



You Have a Home in PFLAG!

GREENSBORO, N.C.

Vol. 15 No. 7

July, 2008

Welcome to PFLAG Greensboro. We offer a safe, confidential space in which to explore our feelings and understandings about the GLBT experience, especially "coming out" and what this means to families and other loved ones. Listen and share, as much or as little as you feel comfortable with, knowing that others can understand. Welcome especially to our returning members whose love is so healing.

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

**PFLAG Greensboro
June meeting**

**Tuesday, July 15
7:30 p.m.**

**Friendship Friends
Meeting House
1103 New Garden Road
Greensboro, NC**

PROGRAM:

**Joan Parker will host several
Gay Trivia games**

July Business Meeting

Present were Linda and Mac Stroupe and Joan and Dave Parker.

Sam Johnson sent his apologies for missing the June regular meeting, where he had intended to be our program speaker. He was ill and unable to attend.

Our thanks to those who participated in the Human Rights Walk and selected PFLAG Greensboro for their donations. We received \$150 from their effort.

We hashed out a number of ideas for marketing giveaways for PRIDE and other events where we are tabling. Diversity Beans have been very successful, and will be purchased again. Other suggestions included Mardi Gras beads, imprinted advertising pens, and more PFLAG booklets. Joan and Dave Parker accepted the assignment to purchase the Diversity Beans and select and purchase additional items up to \$500.

Mac Stroupe is preparing grant requests for fiscal 2009. With the PFLAG National Convention in San Diego next year, the cost per person will be higher than normal. Hotel rates and airline rates are both high – and going higher.

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Parents, Families, and Friends of
Lesbians and Gays
P.O. Box 4153
Greensboro, N.C. 27404
Phone: (336) 852-8489

www.pflaggreensboro.org

President	Joan Parker
Vice President	Linda Stroupe
Treasurer	Mac Stroupe
Secretary	Dave Parker
Facilitator	Mitch Mathews
Webmaster	Dave Parker
Newsletter editor	Tom Clarke

e-mail items for the newsletter to:
tomclarke@mindspring.com

NEWS BRIEFS

[Couples: There's no substitute for marriage](#)

Couples in Connecticut, where the state's high court is reviewing the constitutionality of its civil-union law, are among those around the country who believe such marriage equivalents fail to match the benefits or stature of marriage, according to this article. "We're civilized? We're unionized? Whatever," Suzanne Rogers said of her civil union. "That's part of the problem. Nobody really understands it, and that includes me."

[The New York Times](#)

PFLAG Videos on YouTube:
http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=pflag&search_type=&search=Search

First Legal Same-sex Marriage in CA

I was invited to participate in the first, state-sanctioned same-sex wedding in California. It was held on the steps of the Beverly Hills County Courthouse. The spouses-to-be were Robin Tyler and Diane Olson, first litigants in the just-adjudicated California Supreme Court case. The ceremony was performed by Denise Eger, rabbi of Congregation Kol Ami, in West Hollywood. I was one of four men honored to hold the chuppah, or wedding canopy, used to signify the home the spouses will live in together. It is an event on a date I will never forget, as my late wife and I were married on June 16 forty years earlier under a similar canopy.

The air was electric and we were mobbed by the world's press. The love and joy in the faces of the spouses-to-be was evident to everyone in the audience. Cheers erupted at major points in the ceremony, with the loudest erupting when Rabbi Eger intoned "By the power vested in me by the State of California, I now pronounce you spouses-for-life"! They exchanged rings, kissed and each smashed the traditional glasses at the end of the ceremony.

Of course, there were the usual, sad-faced homophobes (just a few) with their pathetic signs and occasional imprecations. They were mostly blocked and completely ignored. Now comes the hard part - making sure that Robin and Diane (and thousands of other couples) STAY legally married. To that task I will be directing my energies over the next five months - as PFLAG Regional Director and as leader of Jews for Marriage Equality (<http://www.jewsformarriageequality.org/>).

Together we will ensure our families equal rights forever.

Steve Krantz, PhD., Director,
Southern Pacific Region,

Suit urges California high court to nullify marriage question

A proposed constitutional marriage ban in California should be taken off the November ballot because those who signed petitions in support of it were told it wouldn't change state law. With marriage now legal for all couples, that is no longer the case, according to a lawsuit filed with the state's high court. The suit also claims the vote would amount to a constitutional revision, which requires approval of two-thirds of state lawmakers to initiate. [Los Angeles Times](#)

New Findings on Youth and Oral Sex

A popular theory about young people having oral sex to preserve their virginity was debunked last month when the results of a new study found that it is teens who have had vaginal sex who are more likely to have had oral sex. Slated for publication in the July issue of the Journal of Adolescent Health, the study examined data from the National Survey of Family Growth and found that teens initiate a range of sexual activities around the same time, rather than substituting one for another.

Slightly over half of teens (54 percent of teen girls and 55 percent of teen boys ages 15-19) reported having had oral sex, and by 6 months after first vaginal intercourse, 82 percent of teens had also had oral sex. White teens were more likely than African American or Hispanic teens, and teens of higher socioeconomic status were more likely than those of lower socioeconomic status, to have had oral or anal sex.

In a Washington Post article on the study, James Wagoner said: "More than half of our teens are having sex -- vaginal and oral. We can't afford the luxury of denial. Abstinence-only programs are the embodiment of denial. They have been proven not to work, and it's time to invest in real sex education, including condoms."

ME drive for anti-gay ballot measure fails

June 19 - The Christian Civic League of Maine is giving up on its petition drive put a measure on the ballot that would repeal the state's gay-rights law and block adoption and marriage rights after falling far short of its goal of collecting 15,000 signatures by June 10.

"This was a really broad attack on gays and lesbians and their families," said Betsy Smith, executive director of EqualityMaine. "Mainers are generally fair-minded and I think they sent a strong message on primary day."

[The Boston Globe/Associated Press](#)

Children entitled to federal benefits

June 19 - Children of same-sex couples are entitled to Social Security benefits, despite the federal Defense of Marriage Act's denial of benefits to gay and lesbian couples, the U.S. Department of Justice has determined. The ruling was made in a case involving a Vermont lesbian couple with a child; the nonbiological parent in 2005 started receiving benefits in the child's name, under a provision of the law that allows such benefits for children whose parents are on disability. [Advocate.com](#)

Have You Signed the Straight For Equality Pledge?

If not, why not?

If you consider yourself straight, it's time to step up and speak out!

Support equality!!

If you are Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgender, ask your straight friends to step up and speak out!!

How?

By reading and signing the Straight for Equality Pledge at www.pflag.org or www.straightforequality.org

Subcommittee holds first ever hearings on work place discrimination against transgender people.

The opening statement by Congressman Robert Andrews (D-NJ) set a precedent not heard by transgender people before. Congressman Andrews stated that he feels bias and discrimination against transgender people to be unfair and should be made unlawful. He later stated that he believed this to be the moral obligation of this Congress and the American people to see this to completion.

Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin (D-W) Testified she believes that transgender people need to be protected under law.

Glen Lavy, Senior Counsel for Alliance Defense Fund, a conservative religious group, spoke of the deeply felt religious objections the people he represented felt towards allowing transgender people equal rights.

Congressman Andrews later pressed Mr Lavy on exactly what basis he used to support his argument. Congress Andrews examination of Mr Lavy's position was exact, defining and thoroughly exposed the underlying bigotry that the religious right uses to manipulate, control and subjugate Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people.

JC Miller argued that allowing transgender people legal protections would open many unknown legal precedents. Congressman Andrews then pointed out that it was the duty of the legislature to make laws and the job of the judicial branch to either question them or enforce them.

Congressman Andrews stated he felt that this was simply the job that needs to be done.

Same sex marriage law passed by wide majority

Same sex partners will now be able marry as the Norwegian parliament passed a new marriage law on Wednesday. Adoption will be easier and lesbian couples will qualify for state funded fertility treatment.

Conservative religious groups have tried to mobilize opposition against the new law. They worry about the status of marriage in Norway. Progress Party members are concerned about how children will cope with same sex marriages.

Despite efforts from these opponents, the law passed by a two thirds majority.

After the vote Wednesday evening, opponents from the Christian Democrats and Progress Party were among the first to leave. Supporters of the legislation stayed behind to celebrate.

"I am extremely pleased that we managed to get this last stage passed. Now we have to tackle the prejudice which still exists in society," Finance Minister Kristin Halvorsen, also leads the Socialist Left Party, told news bureau NTB.

Norway is the sixth country to adopt same sex marriage laws. Holland was first in 2001. Norway has had a Registered Partner law since 1993.

The most controversial aspect of the new law is offering state funded fertility treatment to lesbian couples. Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Great Britain already provide this service. Up to now, Norwegian lesbian couples have gone to Denmark for this procedure.

<http://www.aftenposten.no/english/local/article2479146.ece?service=print>

[Trans man's pregnancy helps increase dialogue on cultural shift](#)

The public's fascination with Thomas Beatie, a trans man who has made headlines as the nation's first "pregnant father," is part of a larger cultural shift -- and corresponding conversation -- about gender roles and the definition of marriage, according to this article.

"When there's a lot of fascination around a figure like Thomas Beatie, it points to other changes already happening elsewhere in the culture," said Judith Halberstam, a professor of English and gender studies at the University of Southern California.

[The New York Times](#)

"This (CA Marriage Equality) is the beginning of a vision of what it means to live in a nation and a state that says we value one another as equals."

--Kate Kendell, ED of
the National Center for
Lesbian Rights

"How can the state's blessing on these acts of love in any way diminish us?"

-- [Los Angeles Times](#)
Editorial

[Poll: Most Vermonters now favor marriage for all](#)

More than half of those attending Vermont's annual town meetings support equal marriage rights, according to this article.

The poll found 54% favored giving couples the right to marry, up from 46% in 2007, and 37% were opposed.

A state commission next month will deliver a report on whether Vermont's civil-union system for same-sex couples should be expanded to allow all couples to marry.
365Gay.com

Churches Challenge IRS

The Alliance Defense Fund - a legal outfit launched by James Dobson and other prominent conservatives in the mid-1990s - has recruited 50 pastors to deliver sermons in September that will include direct endorsements of political candidates. Although churches and other religious groups, like all not-for-profits, are required by law to eschew partisanship in exchange for their tax-exempt status, ADF'S Pulpit Initiative advances a premise yet to be fully tested in the courts: that religious leaders speaking from the pulpit should benefit from special speech protections.

"The only thing that should be dictating to pastors what they can and cannot say is the Bible, not the Internal Revenue Service," said Gus Booth, a Minnesota pastor who has endorsed Republican Senator John McCain from his pulpit. The idea that church and politics don't mix, he told the Forward, "hasn't actually always been that way."

The new ADF initiative comes in response to the IRS's increased focus on ferreting out not-for-profit violators. It is an attempt, both backers and opponents say, of using the courts to make a game-changing end-run around the agency, which issued a set of detailed guidelines in 2004, including one that precludes all clergy from endorsing from the pulpit.

If a case involving an intransigent pastor does find its way to federal court, ADF will likely pursue a number of legal arguments. Erik Stanley, ADF's senior legal counsel, said it would argue that the tax-exempt status of religious groups "is a right, not just a privilege" and that religious leaders enjoy a number of special protections under the First Amendment.

NY - New Rules for LGBT Youths in Juvenile Detention

by Maria Luisa Tucker
Village Voice

June 3rd, 2008 A year and a half after paying a \$25,000 settlement to a male-to-female transgirl, the agency that runs the state's juvenile-detention centers has quietly adopted a host of new rules to accommodate lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in its custody.

The new rules, adopted in March by the Office of Children and Family Services, now allow transgender youth to request special housing, wear their hair however they want, be called by their chosen name rather than their legal name, and shower privately. The new guidelines even allow biological males to wear girls' panties and bras if they prefer. The agency has also included transgender kids in its antidiscrimination policy—a first for any New York state agency, according to OCFS spokesman Edward Borges.

The policy shift and new rules—quietly hailed by transgender advocates who say that transkids often get harassed by staff and peers at detention centers—were approved without fanfare or even a press release.

The policy shift comes after a 2006 lawsuit that received little attention outside the gay media, but that created big waves inside the OCFS.

The new guidelines aim to create better staff interactions with transgender youth—directing staff members not to use terms like "homosexual" or "transvestite," and also to call transgender kids by the name (and pronoun) that they prefer. The rules also direct the OCFS to continue hormone therapy for kids who are already receiving it at the time of admission, at least until a proper evaluation can be given. The agency will now even consider requests from transgender youths to begin hormone therapy while in its custody.

Triad Pride Men's Chorus

with special guests

Schola Cantorosa Gay Men's Chorus *from* Hamburg, Germany

Present

A Little Nacht Musik

An evening of song and cultural exchange

Friday July 11, 2008 at 8:00 P.M.
Greensboro Cultural Center
200 North Davie Street
Lower Level Room 100

Tickets are \$10.

Credit card orders online at www.triadpridemenschorus.org
or by phone (336) 589-6267.

TPMC is proud to host Schola Cantorosa, a gay men's chorus from Hamburg, Germany.

Following their visit to Buffalo, NY and the Triad, Schola Cantorosa, TPMC, and more than 150 other GLBT choruses will travel to Miami, FL for the GALA Choruses International Festival.

Following the performances, we will host a moderated question and answer time with our guests. Topics to include music, travel, GLBT life in Germany, and their perception of the U.S. Translators will be present.

You won't want to miss this unique evening of lively cultural exchange and beautiful music! Limited seating, order your tickets online today!

www.triadpridemenschorus.org