



You Have a Home in PFLAG!

GREENSBORO, N.C.

Vol. 15 No. 6

June, 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, June 17
7:30 p.m.**

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

PROGRAM:

**Atty Sam Johnson will speak
on legal issues relating to
GLBT and their families**

YouthSAFE: new group for LGBT youth

PFLAG Greensboro and GSAFE (Gay Straight Advocates for education) have been working together to organize “YouthSAFE,” a place where LGBT teens can meet to socialize and discuss problems and issues of concern. Those attending the first two meetings seem enthusiastic about continuing the group and trying to get more people to attend.

YouthSAFE is a safe, welcoming, confidential, regular social networking program for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning youth in Guilford County. Teens, age 14 -18, gather every other Thursday evening to get to know each other, support each other, have fun and informally discuss topics of interest to LGBTQ youth.

Meetings are held on the first and third Thursday of each month, from 7 to 8 p.m. at Panera Bread on Lawndale Dr, Greensboro (Target Shopping Center). GSAFE and PFLAG Greensboro provide funds for each participant to purchase a coffee drink (or other refreshment) at each meeting.

YouthSAFE is a joint project of GSAFE and PFLAG Greensboro to provide safe, welcoming, confidential, regular social networking opportunities for LGBT youth in Guilford County. Teens, under the supervision of at least one approved adult facilitator, meet every other Thursday evening at a local coffee shop to get to know each other, support each other, have fun and informally discuss topics of interest to LGBT youth.

LGBT teens, ages 14 – 18, are welcome to attend YouthSAFE meetings. They may bring one straight ally friend with them each time, if they want to. In order to ensure that meetings are conducted with confidentiality, safety and respect, each youth who attends is required to sign a YouthSAFE Guidelines Agreement at her/his first meeting. Leaving contact information is optional.

Facilitators are LGBT adults, ages 21 – 35. They provide supervision and lead informal discussions at meetings. They foster a respectful atmosphere where all feel included and other patrons of the coffee house are not disturbed. Since meetings are held in public, open spaces, one or two facilitators lead each meeting. Facilitators are screened and approved by GSAFE and PFLAG Greensboro through an application process which includes checking references and criminal background. Facilitators are never alone (one on one) with youth and intimate relationships between facilitators and youth are prohibited.

IN THIS ISSUE

Same-sex marriage becomes legal in California on June 15, as a result of a state Supreme Court ruling. However anti-gay groups have managed to get a constitutional amendment on the November ballot that would overturn the decision. See page 2.

In **North Carolina**, a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage has been introduced in the state legislature. So far LGBT allies have kept it off the ballot four times. Can it be stopped again? See page 3.

Greensboro’s **Representative Pricey Harrison** co-sponsored a fully inclusive statewide **School Violence Prevention Act**, which passed the House. The senate stripped much of the meat in the bill, and it has been referred to conference. ENC and NC Women United will be lobbying for this bill Wednesday, June 18th. See www.enc.org or <http://www.ncwu.org/2008/AdvocacyDay/index.htm> for details.



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

Boy Scouts sues Philadelphia over eviction

The Boy Scouts of America's Philadelphia chapter has filed a federal lawsuit to block the city from evicting the troop from its headquarters on city-owned property on May 31 over the Scouts' refusal to allow gays and atheists to be members. The lawsuit alleges that the group's federal and state constitutional rights have been violated. The city has held that the Boy Scouts are in violation of the city non-discrimination policy and can't use the facility without paying rent.

House Members Form Gay Equality Caucus

Washington, DC – Fifty-two members of the House of Representatives have formed a bipartisan LGBT Equality Caucus whose mission is “to promote lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender equality.” The caucus was announced at a Capitol Hill news conference by the House's only two openly gay members, Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) and Barney Frank (D-Mass.).

California court ruling on marriage equality

California has joined Massachusetts to become the second state to allow same-sex marriages.

In an opinion released May 15, the [California Supreme Court](#) concluded, 4-3, that “retention of the traditional definition of marriage does not constitute a state interest sufficiently compelling, under the strict scrutiny standard, to justify withholding that status from same-sex couples.”

“Our state now recognizes that an individual's capacity to establish a loving and long-term committed relationship with another person and responsibly to care for and raise children does not depend upon the individual's sexual orientation,” Chief Justice Ronald M. George wrote for the majority in the decision. The opinion also noted that “an individual's sexual orientation — like a person's race or gender — does not constitute a legitimate basis upon which to deny or withhold legal rights.”

Gay civil rights activists lauded the court for granting full marriage rights to California's estimated 1.3 million gay, lesbian and bisexual residents.

Jody Huckaby, executive director of PFLAG, called it “an historic step forward in our struggle for full civil rights and a society that celebrates every family.” He also said, “The court has taken an unmistakable stand in favor of ‘liberty and justice for all,’ and struck down any notion that some families are less worthy of full legal recognition than others.”

“This is a historic day for the state of California and a long-awaited day for the plaintiffs in this case and their families,” said Joe Solmonese, Human Rights Campaign president. “The California Supreme Court has made clear that same-sex couples in committed relationships and their families deserve the same level of respect afforded to opposite-sex couples.”

Rea Carey, the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force's acting executive director, agreed. “This is an extraordinary victory for Californians and all Americans who hold fairness and opportunity as fundamental American values,” she said. “Today, once again, California is leading the way in affirming the inherent dignity of all people. Today, in our hearts, we are all Californians.”

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, a Republican, quickly issued a statement noting he would uphold the court's decision. “I respect the court's decision and as governor, I will uphold its ruling,” he said. “Also, as I have said in the past, I will not support an amendment to the constitution that would overturn this state Supreme Court ruling.”

Constitutional amendment on fall ballot could block court victory

A proposal to enact a constitutional marriage ban in California has garnered sufficient signatures to be placed on the November ballot, according to a random sampling of the 1.1 million collected signatures by Secretary of State Debra Bowen. The measure seeks to reverse the state high court's landmark ruling and limit marriage to a union “between a man and a woman.”

[PFLAG](#), [HRC](#), [NGLTF](#) and other groups are gearing up for a major campaign to defeat the proposed amendment in the November election. A previous ballot initiative, “Proposition 22,” banning same-sex marriage easily passed a few years ago, but that has been overturned by the May 15 supreme court ruling. Now opponents of same-sex marriage have turned to a constitutional amendment that would restrict marriage to one man and one woman.

A narrow majority of Californians back equal marriage rights and are opposed to a state constitutional marriage amendment, a new Field Poll has found. The survey found 51% of state voters support same-sex couples' right to marry, and 42% are opposed.

Meanwhile, California expects a surge of gay and lesbian couples seeking marriage licenses on June 16 when the court decision takes effect. Many couples from outside California will be coming to the state to be married. California, unlike Massachusetts, allows out-of-state couples to marry.

– Tom Clarke

Out-of-state marriages to be honored in New York

New York state agencies have been instructed by Gov. David Paterson to adjust their policies and other regulations to incorporate marriages of same-sex couples in places including California, Massachusetts and Canada. The directive stems from a state appeals court ruling that a woman and her partner who were married in Canada are entitled to spousal health benefits from her community-college employer. The new policy means New York would be the only state to grant full legal recognition to couples' unions from other jurisdictions. A right-wing legal organization vows to fight the new policy in court.

High school yearbook shows photos of gay couples

The controversial decision to include same-sex couples in the Clovis High School yearbook in New Mexico was made to show the school's "diversity," according to student editor-in-chief Maggie Chavez and staff member Jessie Hardison. "There [are] gay and lesbian couples in the school and they have a right to be in the yearbook just as much as anybody else does," Chavez said. The inclusion has been criticized by anti-gay religious groups and former Lt. Gov. Walter Bradley.

Air Force officer challenges "Don't ask, don't tell" policy

A federal lawsuit challenging the military's gay ban can proceed, after a three-judge appeals court panel overturned a lower court's dismissal of the case. The appeals court also directed the lower court to require the military to prove its case using the higher "important government interest" standard, which requires showing a threat to the government, and how violating the privacy of the plaintiff, Air Force Maj. Margaret Witt, would support the defense of that interest, according to an article in the May 22 New York Times. The typical standard—"rational basis"—calls for the government to show only a rational reason for a law or policy.

News from Equality North Carolina

Discriminatory Constitutional Amendment Introduced in N.C. Senate

May 14 – Just one day into the 2008 legislative session, Sen. Jim Forrester (R-Gaston) once again filed an anti-LGBT, anti-marriage state constitutional amendment. A similar bill is expected in the state House. Equality North Carolina is working to defeat these attempts to write discrimination into our state constitution.

The proposed bill mirrors those introduced in the last four sessions, which Equality North Carolina and our allies have successfully blocked.

"We can't let our guard down this year," said Ian Palmquist, Executive Director. "The far right would like nothing better than to put this amendment on the ballot and turn out radical conservative voters for the 2008 elections. We can't let Sen. Forrester and his cronies play politics with our lives, our rights, and our families."

New Discrimination Protections for State Employees

April 14 – Equality North Carolina announced today a significant victory in its campaign to end legal discrimination in our state. The 2008 edition of the State Personnel Manual, which covers most state employees, now includes a prohibition of discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.

"This is a big step forward for equal rights and justice in North Carolina," said Ian Palmquist, Executive Director. "Now state employees will be afforded the same protections that so many of our state's private companies offer their employees."

Equality NC Foundation lobbied the State Personnel Commission and the Governor's office on behalf of the policy. The effort grew out of the group's work to pass legislation addressing this issue in the 2007 legislative session. When the State Personnel Commission first considered the issue last summer, their proposed language covered only sexual orientation. Equality NC was successful in advocating for the policy to be expanded to ensure that gender identity and expression were covered before final adoption.

The change is limited in some ways because the additional categories were added by executive branch policy, not by legislative amendment of the statute governing state personnel. In addition, the policy could be easily changed or removed by a future administration.

Equality North Carolina will continue to push the legislature to put the new policy into the statute, ensuring clear and uniform enforcement, and covering additional state workers.

Despite those limitations, Palmquist says the policy provides real protection for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender state employees who may fear workplace discrimination. The policy will discourage discrimination and provide a way for employees to seek redress when they do experience discrimination.

Already, the right wing is trying to take away our victory. Anti-gay House Minority Leader Rep. Paul Stam and the NC Family Policy Council have publicly denounced the policy and called for its removal

Equality North Carolina Secures Hospital Visitation Protections

North Carolina hospital patients will now have a new right, ensuring that they can receive the visitors who matter most to them regardless of the legal status of their relationship. A new statewide rule effective May 1, will help ensure that same-sex partners and other loved ones will be treated the same as immediate family.

The rule adds a provision to the Patients' Bill of Rights, stating: "A patient has the right to designate visitors who shall receive the same visitation privileges as the patient's immediate family members, regardless of whether the visitors are legally related to the patient." The right applies to hospitals statewide.

Portland, Ore. – New mayor is openly gay

An openly gay candidate has won election as Mayor of Portland, Oregon, winning almost 60 % of the votes in the recent election there. According to the Portland Oregonian, the seemingly unlikely victory of Sam Adams in Portland's mayoral race was due to a combination of factors, including mutually agreed upon campaign spending limits, his opponent's stiffness on the campaign trail, and the coattails of Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama, whose presence on the ballot helped boost turnout. What's more, his sexual orientation was never an issue in local media, gay groups said.

Military ban supporter Nunn calls for review of policy

Fifteen years after it was implemented, the military's gay ban probably should be re-examined to determine whether it's still effective, according to former U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga., who helped create the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Nunn said the policy was an important first step to allowing gay and lesbian men and women to serve "honorably" without having to lie about their sexual orientation.

NY Assembly passes transgender rights bill

A bill to add anti-bias protections based on gender identity and gender expression in New York overwhelmingly cleared the state Assembly this week. "I can think of years of personal struggle in the job market and workplace without any legal protection and am now hopeful that there is a real chance that the next generation of transgender New Yorkers will not face these same difficulties," said trans activist Melissa Sklarz. The Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) bans discrimination against transgender people in housing, employment, credit, public accommodations, and other areas of everyday life. The bill now goes to the state senate where passage is uncertain.

Atty Sam Johnson on June Program

Samuel Johnson strongly supports and wants to work aggressively for full legal equality and social acceptance of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people.



LGBT people have special legal needs. Their committed relationships need to be accompanied by appropriate legal arrangements such as, where needed, joint ownership of property, legal resolution of the relationship of both partners to any children, needed will and estate arrangements, mutual powers of attorney and health care decision making authority, etc. LGBT people may have special issues related to health care and receiving health care benefits to which they are entitled. Family law issues may be particularly complex or difficult for LGBT people, including divorces and child custody disputes.

Even in legal matters that do not of themselves raise LGBT issues, e.g., contract disputes or landlord tenant disputes, LGBT people may face discrimination and attempts by others to use their LGBT status as a weapon against them. In all these matters LGBT people need legal representation by someone whom they can trust, who is well informed, and who is active in the LGBT community.

Sam Johnson was born and grew up in Alexandria, Virginia, but came to North Carolina to attend Davidson College. He fell in love with North Carolina and although his career has repeatedly carried him away from the Old North State, he is delighted to have now returned and to be making his home in Greensboro.

Triad Pride Festival

The second annual Triad Pride Festival was held May 7 – 11 this year. There was a small but enthusiastic crowd of perhaps several hundred at the outdoor festival on Saturday. David Parker gave a short speech about PFLAG, and David and Joan were at the PFLAG table passing out literature to the festival goers. Sunday's picnic co-sponsored by PFLAG was pretty much washed out by heavy rains, though the weather later cleared and the softball game went on as planned and was reported to be a blast.

Faith leaders respond to increase in gifts to UCC despite controversial marriage stance

Members of the Task Force-convened National Religious Leadership Roundtable responded to the recent announcement by the United Church of Christ that gifts to its denomination have increased by more than \$1.2 million in 2007 since its controversial resolution in support of same-sex marriage.

"When churches accept risk and still step out into courage, they discover new joys in their life together. The United Church of Christ has taken public prophetic stands that are controversial and the denomination thrives. In 2005, when the General Synod passed a resolution supporting marriage equality, some people predicted the precipitous decline of the church. In 2007, however, church members affirmed their commitment to the shared ministries of the UCC tangibly: by increasing their financial support of the UCC."

— Roundtable member the Rev. Ruth Garwood

"I can tell you right now if they had fired every gay and lesbian person in World War II, we would have lost the war."

--Out World War II veteran John Cook, quoted in the [Washington Blade](#)

A Trans Person Speaks Out

"We aren't a birth defect, or mentally ill. We are simply life continuing to express itself in the many different facets of existence that surrounds us. I am not for medical treatment of transsexuals. I am not a diagnoses or a sexual fetish, I am not better than anyone I never implied that. I respect people's rights to think whatever they want. I am starting to realize though that what is true, what is popularized, and what will actually promote change in our society are turning out to be so different that you have to wonder as a whole if we will ever get it right.

It's my need to be able to express who I am with dignity that drives me. I don't want the generations that follow to carry the mistakes of our parents as my generation did and yours. I don't want those that follow to have to look for reasons to be the beautiful or strong transwomen or transmen they are. I want it not to be a big deal if a girl happens to have a penis, or a boy a vagina. I want us to stop being measured by what is between our legs, and instead be accounted for concerning what is in our hearts and heads."

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

Lambda Legal Announces Partnerships to Improve Out-of-Home Care for LGBTQ Youth

'LGBTQ youth are over-represented in out-of-home care facilities. It is essential that social workers and practitioners are trained in how best to serve them'

(New York, June 9, 2008) --- Lambda Legal, in collaboration with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), today announced two projects to build the capacity, awareness and skills of social workers and other child welfare professionals serving LGBTQ youth living out of home in foster care, juvenile justice centers, and homeless shelters.

"LGBTQ youth are over-represented in out-of-home care facilities," said Flor Bermudez Staff Attorney with Lambda Legal's Youth in Out-of-Home Care Project. "It is essential that social workers and practitioners are trained in how best to serve them."

Through a \$275,000 grant secured by Lambda Legal from the Out-of-Home Youth Fund of the Tides Foundation NASW will launch a national train-the-trainer initiative, and CSWE, the national accreditation organization for schools of social work, will review best practices and diversity curricula at schools of social work nationwide.

The NASW project will train 40 master trainers throughout the country who have met the application requirement and who agree to train 40 more out-of-home care practitioners, resulting in a total of at least 1,600 service providers who will be better able to meet the needs of LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care. More information on the master trainer program will be posted at socialworkers.org and lambdalegal.org.

"Social workers play a significant role in the care that LGBTQ youth receive and it is imperative that we are sensitive to their needs," said Dr. Elizabeth Clark, president of the NASW Foundation. "This program reflects the profession's commitment to children and families and LGBTQ issues."

The CSWE project will engage schools of social work by helping them focus constructively on LGBTQ issues as they complete the best practices survey. After the data has been collected, CSWE will help encourage schools to adopt the best practices identified through the research. CSWE's Commission for Diversity and Social and Economic Justice and Council on Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression will analyze the data collected.

"This survey will provide a more comprehensive picture of how social work students are currently being prepared to serve the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender community," said CSWE Executive Director Julia M. Watkins. "CSWE looks forward to collaborating with Lambda Legal to identify more valuable curricula and resources for our profession's future."

###

Contact: Erin Baer 212-809-8585 ext 267; Cell: 646-752-3251;
email: ebaer@lambdalegal.org

Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work.

###

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." --- Martin Luther King Jr.

2008 BOONE PRIDE - JUNE 13-15

Live, Love, Be!

Tickets and info at www.BoonePride.org

Boone Pride Inc, a local non-profit, officially announces Pride 2008, the High Country's Fourth Annual GLBTIQA event, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, June 13, 14, and 15. In keeping with the national Pride theme, "Live, Love, Be," we invite everyone to help us fulfill our local mission to celebrate, unite, and support our growing GLBTIQA community.

The celebration begins Friday with our first ever live music event from 8pm-midnight on the patio at the Broyhill Inn & Conference Center with singer-songwriter, Crys Matthews; Atlanta based trio, the Melinda Kingsley Band; and local music legend Melissa Reaves. Saturday's events include workshops "Living in the Community" "Loving: Sexual Health" and "Being: Personal Coming Out Stories" at the Watauga Public Library from 1pm to 4pm, and as in years past, there will be a DJ dance with a cash bar from 9pm until 1am Saturday night at the Broyhill. Beginning at noon, Sunday's event at Junaluska Park in Boone, includes a family picnic and cookout hosted by HCUCC, softball games, a "Really, Really Free Market," and plenty of spontaneous festive family fun.

With proceeds from Boone Pride 2008, we will continue to fund a scholarship for a deserving area student, our web site, pride events, community projects, and maintain our on-going commitment to provide GLBTIQ literature to public libraries. The \$10 tickets include all events and are available on our website, at Beanstalk in Boone, or at the door. For more information and a complete schedule, visit

www.boonepride.org.

Boone Pride's mission is to
unite a visible GLBTIQA community,
celebrate freedom and equality of all people, and
support the well-being and development of the community.

Boone Pride, Inc. is a 100% volunteer staffed 501(c)4 non profit civic league in the state of North Carolina.

Hey, fellow PFLAGGERS! Boone isn't that far away!