iowa, the Vermont legislature has overridden the Governor's veto, making marriage for same-sex couples legal in that state too. Not long after, the Washington, D.C. Council voted 12-0 to recognize the marriages of same-sex couples performed in other states.

This is a week to remember — the week that marriage equality in our country turned a critical corner. ...

The historic vote in Vermont makes it the first state where a legislative body successfully enacted a marriage equality law. After ten years of experience with civil unions, the people and elected officials there realized that second-class status for same-sex couples is not right. We congratulate the courageous Vermont legislators for doing the right thing. We also congratulate the advocates who have worked tirelessly for equality in Vermont, especially our colleagues at Vermont Freedom to Marry. And we remember the lawsuit that set the stage when Boston-based GLAD won a historic victory in 1999 in *Baker v. Vermont* that opened the door to the marriage equality finally achieved today.

Equality is on a winning streak — two states in four days and recognition in D.C.! And legislatures in New Hampshire, New Jersey, Maine and New York may pass marriage equality bills soon. ...

Kevin Cathcart

Executive Director, Lambda Legal



LOVE MAKES A FAMILY TO CEASE OPERATIONS AT END OF YEAR

As you know, in October of 2008—after eight years of dialogue with neighbors, community leaders, clergy and our elected officials—Connecticut’s highest court upheld the right of every individual to marry the one they love. In acknowledging the inherent logic and fairness of providing equal marriage rights to same-sex couples in Connecticut, the Connecticut Supreme Court has brought closure to a decade of work by *Love Makes a Family* volunteers, supporters and staff.

Having accomplished our core purpose, *Love Makes a Family* has begun preparations to cease operations on December 31, 2009, allowing our staff, board and community of supporters to focus their energies on the myriad of community issues still facing our state and country. ...

We understand the emotional response this decision may evoke in our supporters and coalition partners. Being a part of this successful marriage equality movement has been an amazing experience for so many of us here in Connecticut. But we have accomplished our mission, and now we want to conclude our work on a high note: celebrating our successes, completing the work that is left to do, and sharing our organizational resources with others to further empower the Connecticut LGBT community for many years to come.

Anne Stanback

Executive Director, Love Makes A Family

I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE GOOD WORKS OF PFLAG HARTFORD WITH A TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF:

\$ _____ My name: _____

Please cut out this coupon and mail it with your check (made payable to PFLAG Hartford) to our Treasurer, Joan Jansen, 12 Colchester Commons, Colchester, CT 06415.

PFLAG Hartford has been available as a resource for support to families and friends of GLBTI people in Greater Hartford, and beyond, for over 20 years. We are staffed solely by volunteers, and depend heavily on contributions to enable us to continue to educate and advocate for an end to discrimination and to make this a safer world for our GLBTI loved ones.

Your help is greatly appreciated.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES DIRECTORY: If you would like to advertise your business/service in *Caring* for one year (6 issues), send your business card and a check for \$40 (made payable to PFLAG Hartford) to: Jean Cormier, 156 Randal Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06110. Your Patronage of our advertisers, who help us pay the costs of sending the *Caring* newsletter to you, would be greatly appreciated by them and by us. Please mention that you saw their advertisement in *Caring*.

Healing begins within the heart...



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Connecticut PFLAG Meetings

PFLAG HARTFORD: Information on front page or at our website: www.pflaghartford.org

PFLAG NORWALK/SOUTHWESTERN CT

When: First Wednesday of every month, 7:30 pm
 Where: Triangle Community Center
 16 River Street Norwalk
 Help Line: (203) 226-0257 or (203) 438-0530
 Email: PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com

PFLAG NORTHWESTERN CT:

Contact: Diane (860) 435-2738

PFLAG GREATER NEW HAVEN/SHORELINE

166 Lovers Lane, Guilford, CT 06437, (203) 458-0493
 Email: greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com
 Meetings: Church of the Redeemer, 185 Cold Spring (Corner of Whitney Av.), New Haven
 3rd Tues of the Month @ 7:30 pm
 Help Line: (203) 907-0518
 Shoreline Area Help Line: (203) 453-1395
 Shoreline Area email: davidwinthropknapp@yahoo.com

PFLAG GROTON (NOANK) /SOUTHEASTERN CT

When: Second Monday of every month, 7:00-8:30
 Where: Noank Baptist Church, 18 Cathedral Hgts.
 Helpline: (860) 447-0884
 Email: robertmarrion@sbcglobal.net
 or www.pflagsect.org

Central and Western Massachusetts

Williamstown Area:

When: Second Sunday of every month, 2 pm
 Where: First Congregational Church, Williamstown
 Contact: (413) 243-2382

Springfield Area:

Where: Agawam
 Contact: (413) 732-3240 or (413) 783-7709

Greenfield, MA

Help Line: 413/625-6636
 E-Mail: PFLAGPV@valinet.com

CARING IS THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PFLAG HARTFORD

Editor/Circulation Manager: Jean Cormier

Caring welcomes articles, letters and other submissions for publication.

Deadline: 15th of even numbered months. Send articles to: *Jean Cormier, 156 Randal Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06110*



Online cartoon in the Boston Globe on 4/7/09 VT decision.

STRAIGHT SPOUSE SUPPORT NETWORK:

In Connecticut and Western Massachusetts
 Monthly Support Group, Third Sunday,
 West Hartford, CT.

Contact Jane Harris at (413) 625-6636 or janenrosie48@yahoo.com or at www.straightspouse.org

In Southern Connecticut

Call Joan Rolnick at (203) 438-0530 or janenrosie@hotmail.com

FOR OTHER PFLAG LOCATIONS

Contact a Hartford Chapter Board Member or call the National PFLAG office at (202)638-4200. You may also sign onto PFLAG's Home Page at www.pflag.org.