

PFLAG Flyer

Official Newsletter of Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays of Houston, TX

February 1999

<http://www.pflaghtx.org>

Helpline: 713-867-9020



PFLAG Houston
PO Box 53796
Houston, TX 77052-3796

LESBIAN EVANGELIST SPEAKS

Janie Spahr, who calls herself "a lesbian evangelist," is a pioneer and current leader for inclusiveness of gays lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons, in the Presbyterian Church (USA). She was one of our keynote speakers at our second major Healing the Hurt conference.

Janie comes to Houston in early February. While the majority of her time will be spent within Presbyterian church circles (she's coming to help establish a Texas satellite of her national organization, That All Might Freely Serve), everyone is cordially invited to one particular event: Friday, Feb. 5, 7:30 PM Worship Service at Central Congregational Church (1311 Holman, just south of downtown, near Houston Comm. College) Janie will preach at this service. There is a reception afterwards.

PFLAG-HOUSTON'S E-MAIL LIST BEGINS OPERATION

On January 1, 1999 PFLAG-Houston began operation of its new mailing list at: **PFLAG-Houston@onelist.com**. The **PFLAG-Houston** list is utilizing e-mail technology at its best, to transmit announcements of activities, meetings, events, and news items of interest to the PFLAG-Houston community immediately and directly from one member of the network to all the other members of the network.

Everyone has a need or desire to communicate ideas or news about topics of common interest; the PFLAG-Houston family and friends are no exception. Mailing lists have been around since the beginning of the Internet and allow people to send e-mail to each other easily. Instead of e-mailing everyone on the list, subscribers of a mailing list simply send their e-mail to one address, which will then automatically send the message to everyone else.

Several of you already maintain large and extensive e-mail address lists of PFLAG members and friends you want to keep informed about Houston area activities and PFLAG events.

Would it not be convenient if you did not have to maintain an e-



NEXT MEETING
February 7

HOW GAY LIBERATION CAN LIBERATE AMERICA

Robert Schaiuby presents and expands his observation that the liberation of gays and lesbians who have come out of the closet provides a model of courage for a society which tends to be comfortable with (or stuck in) conformity.

So please come and join us in what is surely to be a wonderful program.

We meet from 2:00pm - 4:30pm at Christ Church Cathedral, 1115 Texas Avenue at San Jacinto in downtown Houston. After our large group session, please attend one of our small groups.

The small groups are the heart of our monthly meetings. These groups provide everyone an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns and celebrations with others in a safe, confidential environment. There are also special groups for Spouse Support, HIV Concerns, & Advocacy.

If you have announcements for the monthly meeting, please contact Sue Null with the announcement by Friday, December 4th, at 12:00 noon. She can be reached at 713-664-1083 or via email at Suenull@rice.edu

Here's what's inside...

COMING OUT	4
LEGISLATION & GAYS	5
SQUIRREL IN MY COFFEE	6

Schedule of Events

Feb. 7 PFLAG Houston Monthly Meeting
2:00-4:30pm
Christ Church Cathedral
1117 Texas Ave.
Downtown Houston

Feb. 11 PFLAG Houston Board Meeting, 7:00-9:00 pm, Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Ave.

Feb. 21 PFLAG Galveston Monthly Meeting
Health Merchant at 27th and Broadway in Galveston

Feb. 16 Mid Month Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00pm, Church of the Epiphany, 9600 S. Gessner at Bissonnet

NEXT MONTH

March 7 PFLAG Houston Monthly Meeting

March 21 PFLAG Woodlands Satellite Meeting

March 21 PFLAG Galveston Monthly Meeting

March 16 PFLAG Houston Mid-Month Meeting

THOUGHT TO CONSIDER

"As we grow older we have more and more people to remember, people who have died before us. It is very important to remember those who have loved us and those we have loved. Remembering them means letting their spirits inspire us in our daily lives."

Henri J.M. Nouwen in Bread for the Journey

PFLAG Houston holds Mid-Month Discussion Group

On Tuesday, February 16, PFLAG Houston will hold a mid-month discussion group for those of our members who would like to meet more than once a month or are unable to attend our Sunday meetings. These groups will have a facilitator and focus on small-group sharing and discussion.

The meeting will be at Church of the Epiphany at 9600 S. Gessner at Bissonnet from 7:30-9:00pm. This meeting will be held on the third Tuesday of every month! All are welcome. For directions or more information, contact the PFLAG Helpline.

DONATIONS TO PFLAG

PFLAG would like to thank the following people for their generous donation to the chapter. We truly appreciate their support.

David A. Coupar
Richard C. Graves in honor of his parents

It is through donations that PFLAG is able to fund the many different projects throughout the year. A recent example of this is the donation to the public library system by PFLAG.

If you or someone you know would like to make a donation, please contact a board member or call the help line, 713/867-9020.

If
homosexuality
is a
disease,
let's all call
in queer
to work.
"Hello,
can't
work
today.
Still
queer."

Comedienne Robin Tyler

HELPING US HELP

At any given point in time, PFLAG-Houston is likely to have several short-term projects underway, in addition to the myriad of day-to-day, ongoing efforts. There is one thing they all have in common--they need people to make them work.

If you are interested in any of the following projects, call the designated person and check it out.

Board Positions: In general, Board members are expected to recommend policy positions for their area of responsibility, ensure that the task work associated with this area of responsibility is completed (by either effectively delegating the work to others or doing the work themselves), and to participate in monthly Board meetings.

Committee Chairs/Members: Some committees are "committees of one"; others are groups of 2 or more individuals with a chairperson and have ongoing responsibilities. Think of them as "standing committees". The responsibilities of the members of these committees vary according to the charter of the committee.

- (1) The Support Group board member oversees the small group discussion sessions at General Meetings - ensures that facilitators are available, handles logistics, etc.
- (2) Marketing is a new Board position. This person would be responsible for coordinating any marketing initiatives of PFLAG-Houston (e.g., brochures, posters, billboards, advertising, etc.)
- (3) The Scholarship Chair oversees PFLAG-Houston's annual effort to award scholarships to needy and deserving gay or lesbian youth.
- (4) We will be sponsoring another Healing the Hurt conference in 1999. This person would coordinate the effort, with a team of volunteers.
- (5) Nancy Camp and Mary Egert have helped us get the Flyer into the mail for several years now. The job is getting big enough that back-up is needed.
- (6) Don and Susan Upchurch are using part of their garage to store PFLAG materials. Does anyone have extra garage/warehouse storage space or an extra bedroom that we could use to store PFLAG materials?
- (7) This person would be responsible for the preparation and follow-up in connection with requests we make for grants.
- (8) If you just want to volunteer, but don't have anything in particular in mind, call Cheryl Francois, PFLAG's member Involvement Chairperson.

Type of Help	Name of Position/Committee/Project	Contact Person	Phone No.
Board position	Support Groups (1)	Norma Graves	713-467-4105
Board position	Marketing (2)	Jim Bianchetta	281-491-3114
Board position	Scholarship (3)	Gordon Weisser	713-776-1227
Board position	Grant Writing (7)	Gordon Weisser	713-776-1227
Committee Chair	Healing-the-Hurt III (4)	Susan Upchurh	713-995-9777
Miscellaneous	Back-up for newsletter distribution (5)	Nancy Camp	713-748-4448
Miscellaneous	Storage space (6)	Susan Upchurch	713-995-9777
Miscellaneous	Any kind of volunteering (8)	Cheryl Francois	281-320-1199

A MOMENT OF TRUTH

"We need to stop asking permission to exist! We do exist, this is it. You've really got me on a soap box now. I feel like we're asking people to understand our lives. Well, they'll never completely do that. What they need to do is to take our lives at face value...there's a point where our community has to get to where we just start demanding... that our lives be valued."

—Gay actor Wilson Cruz (Ricky on My So – Called Life) to Milwaukee's In Step, Nov. 17, 1998

COMING OUT

By Daniel Saltsman

COMING OUT

I HAVE HEARD THE PHRASE
USED BY THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED MANY
DAYS
HIDING THEMSELVES AND WHO THEY ARE
FROM ALL OF THOSE WHO CAN'T SEE TOO FAR
I KNOW OF THIS AND OF IT'S PAIN
FOR MANY YEARS I HAVE BEEN THE SAME.

YES, THIS IS WHAT I WANT TO BE
I MUST FIND COURAGE FOR ALL TO SEE
SO I AM LOOKING FORWARD IN HOPES TO FIND
LOVE FOR MY HEART AND PEACE FOR MY MIND
SOON I WILL LOSE THIS HOPELESS DESPAIR
FOR I WILL FIND THE ONE WITH A GENTLE HAND
FOR THE LOVE OF MY LIFE WILL BE A MAN

PEOPLE TELL ME THIS IS WRONG
BUT IT IS ONLY FOR LOVE I LONG
THE FEELINGS I HAVE ARE DEEP AND TRUE
SOMETHING THAT YOU CAN'T MEASURE
TO LIVE A LIFE WITHOUT REJECTION
IS SOMETHING TO BE TREASURED.

SO, WHEN YOU POINT YOUR FINGER AT ME
AND TELL ME THAT I'M SINNIN'
TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT YOURSELF, ARE YOU AS
WHITE (PURE) AS LINEN?
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE. YOU DON'T
KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
JUST TAKE THE THING YOU LOVE THE MOST AND
MAKE IT GO AWAY.

YOUR MOM OR DAD YOUR KIDS OR SPOUSE OR
MAYBE YOUR DOG OUTSIDE,
JUST TAKE ALL THE LOVE YOU HAVE FOR THEM
AND PUT IT ALL ASIDE
IT DOESN'T EXIST AND IT'S NOT REAL. YOU CAN
DO WITHOUT THERE LOVE
IF YOU CAN IMAGINE ALL OF THIS THEN MAYBE
YOU'LL UNDERSTAND
HOW SOMEONE JUST LIKE ME CAN LOVE AN-
OTHER MAN.

I WROTE THIS POEM AS AN AFFIRMATION OF
WHO I AM, THOUGH IT IS NOT A MAGICAL KEY
THAT WILL MAKE MY LIFE EASIER IT IS A STEP TO-
WARDS RELIEF.

DEDICATED TO ALL THOSE WHO ARE TRYING TO
MAKE SOME SENSE OF IT ALL. I HOPE THIS WILL
BRING SOME COMFORT, YOU'RE NOT ALONE.

1998

mail address list? Would it not be convenient if someone who wanted to know what is going on at PFLAG-Houston did not have to find someone and get added to their list? And ... what happens when someone goes on vacation? Well ... that is all taken care of on the **PFLAG-Houston** list.

ONelist, the Internet service provider, provides some unique features and this is how it works.

You must first subscribe to the **PFLAG-Houston** list by sending an e-mail (from the e-mail address at which you want to receive the e-mails) to the following address: **PFLAG-Houston-subscribe@onelist.com**. No Subject or Message is required. You will receive a confirmation e-mail, and you must reply to this e-mail before your subscription will become effective. If this is the first time you have subscribed to a mail list **@ONelist.com**, you will also receive a password. Save this password as you will need it to access the User Center at **www.onelist.com** to modify your subscription or password. You will also receive a welcome message, which will describe some of the unique features offered by **ONelist.com**, the Internet service provider.

If you want to send an e-mail message to people on the list, simply send your e-mail to: **PFLAG-Hous-ton@onelist.com**. There are no long distribution lists and the receiving e-mail addresses are confidential. Only the list manager has access to the e-mail addresses. Your e-mail address will be part of your posting just like any other e-mail.

You may subscribe to the 'single' version of the list where each e-mail, sent to the list, will be immediately sent to you as separate e-mails. Or you may subscribe to the 'digest' version where you will only get one e-mail a day of all the e-mails sent to the list on the previous day. The 'digest' mode reduces the number of e-mails you receive but the receipt of messages may be up to 24 hours after posting.

You can stop your e-mail with the 'No Mail' option, without having to unsubscribe and resubscribe, for when you might be out of town, and then resume getting mail upon your return. Oh, don't you wish we could do that with the Post Office? You can do this by going to **www.onelist.com** and clicking on 'User

LEGISLATION TARGETS GAY FOSTER PARENTS, SODOMY

Fort Worth Star Telegram, January 2, 1999
By Stephanie Elizondo Griest, Associated Press

AUSTIN – Social workers are rigorous in their search for potential foster and adoptive parents. They call references, check criminal backgrounds and calculate finances. And if two Texas lawmakers get their way, social workers will consider sexual preference, too. State Reps. Warren Chisum, R-Pampa, and Robert Talton, R-Pasadena, have filed bills to ban the placement of children into gay or lesbian households.

Chisum said such households provide an improper atmosphere for raising children. "It is not conducive to Judeo-Christian beliefs and it can be destructive for the children," he said, adding that heterosexual couples offer the most solid home and best lifestyle.

Gay and lesbian advocates point to American Psychological Association studies which have determined sexual orientation is irrelevant to a parent's ability to raise a child. "People who support proposals like this say they are pro-family, but what more antifamily thing can you do than to say to children in foster care that we are going to deny you the opportunity to be raised by loving parents who could give you a good home and leave you in institutional care instead?" asked Matt Coles, director of the lesbian and gay rights project at the American Civil Liberties Union. The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services reports an average of 1,850 children are available for adoption each month in Texas for some 2,000 willing households. The numbers are even greater in foster care – about 11,000 children are living with some 6,000 licensed foster families on any given month. Stewart Davis, an agency spokesperson, said matching families' and children's criteria is complex. Some children want to stay with their siblings and families often request a particular age, race, and gender.

"This legislation would reduce the potential number of families that could be considered for foster care and adoption," he said. A state child welfare worker who sued the agency in September was the inspiration for the bills.

Rebecca Bledsoe, a 12-year employee of the agency's Child Protective Services division, said the agency demoted her for taking a 3-month-old boy from a lesbian couple's home in Dallas. According to a grievance she filed last year with the agency, she reasoned "homosexual conduct is against the law in Texas." The law she cited also is up for consideration in the 1999 Legislature, which convenes Jan. 12. Rep. Debra Danburg, D-Houston, has filed a bill to repeal a clause in the Texas Penal Code which makes "sexual intercourse with another individual of the same sex" a Class C Misdemeanor. Suzanne Goldberg, a lawyer for the national gay legal group Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, called the state's 119-year-old anti-sodomy law an outrageous invasion of privacy. "It licenses police to enter the bedrooms of consenting adults," said Ms. Goldberg.

But Ms. Danburg may have a hard time getting the bill past Texas, where the anti-sodomy law has some staunch support. "It is easy to see how society is going in the wrong direction; we don't need to take any other barriers down that would further advance our decline in morality," said Rep. Charlie Howard, R-Sugar Land. Rep. Chisum's bill is HB 382. Rep. Talton's bill is HB 415. Rep. Debra Danburg's bill is HB 337.

Center.'

If you have web access, you can subscribe at the **PFLAG-Houston** subscription webpage at: <http://www.onelist.com/subscribe.cgi/pflag-houston>.

Once you are a subscriber, you can go to the Archives and look at back listings.

You may send a response to either the sender of the e-mail – or – the **PFLAG-Houston** list, which will be sent to all subscribers. The default, if you use the 'Reply To:' function, will be to send the reply to the sender of the e-mail and NOT post it on the list. If you want to send your reply to the list, simply change the 'Mail To:' line to: **PFLAG-Houston@onelist.com**.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please send an e-mail to: **PFLAG-Houston-owner@onelist.com**.

Guidelines will be posted, when appropriate, over the next couple of months as we see the usage. PFLAG looks forward to each subscriber letting us, at **PFLAG-Houston-owner@onelist.com**, know of inappropriate posting and suggestions for improvement.

Try a subscription, it's FREE. Send an e-mail to: **PFLAG-Houston-subscribe@onelist.com**.

SAFE SCHOOL SUPPORT GROUP

This group meets monthly and is for anyone who is in need of support on issues related to schools and education. Anyone who wanting to provide support is also welcome. The group's focus will be "Making Schools Safe" for both students and educators, including issues of discrimination against people who are different.

We will be sharing experiences and resources, educating and learning. A listing of resources on the Internet will be available.

The group will meet after the main program, at the same time the other Small Groups meet. See the Small Group Room Assignment Sheet for room number and location.

THERE'S A SQUIRREL IN MY COFFEE!

Our house near Jacksonville, Florida, is a veritable zoo. My wife and I wanted our seven-year-old twins to develop the same love for nature and animals that we had when we were children. We have tortoises and turtles, snakes, iguanas, frogs, rabbits and four-pound attack Yorkie named Scooter. We even had a wayward baby armadillo for a spell. But when Rocky came to stay, our household-and our lives-changed dramatically.

A career Navy pilot, I was at home recovering from a rare, invisible form of a deadly skin cancer that had required some drastic surgery, and I definitely needed a humor injection in my daily routine. Rocky was just what the doctor ordered. The doctor, however, turned out to be a veterinarian, not an oncologist!

Dr. John Rossi is the animal doctor. When someone showed up at his vet clinic with a tiny baby flying squirrel that had fallen from his nest, John and his wife, Roxanne, reasoned that if a baby flying squirrel couldn't help a recovering cancer patient nothing could. Rocky became an immediate fixture in our home. When Rocky first arrived, he resembled a little ball of dust-like the ones you find in the guest bedroom closet during spring cleaning. He was no bigger than a walnut and he weighed less. His eyes had recently opened and he drank formula and water from a tiny toy baby bottle. He barely moved and his fur was kind of oily, like a "greaser" from the 1950's. His bulging black eyes looked like aviator goggles, and my twins, having just seen an old cartoon rerun of *Rocky and Bullwinkle*, immediately named him Rocky.

He grew quickly and was soon the size of a fresh bar of soap: his adult size. Rocky's fur turned a silky smooth brown as he learned to clean himself regularly, and eyes grew even more bulgy. His loose skin and his flat rudder-like tail turned him into a rodent Frisbee during his daily flying lessons, which I conducted by gently tossing him from our bathroom onto our bed. Rocky didn't require much training because gliding came so naturally for him.

Flying squirrel movements are extremely fast and are very vertically oriented. In the wild, they rapidly run up and down tree trunks. In the same way, Rocky ran up and down our bodies, moving like a high-scoring furred pinball in a flesh-and-pinball machine. Moving at what seemed the speed of light, he was all over the inside and outside of our clothing as we tried to catch him with our bare hands. The tickling, particularly when he dived into the armpits-one of his favorite haunts-was incredible. This activity has become a daily ritual in our household, wonderfully uplifting our spirits. My doctors are amazed at how quickly my scars have healed. If laughter is the best medicine, then Rocky has delivered it by the truckload.

One morning, I was enjoying my morning coffee like most people do, except that I had a newspaper in front of me and a squirrel on top of me. Rocky was sitting on my head surveying his squirrel-dom, probably wondering if he had nibbled off the large chunk of my left ear that had been removed during cancer surgery. Suddenly, I sneezed. It was a big sneeze-one that occurred as I was bringing my cup of coffee, now lukewarm, to my lips. Afterwards, as I reopened my eyes while continuing to bring my coffee to my mouth I saw two of the most enormous, bulging eyes that I had ever come face-to-face with in my life, a furred hyperthyroidic monster if I'd ever seen one.

"Peggy, there's a flying squirrel in my coffee!" I yelled, laughing hysterically as my wife sprinted into the room. In an instant, Rocky had scrambled back onto my head and was preening himself, probably getting a caffeine buzz to boot.

I picked the newspaper back up, then quickly put it back down in a moment of reflection. We've all had those moments, when suddenly everything is brilliantly clear and sharp, and laced with humor and an overwhelming sense of gratitude. I was overcome by the realization that I was an utterly unique being. Unquestionably-absolutely unquestionably-I was the only person in the world, perhaps in the universe, that had the amazing good fortune to have a flying squirrel in his coffee that morning.

By now, Rocky was sound asleep under my sweater. Unaware of my earth-shattering musings, he had curled up directly on a large scar at the base of my neck where my jugular vein, trapezoid muscle and 200 lymph nodes had been surgically removed.

Rocky—and G-d—were doing their healing magic once again.

Dedicated to all the wonderful furry creatures who enrich our lives and the world in which we live. May they always be treasured. —Jeffrey Mikael Sion-Austin

"DANCE TO THE PIPER"

By Martha Graham

"There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action. And because there is only one you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium... the world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is, nor how valuable, nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open."

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS-

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We hope all of you had blessed holidays, filled with peace, love, joy and many real moments.

We were unable to produce a newsletter for January due to final exams and all of the Holidays.

Don't forget your loved ones on February 14th, 1999- Valentine's Day. Happy Valentine's Day to all are friends and family, from our hearts to yours.

We are always looking for newsletter items. So if you have a story, poetry, or just want to say hello, drop us a line or two. We can be reached at 713/868-2674 or



PFLAG Houston helps families understand their gay family member(s) and is totally committed to educating the community at large. To accomplish these purposes, we:

- Operate a help line to give information and help to anyone who needs us.
- Distribute educational material such as newsletters and booklets.
- Organize educational events for helping professionals in the city.
- Staff an information booth at city-wide functions.
- Have an active speaker's bureau. We speak out!
- Advertise in local newspapers and magazines to reach parents that might not know about us.
- Maintain an active Internet site with helpful information.
- Testify at legislative hearings.
- Provide scholarships to deserving gay & lesbian high school seniors.

We do all of the above and much more. Your support is crucial to PFLAG Houston continuing to reach out to our community, our state, and our nation! Please take a moment and fill out the membership form on the right and mail it to:

PFLAG Houston
P.O. Box 53796
Houston, TX 77052-3796

Join us in our mission and.....Be a part of Our Rainbow!

713/868-2676. You may also e-mail Stephen personally at stevenmc@flash.net or Jeffrey at jsioniaustin@hotmail.com. If you would like to mail us any information the address is: Stephen Carleton and Jeffrey Sion-Austin
201 South Heights Blvd. Apt. #2938
Houston, TX 77007
Stay in peace and grace to you, Stephen and Jeffrey

Be a Part of Our Rainbow!

Names): _____

Email Address: _____

Address: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

Phone/Fax _____ / _____

Other Information: _____

 Check here if this is for address/phone/fax change only. Check here if you prefer PFLAG mail come in a sealed envelope. Check here if you do NOT want to receive the PFLAG Flyer Newsletter.

Membership Category (Check One)	Amount
<input type="checkbox"/> Red	Student/Limited Income \$10
<input type="checkbox"/> Orange	Individual \$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow	Family/Couple \$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Green	Supporter \$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue	Patron \$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple	Sponsor \$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver	Benefactor \$1,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold	Advocate \$2,500

 Special Contribution: \$ _____

\$8 of your dues go to PFLAG's National organization.

Please make checks payable to **PFLAG Houston**.

Your donation may be tax deductible. PFLAG Houston is a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Organization. [I.D. # 76-0372-170]



HATCH

PO Box 667010, Houston, Texas 77266-7010

February 1, 1999

Dear PFLAG Members and Supporters:

You are invited to be part of a history-making event ... the first annual *Spring Fling*, a fund-raising dinner for the PFLAG/HATCH Scholarship Fund. This milestone event will be in the Versailles Room of the Warwick Hotel, 5701 Main Street, on Friday, March 26. The evening will begin at 7:00 PM with a social hour and cash bar, featuring a silent auction. The seated dinner to follow will include a program featuring students who are currently benefiting from the PFLAG/HATCH scholarship program.

PFLAG began its scholarship program in 1994, awarding one grant of \$4,000. In 1998, HATCH joined with PFLAG, and 8 scholarship recipients were awarded a total of \$34,500. In 1999, PFLAG and HATCH are formally merging their two programs to form a new 501(c)(3) organization, the *PFLAG/HATCH Youth Scholarship Foundation*. We hope you will make plans now to attend this special event and help us to achieve our goal of raising \$50,000 for this important cause.

PFLAG and HATCH recognize that specific opportunities for gay and lesbian youth are limited, and the need for positive role models is acute. Both organizations are proud to celebrate the achievements of these special young people and to support their continuing education.

Your generosity will help us respond to the large increase we are seeing in applications this year, which are already more than triple last year's number. Please consider being a Sponsor at \$125 per person (or \$200 per household couple). Sponsors will receive special recognition as underwriters. Non-sponsor tickets are \$75.

Please make your reservations by returning the enclosed form in the return envelope provided. Instructions are included for making out your tax-deductible check.

We look forward to seeing you at *The Spring Fling*.

Sincerely,

Pat Rickey, Chair
PFLAG Scholarship Fund

Gary J. Van Ooteghem, Chair
HATCH Scholarship Fund

PFLAG Flyer

Official Newsletter of Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays of Houston, TX

April 1999

<http://www.pflaghtx.org>

Helpline: 713-867-9020



PFLAG Houston
PO Box 53796
Houston, TX 77052-3796



CHISUM PUBLICLY ADMITS DEFEAT

(AUSTIN, TX) -- Rep. Warren Chisum (R-Pampa), the sponsor of House Bill 382 which prevents gay and lesbian parents from adopting children or acting as foster parents, conceded this week that his bill was dead this session.

"It's clear the chances of passing it are zero," Chisum admitted to the San Antonio Express-News March 13 in an article about the legislation.

LCR/Texas President Steve Labinski responded, "It may still be too early to declare victory, but it is clear that our voices and lobbying work are being heard."

The top priority of LCR/Texas this session is to stop the anti-gay adoption and foster parent bills. Log Cabin's lobbyist has been working to secure Republican opposition to Chisum's bill. Republicans enjoy a majority in the Texas Senate, have near parity in the state House, and control the Governor's mansion and all state-wide offices. A second bill relating to foster care is sponsored by Rep. Robert Talton (R, Pasadena). The Express-News reported that Talton refused to comment on his bill for their article.

(Chisum" Continued on page 5)

HOMOSEXUALITY WAS NOT MY FIRST CHOICE

PFLAG Phoenix-author not known

Not at twelve when I was suicidal; or at eighteen when I went off to college; or at twenty-one when I got married; or at twenty-five when my daughter was born.

Homosexuality was not my first choice at twenty-eight when I accepted it.

Years of starting each day by telling myself "today I will conquer this" and ending each day knowing that I had

(Not first Choice" Continued on page 6)

NEXT MEETING APRIL 11

Due to the Easter holiday, the next general meeting will be held on April 11th. We hope to see everyone there and look forward to hearing about the march on Austin from all those who went.

We meet from 2:00pm - 4:30pm at Christ Church Cathedral, 1115 Texas Avenue at San Jacinto in downtown Houston. After our large group session, please attend one of our small groups.

The small groups are the heart of our monthly meetings. These groups provide everyone an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns and celebrations with others in a safe, confidential environment. There are also special groups for Spouse Support, HIV Concerns, & Advocacy.

If you have announcements for the monthly meeting, please contact Sue Null with the announcement by Friday, April 9, at 12:00 noon. She can be reached at 713-664-1083 or via email at Suenull@rice.edu

Here's what's inside...

Donations to PFLAG	2
Hate Crimes Prevention Act	3
Houston Public Library	4
Memorial/Holocaust Gays	5

Schedule of Events

April 11 PFLAG Houston Monthly Meeting
2:00-4:30pm
Christ Church Cathedral
1117 Texas Ave.
Downtown Houston

April 8 PFLAG Houston Board Meeting, 7:00-9:00 pm, Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Ave.

April 18 PFLAG Woodalnds Monthly Meeting

April 18 PFLAG Galveston Monthly Meeting

April 20 Mid Month Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00pm, Church of the Epiphany, 9600 S. Gessner at Bissonnet

NEXT MONTH

May 2 PFLAG Houston Monthly Meeting

May 16 PFLAG Woodlands Satellite Meeting

May 16 PFLAG Galveston Monthly Meeting

May 18 PFLAG Houston Mid-Month Meeting

THOUGHT TO CONSIDER

"To Love yourself is to heal yourself."

Gifts from a Course In Miracles

PFLAG Houston holds Mid-Month Discussion Group

On Tuesday, April 20, PFLAG Houston will hold a mid-month discussion group for those of our members who would like to meet more than once a month or are unable to attend our Sunday meetings. These groups will have a facilitator and focus on small-group sharing and discussion.

The meeting will be at Church of the Epiphany at 9600 S. Gessner at Bissonnet from 7:30-9:00pm. This meeting will be held on the third Tuesday of every month! All are welcome. For directions or more information, contact the PFLAG Helpline.

DONATIONS TO PFLAG

PFLAG would like to thank the following people for their recent generous donation to the chapter. We truly appreciate their support.

Barbara Paige in honor of Jeffrey Mikael Sion-Austin's Twenty-Eighth Life Celebration and Blessing of his name.
Suzanne Anderson Properties
In honor of Elizabeth
Kenneth A. Croft
Roger S. Donley
Carma and Glen Gibler
In memory of Mary K. Jones
The Grey Party
Robert L. Jones
Russell G. Jones
Doris and Lane Kalmin
Kati Headwear, Inc.
John W. Kellet
Mary Lou Kurtz
In memory of Mary K. Jones
Phil Lacy
Marc and Jo Ann Levine
Rebecca S. Miller
Sue and Jim Null
Carolyn and Merill Stiles
Don and Susan Upchurch
Blake and Gordon Weisser

It is through donations that PFLAG is able to fund the many different projects throughout the year. A recent example of this is the donation to the public library system by PFLAG.

If you or someone you know would like to make a donation, please contact a board member or call the help line, 713/867-9020.

BIRMINGHAM, AL VIGIL FOR GAITHER

ewsPlanet Staff

An overflow crowd paid their respects to the murdered Alabama gay man and showed "there's as many of us as there are of them."

A diverse crowd of perhaps three hundred people came from all over Alabama to Birmingham on March 9 to remember murdered gay Billy Jack Gaither and to denounce the kind of hatred and violence that led to his death. The Covenant Metropolitan Community Church was filled beyond capacity and overflowing, far exceeding what pastor Marge Ragona had anticipated.

There were seventeen speakers, many of them clergy from other area churches -- Baptist, Episcopalian, Methodist, Presbyterian, all urging the crowd to speak out against hatred. When the two-hour memorial was finished the crowd gathered outside with candles and sang "This Little Light of Mine."

Openly gay Birmingham resident Robert Martin, whose activism dates back to the 1960's, told the "Birmingham Post-Herald" that the large turnout was important because, "We wanted to show that there's as many of us as there are of them. We wanted to do it peacefully, in a grown-up way."

Although Topeka, Kansas homophobe Fred "God Hates Fags" Phelps and five members of his clan picketed across the street, even Phelps expressed "outrage" at the violent crime against Gaither. [Ed. note: NewsPlanet is not aware of Phelps having said anything similar previously, even when religious right groups were speaking out against his picketing of the funeral of Matthew Shepard.] Phelps told the "Birmingham News" that, "We are outraged at this violent crime, but the issue is the homosexuals are exploiting it. It is no longer merely an event for the family and friends to grieve."

Reporters were particularly attracted to 9-year-old Max Griffies, who had dragged his weary mother to the rally so that he could display the sign he had made himself, reading, "God loves all people." He said the Phelps group "disgusted" him "because everybody is created equal and all people are created by God." The Griffies have assisted people with AIDS through a program of their Presbyterian Church.

HATE CRIMES PREVENTION ACT

WASHINGTON, DC---March 11, 1998--- The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force applauds the announcement by Congressional leaders of plans to introduce the Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA). The Hate Crimes Prevention Act will provide new authority for federal officials to investigate and prosecute cases of bias violence, including sexual orientation bias.

"We hope that Congress will have the will and the conscience to do what many state lawmakers this year have failed to do: help addressing hate crimes by passing legislation that is of great importance, both symbolically and practically," said NGLTF executive director Kerry Lobel. "We ask our elected officials in Congress, if not now then when? The time for the Hate Crimes Prevention Act is now," added Lobel.

Thus far this year, a number of state legislatures, including Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana voted down hate crime bills. The New Mexico legislature passed a hate crimes measure, only to have New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson veto it.

The Hate Crimes Prevention Act would specifically add sexual orientation, gender, and disability to existing federal hate crimes law. Currently, the federal government is only allowed to involve itself in hate violence incidents based on racial, religious, and ethnic violence. Even then, involvement by the federal government is limited to very narrow parameters. The Hate Crimes Prevention Act would remove some of those barriers to federal intervention.

Introduction of HCPA comes not long after the vicious and highly publicized racist murder of James Bird, an African-American man, in Jasper, Texas and the brutal anti-gay killings of Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming and Billy Jack Gaither in Cyclacauga, Alabama. Most states do not have hate crimes laws to punish individuals who commit hate violence based on sexual orientation.

Violent crime throughout the United States has been declining in recent years, yet, hate crimes against GLBT people continue to rise. In 1997, according to the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Projects, at least 18 lives were lost as a result of anti-GLBT violence. In addition, the FBI reports there were 1,102 anti-gay hate crimes in 1997 or 13.7 percent of the 8,049 total reported hate crimes for that year.

THE BECOMING OF HERITAGE

Time touched stone, touched water, touched stone,
The stone became smooth, with water, with time.

Time speaks through a culture, a soul, or a race;
That, is heritage-a gift, a burden, or a rage.

The weight of each line, through heritage,
aged through time;
It becomes the invisible, tangible, cellular soul
of a race, and in each cell is a combination of
his, hers, mine, theirs-
Father, mother, ancestors, cultures, DNA, and
then...Myself.

What am I, which part is me, what is mine?
Time rarely answered-for there is a lifetime to
know.

Time raged through a child's mind and gives
her age,
The mind sifts through freedom, communities,
and "in G-d we trust,"
But what price for freedom, and which G-d, for
how much trust?
And which community: individuality or social
self-destruct?

Time shifts,
As time usually would.
The child aged, the grown-up answers:
All the cultures, all my countries,
They will all meet in me-
This time.

Used by permission of author,
Thin An Vo Sept. 21, 1996

RESPONSE LETTER FROM HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Director Andrea Lapsley
December 1, 1998

"As the year draws to a close and I think about our wonderfully generous community, it gives me great pleasure to again thank PFLAG for the generous gift of \$5,000.00 to the Houston Public Library. Using library and vendor discounts we have purchased 511 volumes valued at \$6,225.45. Using the list you supplied, the fifteen different titles ad multiple copies have been distributed to all of our library locations. Each volume has been book-plated as donated by Parents, Friends and Families of Lesbians and Gays, Houston Chapter/Keeping Families Together/ Helpline: 713-867-9020."

"Again, my sincere thanks for your commitment to Houston Public Library and to our mission of providing educational support for our community. We thank all your members for making such a meaningful gift to our community. As a major educational resource, we are proud to serve as a prime source of information and knowledge for the citizens and students of Houston and Southeast Texas."

I thank PFLAG for having the funds to be able to give in such a wonderful way by helping young gay and lesbians have access to truth and to help them Become who they were created to Be.

Thank you PFLAG!

Jeffrey Mikael Sion-Austin

LIAISON'S WANTED FOR P-FLAG

Are you involved in other gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender organizations as well as P-FLAG? If you are and would be interested in serving as an informal liaison for P-FLAG and the other GLBT organization, please contact Advocacy Chair Roger Donley.

He can be reached at (713)229-1285 during the day, (713) 520-6860 in the evenings, and via e-mail at ZEBRA4@EARTHLINK.NET

FIRST GERMAN MEMORIAL FOR HOLOCAUST GAYS

NewsPlanet Staff
Wednesday, January 27, 1999

At the 1st Day of Remembrance ceremony to recognize the Nazi's gay victims, activists asked for rehabilitation, compensation and an apology.

As Germany observed its fourth annual Day of Remembrance for Victims of Nazism January 27, the government formally remembered gay male victims of the Nazi regime for the first time. The main ceremony was held at the site of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, which because it is near Berlin had about 1,000 gay inmates, the largest share of the estimated 10 - 15,000 gay men incarcerated by the Nazis. The commemoration included a wreath-laying, lectures about the treatment of gay men in the Holocaust, and a performance by a gay men's chorus - because camp staff sometimes allowed gay musicians to perform for inmates.

Yet according to Sachsenhausen ceremony organizer Horst Seferens, the gay camp survivors themselves "don't attend these memorials, and I doubt they ever will." Gays were the only group in the camps who were still considered to be criminals after the liberation, and the laws they had broken --beefed up early in the Nazi rule until even a glance at another man could mean arrest --were not fully repealed until 1994. The gay organization SVD (German association of homosexuals) participated in the Sachsenhausen ceremony, where spokesperson Guenter Dworek said, "Gays have long been the forgotten and excluded victims of the Nazis. The government has still not recognized the persecution that began in 1935. We urge the government to rehabilitate at long last the gay victims of the Nazis. It's a signal that's long overdue." SVD's Klaus Jetz added, "It's time that the parliament apologized to homosexuals."

SVD also called on the government to pay reparations to gay Holocaust victims, which they have not previously received. However, part of the formal agreement between the Socialist and Green Parties in forming Germany's current ruling coalition is the establishment of a government foundation to compensate the so-called "forgotten vic-

tims," including gay men. Some gay men have also been recipients of the compensation funds set up recently in Switzerland, thanks to the efforts of the Swiss group Pink Cross.

The badge that identified the gay inmates was the pink triangle, which has become the symbol of gay liberation. (Lesbians were not specifically targeted as such, although they were included in other categories.) According to speakers at the ceremony, thousands of gay men were castrated as an alternative to the camps. In the camps their housing was separate from that of other inmates. According to historian Joachim Mueller, even though the gay men were often tortured and frequently died of disease, the Nazis did not systematically "eliminate" them as they did some other groups, but sought to "reeducate" them. Therefore they were often put to particularly hard labor on the theory that, "hard work will make you masculine." At Sachsenhausen, much of that labor was in the camp's brick factory.

(Chisum Continued from page 1)

In justifying a state prohibition on gays adopting, Chisum articulated that only the state should have the power to decide the welfare of the child. Chisum said, "I feel that the state can make better choices when it comes to placing children in foster homes and adopting."

Labinski responded, "Chisum's attitude is contrary to the Republican ideals of individual responsibility and autonomy. It also demonstrates that all of Chisum's anti-gay initiatives are nothing more than anti-family, government-based discrimination cloaked in a thin veil of 'family values'."

Labinski said that his organization will continue lobbying Republicans on all anti-gay legislation. The group is sponsoring its own Lobby Day on Monday, April 12th in Austin so Log Cabin members can meet with legislators and talk about the group's message, "Equal Treatment Under The Law."

THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE

By Gregory M. Lousig-Nont, Ph. D.

Today, when I awoke, I suddenly realized that this is the best day of my life, ever!

There were times when I wondered if I would make it to today; but I did! And because I did I'm going to celebrate what an unbelievable life I have had so far: the accomplishments, the many blessings, and, yes, even the hardships because they have served to make me stronger.

I will go through this day with my head held high, and a happy heart. I will marvel at G-d's seemingly simple gifts: the morning dew, the sun, the clouds, the trees, the flowers, the birds. Today, none of these miraculous creations will escape my notice.

Today, I will share my excitement for life with other people. I'll make someone smile. I'll go out of my way to perform an unexpected act of kindness for someone I don't even know. Today, I'll give a sincere compliment to someone who seems down. I'll tell a child how special he is, and I'll tell someone I love just how deeply I care for her and how much she means to me.

Today is the day I quit worrying about what I don't have and start being grateful for all the wonderful things G-d has already given me. I'll remember that to worry is just a waste of time because my faith in G-d and his Divine Plan ensures everything will be just fine.

And tonight, before I go to bed, I'll go outside and raise my eyes to the heavens. I will stand in awe at the beauty of the stars and the moon, and I will praise G-d for these magnificent treasures.

As the day ends and I lay my head down on my pillow, I will thank the Almighty for the best day of my life. And I will sleep the sleep of a contented child, excited with expectation because I know tomorrow is going to be the best day of my life, ever!

(“Not First Choice” Continued from page 1)

failed, has taken its toll. I had tried everything and nothing had worked. I couldn't even keep a lid on the feelings: they kept seeping out the edges. I was trying so hard to be there for everybody else while at the same time trying so hard to ignore the turmoil going on inside me.

I remember the day I realized I was headed for some kind of nervous breakdown. That day I was in so much pain I was sitting in the closet in the dark trying to shut everything out. All of a sudden the door opened and there stood my three year old. She thought I was playing a game and started to giggle. I couldn't stand the noise; I screamed at her. I saw her fear, her face crumpled into tears. As I held her I realized I had become a person who was driving himself crazy.

This new knowledge sent me into crisis. For years I had believed my marriage could overcome my homosexuality. Now I knew if I continued efforts in overcoming my homosexuality, I would end up in padded cell with a straight jacket on. Either way I would end up losing my family.

I saw three options: continue on as I had been and have a nervous breakdown, accept my homosexuality and either remain married or get a divorce. I did not like any of the options, but today I have come to terms with my homosexuality and I am still married. I felt this option allows me to care for my family, and for however long my marriage lasts, I can still be with them.

Homosexuality is not a choice. I just assumed it was. After all, everybody I knew was heterosexual. Or so I thought until I came out.

One last thing. I am a good father; I only wish I could have been a better husband.

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS-

dearest friends and family, we are sorry for not putting out a newsletter for the month of February. February was a very busy month for Stephen and I and we just did not have the extra time to put a newsletter together. We apologize for this and will try harder in the next coming months.

Learning the art of balancing all our different lives: school, work, spirituality, friends, family, our relationship, care and nurture of our three "kids"-Ayla, Sebastian and Elijah Jacob, and household cleaning and duties. I have always admired men and women with children who can do all these things and still keep a clear thinking head. I feel that too often house wives are ignored as "not having a job." I don't know of any job more challenging, but very rewarding. I salute you and admire you. Someday, I too,

will be in that role (hopefully) and feel confident enough that I am up to the challenges. So moms and the few stay home dads, here's "two thumbs up" from me to you.

Love ya, Jeffrey Mikael

We are always looking for newsletter items. So if you have a story, poetry, or just want to say hello, drop us a line or two. We can be reached at 713/868-2674. You may also e-mail Stephen personally at stevenmc@flash.net or Jeffrey at Noahsdove@hotmail.com.

If you would like to mail us any information the address is: Stephen Carleton and Jeffrey Mikael Sion-Austin

201 South Heights Blvd. Apt. #2938

Houston, TX 77007

Stay in peace and grace to you, Stephen and Jeffrey Mikael



PFLAG Houston helps families understand their gay family member(s) and is totally committed to educating the community at large. To accomplish these purposes, we:

- Operate a help line to give information and help to anyone who needs us.
- Distribute educational material such as newsletters and booklets.
- Organize educational events for helping professionals in the city.
- Staff an information booth at city-wide functions.
- Have an active speaker's bureau. We speak out!
- Advertise in local newspapers and magazines to reach parents that might not know about us.
- Maintain an active Internet site with helpful information.
- Testify at legislative hearings.
- Provide scholarships to deserving gay & lesbian high school seniors.

We do all of the above and much more. Your support is crucial to PFLAG Houston continuing to reach out to our community, our state, and our nation! Please take a moment and fill out the membership form on the right and mail it to:

PFLAG Houston
P.O. Box 53796
Houston, TX 77052-3796

Join us in our mission and.....Be a part of Our Rainbow!

Be a Part of Our Rainbow!

Names: _____

Email Address: _____

Address: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

Phone/Fax _____ / _____

Other Information: _____

Check here if this is for address/phone/fax change only.

Check here if you prefer PFLAG mail come in a sealed envelope.

Check here if you do NOT want to receive the PFLAG Flyer Newsletter.

Membership Category (Check One)	Amount
Red	Student/Limited Income
Orange	\$10
Yellow	\$25
Green	\$40
Blue	\$100
Purple	\$250
Silver	\$500
Gold	\$1,000
	\$2,500

Special Contribution: \$ _____

\$8 of your dues go to PFLAG's National organization. Please make checks payable to **PFLAG Houston**.

Your donation may be tax deductible. PFLAG Houston is a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Organization. [I.D. # 76-0372-170]

PFLAG Flyer

Official Newsletter of Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays of Houston, TX

May 1999

<http://www.pflaghtx.org>

Helpline: 713-867-9020



CRIMES AGAINST GAYS MORE HATEFUL AND AGGRESSIVE

Violent incidents against lesbians, gays and bisexuals in the United States dropped slightly in 1998, but the number of such assaults in which victims required hospitalization increased 108 percent, according to a report released Tuesday.

The report by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs also showed that assaults and attempted assaults with guns against gays and lesbians rose 71 percent from 1997 to 1998. The use of bats, clubs and other blunt objects increased by 47 percent; vehicles by 150 percent; ropes and restraints by 133 percent; and knives and sharp objects by 13 percent.

And it said police raids and entrapment "further victimized" homosexuals. "Instances of verbal harassment and abuse of victims by police officers increased by 155 percent. Reports of physical abuse by police grew by more than 866 percent."

While anti-gay incidents dropped 4 percent overall in 1998 to 2,552 from 2,665 in 1997, the number of violent anti-gay incidents far outweighed that finding.

"This year's report indicates that the severity and intensity of the violence toward lesbians, gay men and people of trans-

(Crimes" Continued on page 3)

McDONALD'S McEQUAL EMPLOYMENT

Thanks to the Securities and Exchange Commission's revisions last year to a ban on such actions stemming from the Cracker Barrel restaurants' notorious former anti-gay policy, shareholder activism to establish anti-discrimination employment policies is back again. The first fruits were claimed this week by Seattle, Washington's Pride Foundation, which won a plan from fast-food giant McDonald's to specify sexual orientation among the protected categories in its policies against discrimination and harassment, affecting some 250,000 workers in the U.S. and beyond. The Pride Foundation and its partner in crime, Trillium Asset Management, have picked General Electric and Exxon as their next targets.

("McDonalds" Continued on page 5)

May 1999

Page 1



NEXT MEETING MAY 2ND

We're delighted that Dr. Lynn Mitchell, Professor of Religion at the University of Houston, will be speaking on *Understanding and Communicating With Fundamentalists and Evangelicals*.

Dr. Mitchell has given much time and thought to understanding the attitudes, beliefs and values of Christian Fundamentalists. We can anticipate an informative AND—more importantly—HELPFUL presentation!

Hope to see you there! We meet from 2:00pm - 4:30pm at Christ Church Cathedral, 1115 Texas Avenue at San Jacinto in downtown Houston. After our large group session, please attend one of our small groups. The small groups are the heart of our monthly meetings.

These groups provide everyone an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns and celebrations with others in a safe, confidential environment. There are also special groups for Spouse Support, HIV Concerns, & Advocacy. If you have announcements for the monthly meeting, please contact Sue Null with the announcement by Friday, April 30, at 12:00 noon. She can be reached at 713-664-1083 or via email at Suenull@rice.edu

Here's what's inside...

The Last Session	2
A Home in PFLAG	4
New Year's In July	6
Award to the Rickey's	6

Schedule of Events

May 2 PFLAG Houston Monthly Meeting
2:00-4:30pm
Christ Church Cathedral
1117 Texas Ave.
Downtown Houston

May 6 PFLAG Houston Board Meeting, 7:00-
9:00 pm, Christ Church Cathedral,
1117 Texas Ave.

May 16 PFLAG Woodalnds Monthly Meeting

May 16 PFLAG Galveston Monthly Meeting

May 18 Mid Month Discussion Group, 7:30-
9:00pm, Church of the Epiphany, 9600
S. Gessner at Bissonnet

NEXT MONTH

June 6 PFLAG Houston Monthly Meeting

June 15 PFLAG Houston Mid-Month Meeting

June 20 PFLAG Woodlands Satellite Meeting

June 20 PFLAG Galveston Monthly Meeting

THOUGHT TO CONSIDER

"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing. One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery every day. Never lose a holy curiosity."

~Albert Einstein

THE LAST SESSION, THEATER PARTY, FRIDAY MAY 14

The Last Session is a semi-autobiographical, five-character musical by Steve Schalchlin and Jim Brochu whose central character is an ex-Gospel singer/songwriter with AIDS who has invited his best friends to join him in the studio and sing backup for him for one last recording session. This is a show about a man's search for a reason to live. It's also a show about love and Christianity and divorce and suicide and hope. . .

Here's what the critics are saying about *The Last Session*:

"Along with large doses of humor... *The Last Session* is as dramatically engrossing and warmly human as *Angels in America* and *Rent*. . ."
New York Times CyberTimes

". . . one of the best of the season."
John Willis, Theater World

And the awards have been numerous:
1998 GLAAD's Best Show of the Year (L.A.)
1998 N.Y. Outer Critics Circle Award Nominee
1998 N.Y. Drama League Award Nominee
1998 Winner of 1999 L.A. Drama Critics' Circle
Awards for Writing, Music, Lyrics, Music Direction and
Featured Performance

And it is making its Southwest Premiere in
Houston on May 7, 1999, at THE LITTLE ROOM
DOWNSTAIRS THEATER for a limited engagement.

There are a limited number of seats for
PFLAG-HOUSTON for the Friday, May 14, 8:00 pm

("Theater Party" Continued on page 3)

PFLAG HOUSTON HOLDS MID-MONTH DISCUSSION GROUP

On Tuesday, May 18, PFLAG Houston will hold a mid-month discussion group for those of our members who would like to meet more than once a month or are unable to attend our Sunday meetings. These groups will have a facilitator and focus on small-group sharing and discussion.

The meeting will be at Church of the Epiphany at 9600 S. Gessner at Bissonnet from 7:30-9:00 pm. This meeting will be held on the third Tuesday of every month! All are welcome. For directions or more information, contact the PFLAG Helpline.

PFLAG-HOUSTON NEWS BRIEFS

PFLAG-Houston News Briefs is intended to provide you with a thumbnail sketch of the various activities underway here at PFLAG-Houston. For additional information, contact any of the individuals listed or one of the PFLAG Officers or board members.

Austin March. 22 PFLAGers from Houston joined over 5,000 supporters of sexual minorities who marched on the state capital on Saturday, March 21st. The event was organized (along with similar events throughout the country) by NGLTF (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force) to show support of, or opposition to, the various bills that are currently working their way through the Texas legislature.

Testimony to the State Legislature's Public Education Committee. PFLAGers Don and Kathy Sinclair, and Fred Wilson provided testimony on Monday March 22nd to the Public Education committee that was hearing testimony regarding two bills currently before the legislature -- one would assure that public school teachers are not discriminated against as a result of their sexual orientation; the other offers similar anti-discrimination protection for public school students.

(“News Briefs” Continued on page 4)

(“Theater Party” Continued from page 2)

performance. Tickets are \$15 per person + \$1 handling for credit card purchases. The theater accepts Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover. You may purchase tickets at the May 2 meeting (if any are left) or mail or call in your order at 713-523-0791. The Little Room Downstairs Theater is at 2326 Bissonnet, Houston, TX 77005.

For more information or materials (a study guide is available for congregations) call Gregory Brown at the number above or check out the websites: www.thelastsession.com or Steve Shalchlin's at www.bonusround.com.

SMILE, WE LOVE YOU!

(“Crimes” Continued from page 1)

gender experience has increased significantly since last year," said Clarence Patton Jr., of the New York City Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project.

"What this may be indicating is that perpetrators are getting bolder and their actions are becoming more premeditated since ... you have to make a decision to leave your house with a baseball bat," said Richard Haymes, executive director of the Anti-Violence Project.

The report covered recorded incidents of anti-gay violence in 16 cities, states and/or regions across the United States.

It came on the same day that President Clinton asked Congress to expand federal hate crimes law to include offenses based on sexual orientation.

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs highlighted several cases, in particular the murder last fall of gay college student Matthew Shepard in Wyoming. The slaying prompted calls for legislative change nationally and in Wyoming, one of eight states without a hate crime law.

Among the report's findings:

- The number of actual or suspected anti-gay murders shot up 36 percent, from 14 in 1997 to 33 in 1998.
- Major injuries jumped 12 percent, despite an 11 percent decline in the number of assaults. Victims requiring inpatient hospitalization rose 108 percent, from 53 in 1997 to 110 last year.
- Anti-gay violence committed by strangers rose to 65 percent in 1998, from 60 percent in 1997.

Although the severity of anti-gay violence rose last year, the report said police response "did not rise as much in consequence" in terms of bias crime classification, arrests and processing of complaints.

The report called on the government, the media, business and religious leaders to coordinate efforts against anti-gay violence and to respond to it as a widespread epidemic.

It also recommended increasing the hiring of gay and lesbian police officers, and establishing anti-bias units in every police force.

(*"News Briefs" Continued from page 3*)

Legislative lobbying. 12 Houston PFLAGers visited with their respective legislators and/or other key legislators on Monday March 22nd in support of the various state legislative efforts that affect sexual minorities.

Visit to Jersey Village High School. Irv Smith and Jim Bianchetta visited with the Principal, Assistant Principal, and members of the faculty and guidance department to discuss issues of importance to sexual minorities. Jim and Irv have been invited back to visit with the entire guidance department staff.

Presentation to the San Jacinto Girl Scouts Pluralism committee. Barbara Winston and Jim Bianchetta made a presentation recently to the SJGS's pluralism committee to request that they make changes to the verbiage in their current pluralism statement and to address other issues relating to sexual minorities. We also offered to support the SJGS Council (the largest in the US) with our Speaker's Bureau.

New PFLAG Houston Brochure. An ad hoc committee has formed and is working on the design and production of a new PFLAG Houston brochure to be available later this year.

Should we have a "Paid Staff" person? Another ad hoc committee (Susan Upchurch, Cindi Murphy, Alice Wilson, and Jim Bianchetta) is reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of PFLAG-Houston recruiting the services of a "staff person". All aspects of the issue are being investigated: Part time vs. full time? Where would the money come from to support this on an on-going basis? What would the person do? Can we afford this? If you have thoughts on this issue, let any of the committee members know.

"YOU ALWAYS HAVE A HOME IN PFLAG"

By Nancy Lamkin Olson, Chicago PFLAG

I designed a logo which says, "You Always Have a Home in PFLAG." It has been made into t-shirts, bookbags, sweatshirts, enamel pins, and bumperstickers.

Lately, I have been getting a lot of re-

(*"A Home" Continued on page 6*)

COLLEGE DEMOCRATS ENDORSE THE MILLENNIUM MARCH ON WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON-The Board of Directors of the Millennium March on Washington announces the endorsement of the College Democrats. College Democrats is a grassroots network across the country that serves as the student arm of the national Democratic Party for the entire College community. They engage in a wide variety of activities including grassroots campaign training; state party contacts; local, state, and national campaigns; access to Democratic internships; and opportunities to participate in White House and Congressional events. "We are thrilled to welcome such an extraordinary organization to the Millennium March endeavor", said Donna Red Wing, a co-chair of the MMOW Board of Directors. "College Democrats bring a demonstrated history of democratic participation to the table. We are delighted to have them with us."

In addition, the MMOW is pleased to announce the endorsements of: "Out & About", the newsletter of essential information for Gay & Lesbian Travelers; The Maryland Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers: Committee on Sexual Minority Issues; Coastal Pride of Florida and the Maryland Gay Resource Network. Anyone interested in serving on the Board of Directors or the MMOW Leadership Council should send a letter of interest and a resume to: Duane Cramer, c/o The NAMES Project AIDS Quilt, 310 Townsend Street, #310 San Francisco, CA 94107.

For additional information about the Millennium March on Washington or to become an endorsing organization, please contact our Executive Producer, Robin Tyler, at MMOW, POB 65960, Washington, DC 20035. You may call 202.296.9454. FAX-202/296-9462. E-mail: MMOW2000@aol.com

LIAISON'S WANTED FOR P-FLAG

Are you involved in other gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender organizations as well as P-FLAG? If you are and would be interested in serving as an informal liaison for P-FLAG and the other GLBT organization, please contact Advocacy Chair Roger Donley.

He can be reached at (713)229-1285 during the day, (713) 520-6860 in the evenings, and via e-mail at ZEBRA4@EARTHLINK.NET

OUT TV of TEXAS

Houston TV Program Showcases Gay Community every Monday at 8 PM, via a locally-produced TV show, Houstonians get a look at what is happening in Montrose--from a pancake breakfast at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church to shopping for antiques to the Gay Pride Parade.

TV Montrose, a 30-minute show that airs on Warner Cable Channel 74, recently celebrated its first year on the air. Shows typically present three different stories, ranging from interviews with artists to promotions for such events as PFLAG/HATCH's Spring Fling. A PFLAG advertisement created through PFLAG's Washington office runs almost every week, compliments of TV Montrose's producer, Steve Baker.

A long-time friend and supporter of PFLAG Houston, Steve produced the video Always My Kid in 1994 and Claiming America's Promise in 1997. Currently he is devoting his energy to developing TV Montrose into a statewide television program. "In addition to projecting positive visibility of the gay community into mainstream society, our goal is also to educate our own diverse community about each of our sub cultures and to unite men and women in our family. If we are not united ourselves, how can we expect people outside our community to support us?"

On May 3, the weekly show will begin airing in Dallas as well as Houston and will be renamed OUT TV, of TEXAS. "OUT TV will in effect become the first gay and lesbian television program to link two major cities in America with the same programming each week," says Steve. "With the inclusion of stories from other Texas cities such as Austin, San Antonio and Galveston, OUT TV will in essence become the first statewide gay and lesbian television program in the country."

"Equality thru Visibility" is the slogan for OUT TV. "This slogan reflects the need for positive television visibility of the homosexual community in order to win the support of mainstream Americans in the legislative battles for equality," says Steve.

In addition to viewing this weekly show, watch for copies of OUT TV segments soon to be available for loan through the PFLAG library.

(“McDonalds” Continued from page 1)

Since its founding a dozen years ago, the Pride Foundation has distributed more than \$2-million to more than 200 non-profit groups. It's also built up its endowment to become the largest of any U.S. gay and lesbian philanthropy, and now holds a stock portfolio in excess of \$2.4-million. Its Board and contributors were eager to see that money working in more ways than one towards the Foundation's mission of strengthening the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community in the Pacific Northwest.

It doesn't take a fortune to file a shareholder resolution; \$2,000 held for a year will do, and Pride had a \$55,000 chunk of McDonald's stock. It also had Trillium Assets Management as an anonymous co-filer of its October resolution to add sexual orientation to the equal opportunity employment statement. The company didn't wait for a vote on the resolution, but invited Pride representatives to talk with management. In a matter of weeks McDonald's had agreed to the new policy, including rewriting its employee handbooks, posting new anti-discrimination statements at its sites, and adding sexual orientation to its diversity training sessions.

McDonald's made it easy. A corporate spokesperson told the "Seattle Times" that, "We were already heading in that direction," and Pride chose to start with them partly because of their track record of valuing diversity. However, even though about half of the Fortune 500 companies have already explicitly come out against anti-gay discrimination, Trillium Asset Management's Shelley Alpern knows from experience that the power of the shareholder resolution can sometimes make all the difference.

Trillium, formerly known as Franklin Research and Development Corporation, is a socially responsible investment firm with offices in Boston and San Francisco which bills itself as the only investment firm to date to file shareholder proposals advancing gay-friendly workplace policies. Alpern has asked other companies to add sexual orientation to their policies. She mentions Johnson & Johnson (J&J, famously a former target of shareholder activism regarding South African divestiture in the days of apartheid) as a company, which simply stalled her -- until Trillium filed a resolution. Then J&J acted expeditiously to protect its 93,000 workers from sexual orientation discrimination.

NEW YEAR'S IN JULY

What could possibly disrupt an innocent New Year's Eve Party? Plenty, if it's the eve of 2000, at Y2K!

You'll find out if you save the date of Saturday, July 24. That's the day of the annual musical show by Bering and Friends, and this year PFLAG is a beneficiary of the event, which will be at the Doubletree Hotel on Post Oak.

This is the eighth year of the musical revue, and the fourth year with a black tie gala evening. The evening of July 24 starts with a wine and champagne reception, a seated dinner catered by the Doubletree Hotel, followed by the musical.

If you haven't seen one of the original Bering and Friends shows, you owe it to yourself. This promises to be a highlight of the year. Put Saturday, July 24, on your calendar. If your company can be an underwriter or sponsor a table, or if you can be a table captain, call Peg or George Nevers at 713-526-0471, or e-mail gnev@earthlink.net for an invitation to the kick-off party.

AND THE AWARD GOES TO... GAIL AND PAT RICKEY COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Gail and Pat Rickey are largely responsible for creating the growing, vibrant organization that is P-FLAG Houston today. As past presidents, they have been key in increasing the monthly attendance from 30 people in 1992 to 150 people today. P-FLAG Houston is extremely successful today because of the Rickey's dedication, persistence, and creativity in the organization.

In 1994, Gail conceived of and helped bring to reality the first "Healing the Hurt" conference designed to break the silence surrounding homosexuality. The conference was also designed to give educators information to use every day in their work. Two more conferences of the same name with slightly different emphases have been held since then, and a forth is slated for this fall.

In 1996, Gail organized a major bus trip of Houston P-FLAGGers and other supporters from various southern cities to Washington

DC, called "Moms and Dads Go to Washington." Here the parents lobbied their legislators in favor of ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act). Subsequently, a video was made of the trip and its effects on the participants. A copy was sent to every P-FLAG chapter in the country. Gail was also the first straight board member of LGRL (Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby).

Pat has lent support every step of the way, and now, since his retirement from Exxon last year, has become the Scholarship Chairperson for the growing P-FLAG Scholarship Fund. Pat is also co-chair of this year's Spring Fling, a fundraiser for additional scholarship funds for Gay/ Lesbian/ Bisexual/ Transgender students. The goal for this year's Spring Fling event is \$50,000.

(A Home Continued from page 4)

sponse to the two bumperstickers that I have on either side of the license plate on my car—repeated "thumbs up" signs from those who are delighted to see a PFLAG bumperstickers.

But, truly the most touching thing I've experienced was after coming out of a mall in Northbrook, Illinois. Waiting by my car was a young African-American man. I asked him if I could help him and he said:

"I just want you to know ho much it means to me to see your bumperstickers. It makes me, as a gay man, feel safe and I just wanted to wait here and meet you."

It never occurred to me that this logo might produce that effect but it makes sense. He knew that inside that mall was a person who would embrace him, care for him, and yes...put herself in harms way if need be, for him and others like him. It was inherent in the message of "You Always Have A Home In PFLAG."

Perhaps it's just a pipe dream, but I would like to see this as pervasive as the "I have an honor student in...High" bumperstickers. The good thing is that it's not an in-your-face message. It's a quiet message of support. It shows that the people inside that car, care.

The bumperstickers can be ordered from the website: www.outwear.com Just click on PFLAG. You can also call Maria S. Nasca at 630-894-3210. Bumperstickers are \$2.00.

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS-

not believe what is going on! The "ethnic cleansing" of Albanians in the Balkans and the slaughter of young adults at a high school in Colorado. I am sickened and frustrated at the tremendous loss of life. When will the world learn of how precious life is? Has the world not learned anything from human history? My heart and my love goes out to the families affected by all of this nonsense. The words of Sara Hickman, a Texas folk singer, best sums up how I am feeling right now:

"If we sent our hearts over now, would it ease the pain?
If we sent our hearts over now, would it stop the fighting?
If we sent our hearts over now, would it be enough to

save the world?

Oh, I can't believe I'm the only one who just can't believe this is going on..."

I would like to think that I am not the only one and I challenge everyone, everywhere to send our Hearts Over Now!

In hopes of world peace and wholeness,
Jeffrey Mikael Sion-Austin

We look forward to hearing from you. Electronically we are available for dialogue at stevenmc@flash.net for Stephen Carlton or [Noahsdove@hotmail.com](mailto>Noahsdove@hotmail.com) for Jeffrey Mikael Sion-Austin. Or if you prefer the human side are telephone number is:

713-868-2674

Shalom,

Jeffrey Mikael and Stephen



PFLAG Houston helps families understand their gay family member(s) and is totally committed to educating the community at large. To accomplish these purposes, we:

- Operate a help line to give information and **help to anyone who needs us.**
- Distribute educational material such as newsletters and booklets.
- Organize educational events for helping professionals in the city.
- Staff an information booth at city-wide functions.
- Have an active speaker's bureau. We speak out!
- Advertise in local newspapers and magazines to reach parents that might not know about us.
- Maintain an active Internet site with helpful information.
- Testify at legislative hearings.
- Provide scholarships to deserving gay & lesbian high school seniors.

We do all of the above and much more. Your support is crucial to PFLAG Houston continuing to reach out to our community, our state, and our nation! Please take a moment and fill out the membership form on the right and mail it to:

PFLAG Houston
P.O. Box 53796
Houston, TX 77052-3796

Join us in our mission and.....Be a part of Our Rainbow!

Be a Part of Our Rainbow!

Names): _____

Email Address: _____

Address: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

Phone/Fax _____ / _____

Other Information: _____

Check here if this is for address/phone/fax change only.

Check here if you prefer PFLAG mail come in a sealed envelope.

Check here if you do NOT want to receive the PFLAG Flyer Newsletter.

Membership Category (Check One)	Amount
<input type="checkbox"/> Red	Student/Limited Income \$10
<input type="checkbox"/> Orange	Individual \$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow	Family/Couple \$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Green	Supporter \$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue	Patron \$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple	Sponsor \$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver	Benefactor \$1,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold	Advocate \$2,500

Special Contribution: \$ _____

\$8 of your dues go to PFLAG's National organization.

Please make checks payable to **PFLAG Houston**.

Your donation may be tax deductible. PFLAG Houston is a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Organization. [I.D. # 76-0372-170]

PFLAG Flyer

Official Newsletter of Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays of Houston, TX

June 1999

<http://www.pflaghtx.org>

Helpline: 713-867-9020



PFLAG Houston
PO Box 53796
Houston, TX 77052-3796

OFFICERS AND BOARDS MEMBERS FOR 1999-2000

Co-Presidents: Jeanne Edmonds and Jim Bianchetta
Vice-Presidents: Steve and Debra Trimble
Secretary: Sue Null
Treasurer: Gordon Weisser
Support Groups: Cindi Murphy
Speakers Bureau: Jennifer Dial
Internet Coordinator: Peter Poit
Scholarships: Pat Rickey
Advocacy: Roger Donley
Library: Bob Long and Terri Odom
Helpline: Jane Smith
At Large: Norma Graves, Susan Upchurch, Alice Wilson, Beth Adams, Blake Weisser
Database Manager: Tim Granger
Newsletter: Stephen Carleton and Jeffrey Mikael Sion-Austin
Newsletter Distribution: Nancy Camp
Pride Parade, June: Ron Dupre
Bering and Friends Musical Revue, July: Susan Upchurch
Healing the Hurt Conference, October: Jim Null
Black Tie Dinner, November: Jeffrey Garrett

We are looking for caring people to work with Membership, the Newsletter, Programs, Fund Raising/Grant Writing, Publicity, and with Volunteer Coordination. Please call Jim Bianchetta, 281-242-4335, if you can help in any way.

MUST SEE!

Bering and Friends has created and produce an original musical revue. This musical comedy will have you laughing for days. The theme is "2k or not 2K—A Millenium Dilemma," set at 1999 New Year's Eve party.

Two regular theater performances will be held at Main Street Theater @ Chelsea Market on Friday Evening, July 23 and Sunday afternoon July 25. Tickets are \$15.00 each and can be reserved at 713-285-0007.

A Black Tie Gala is also planned for Saturday July 24 @ the Doubletree Hotel on Post Oak. The Gala will include a wine and champagne reception, silent and live auction, elegant seated dinner and the wonderful musical. Call Peg Nevers at 713-526-0471 for tickets to the Gala.



NEXT MEETING JUNE 6

June is typically the wedding month.

Our June program features four gay and lesbian couples who chose to have a commitment ceremony. Come and enjoy their personal stories.

We meet from 2:00pm - 4:30pm at Christ Church Cathedral, 1115 Texas Avenue at San Jacinto in downtown Houston. After our large group session, please attend one of our small groups.

The small groups are the heart of our monthly meetings. These groups provide everyone an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns and celebrations with others in a safe, confidential environment. There are also special groups for Spouse Support, HIV Concerns, & Advocacy.

If you have announcements for the monthly meeting, please contact Sue Null with the announcement by Friday June 4 at 12:00 noon. She can be reached at 713-664-1083 or via email at Suenull@rice.edu

Here's what's inside...

THOUGHT TO CONSIDER	2
THE A-Z OF LOVE	2
HELP WANTED	2
EDITOR'S NOTES	3

Schedule of Events

June 6 PFLAG Houston Monthly Meeting
2:00-4:30pm
Christ Church Cathedral
1117 Texas Ave.
Downtown Houston

June 10 PFLAG Houston Board Meeting, 7:00-9:00 pm, Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Ave.

June 20 PFLAG Woodalnds Monthly Meeting

June 20 PFLAG Galveston Monthly Meeting

June 15 Mid Month Discussion Group, 7:30-9:00pm, Church of the Epiphany, 9600 S. Gessner at Bissonnet

NEXT MONTH

July 11 PFLAG Houston Monthly Meeting

July 18 PFLAG Woodlands Satellite Meeting

July 18 PFLAG Galveston Monthly Meeting

July 20 PFLAG Houston Mid-Month Meeting

THOUGHT TO CONSIDER

"If you are not personally free to be yourself in that most important of human activities—the expression of love—then life itself loses its meaning."

~Harvey Milk

PFLAG Houston holds Mid-Month Discussion Group

On Tuesday, June 15, PFLAG Houston will hold a mid-month discussion group for those of our members who would like to meet more than once a month or are unable to attend our Sunday meetings. These groups will have a facilitator and focus on small-group sharing and discussion.

The meeting will be at Church of the Epiphany at 9600 S. Gessner at Bissonnet from 7:30-9:00pm. This meeting will be held on the third Tuesday of every month! All are welcome. For directions or more information, contact the PFLAG Helpline.

THE A - Z of LOVE

Author unknown

A Love

- (A)ccepts you as you are
- (B)elieves in "you"
- (C)alls you just to say "HI"
- (D)oestn't give up on you
- (E)nvisions the whole of you (even the unfinished parts)
- (F)orgives your mistakes
- (G)ives unconditionally
- (H)elps you
- (I)nvites you over
- (J)ust "be" with you
- (K)eeps you close at heart
- (L)oves you for who you are
- (M)akes a difference in your life
- (N)ever Judges
- (O)ffers support
- (P)icks you up
- (Q)uiets your fears
- (R)aises your spirits
- (S)ays nice things about you
- (T)ells you the truth when you need to hear it
- (U)nderstands you
- (V)alues you
- (W)alks beside you
- (X)-plain things you don't understand
- (Y)ells when you won't listen and
- (Z)aps you back to reality

HELP WANTED

Help is needed in contacting school counselors about PFLAG scholarships, screening applicants, and fundraising. Call Pat Rickey @ 281-440-0353.

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS-

Well here we are in the midst of the sizzling summer and we would like to take the time to wish everyone a Happy Pride month!

Remember everyday is a day to proud of who you are and who you will become, simply because you are wonderful and beautiful!

Be safe in every sense of the word!



PFLAG Houston helps families understand their gay family member(s) and is totally committed to educating the community at large. To accomplish these purposes, we:

- Operate a help line to give information and help to anyone who needs us.
- Distribute educational material such as newsletters and booklets.
- Organize educational events for helping professionals in the city.
- Staff an information booth at city-wide functions.
- Have an active speaker's bureau. We speak out!
- Advertise in local newspapers and magazines to reach parents that might not know about us.
- Maintain an active Internet site with helpful information.
- Testify at legislative hearings.
- Provide scholarships to deserving gay & lesbian high school seniors.

We do all of the above and much more. Your support is crucial to PFLAG Houston continuing to reach out to our community, our state, and our nation! Please take a moment and fill out the membership form on the right and mail it to:

PFLAG Houston
P.O. Box 53796
Houston, TX 77052-3796

Join us in our mission and.....Be a part of Our Rainbow!

If you would like to contact us we can be reached electronically at stevenmc@flash.net or Jeffrey Miikael at Noahslove@hotmail.com.

If you prefer the human side of communication you can telephone us at 713-868-2674.

Have a superb summer!

In hopes of wholeness,

Jeffrey Mikael and Stephen

Be a Part of Our Rainbow!

Names): _____

Email Address: _____

Address: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

Phone/Fax _____ / _____

Other Information: _____

Check here if this is for address/phone/fax change only.

Check here if you prefer PFLAG mail come in a sealed envelope.

Check here if you do NOT want to receive the PFLAG Flyer Newsletter.

Membership Category (Check One)	Amount
<input type="checkbox"/> Red	Student/Limited Income \$10
<input type="checkbox"/> Orange	Individual \$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow	Family/Couple \$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Green	Supporter \$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue	Patron \$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple	Sponsor \$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver	Benefactor \$1,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold	Advocate \$2,500

Special Contribution: \$ _____

\$8 of your dues go to PFLAG's National organization. Please make checks payable to **PFLAG Houston**.

Your donation may be tax deductible. PFLAG Houston is a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Organization. [I.D. # 76-0372-170]

P-FLAG HOUSTON

In early 1979 the first chapter of P-FLAG came into being through the efforts of Mrs Annella Harrison, mother of local activist Patrick McIlvain. That first group was called "Family and Friends of Gays" (FAFOG). Members went to Washington for the march in October, and also participated in organizing the national PFLAG group - the National Federation of Parents and Friends of Gays.

In 1983 the National and all local groups adopted a new name - "Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (Parent FLAG). Leadership of the Houston chapter went to Freda Jerrell, and remained there until 1986.

In 1987 the current chapter formed and was affiliated with the National organization. This group was led by Alida Webb and Norma Robinson for several years.

The Houston chapter has always been a very pro-active group, and has been blessed with dynamic leadership. Attendance at monthly meetings has grown from 30 to 150 people in the last few years. The chapter has participated in Pride events and parades, marches and rallies, and creative fund raising events. They have received many awards and national recognition for their work.

Some highlights of their work are (1993) participated in the production of the documentary "Always My Kid"; (1994) hosted the first "Healing the Hurt" conference on homophobia and developed a speakers bureau; (1995) hosted second "Healing the Hurt" conference and started a college scholarship program for Gay and Lesbian youth; (1996) spearheaded the "Mom's and Dad's Go To Washington" project (ENDA), and the billboard project for "Project Open Mind"; (1997) hosted the third "Healing the Hurt" conference and premiered the video "Claiming America's Promise"; (1998) bought sets of twenty selected titles for 34 Houston branch libraries; and (1999) with HATCH (Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals) formed the Youth Scholarship Foundation for college scholarships for Gay and Lesbian Youth.,

MISSION STATEMENT

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual persons, 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 civil rights

P_FLAG provides opportunity for confidential dialogue about sexual orientation, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.



HOUSTON

June 1, 1999

Dear PFLAG supporter,

We wanted to call your attention to the upcoming local broadcast of the Academy Award-winning video, "It's Elementary."

The essence of this video is described in the accompanying brochure. Please take a minute to look it over and mark your calendar for Tuesday, June 8, at 9:00 P.M.

In addition to watching this video, you can support sexual minorities in at least two other ways:

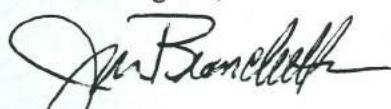
Provide feedback to KUHT. Call KUHT (713-749-8228) and thank them for airing this program and, in particular, for airing it at "prime time." (KUHT advises us that they have received numerous calls from Houstonians—on the advice of their ministers and without ever having seen the video—complaining about the broadcast of this program. Our positive feedback to KUHT is important to balance the criticism.) Letters can be sent to:

Ken Lawrence, Director of Programming
KUHT-TV
4513 Cullen Boulevard
Houston, TX 77004

E-mail can be directed to whilton@kuht.uh.edu.

Subscribe to KUHT. Subscriptions speak volumes. If, after viewing the program, you are sufficiently touched by it, a check for \$40.00 entitles you to a one-year membership (which includes various benefits including museum discounts, a monthly program guide, and discounts at "Stores of Knowledge"). Make your check payable to KUHT and mail it to PFLAG. We will present the checks to KUHT as a token of our appreciation for broadcasting "It's Elementary".

Best regards,


Jim Bianchetta
Co-President


Jeanne Edmonds
Co-President

PFLAG Flyer

Official Newsletter of Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays of Houston, TX

July 1999

<http://www.pflaghtx.org>

Helpline: 713-867-9020



PFLAG Houston
PO Box 53796
Houston, TX 77052-3796

NEW MID-MONTH MEETING TO BEGIN

There will a new mid-month discussion group to begin meeting at The Hollyfield Foundation.

First meeting will be July 13.

2700 Albany from 7:30 p.m. —9:00 p.m.
(Albany is off of Montrose at Fairview)

PRIDE MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT

CLINTON

Planet Out News

Thirty years ago this month, at the Stonewall Inn in New York City, a courageous group of citizens resisted harassment and mistreatment, setting in motion a chain of events that would become known as the Stonewall Uprising and the birth of the modern gay and lesbian civil rights movement. Gays and lesbians, their families and friends, celebrate the anniversary of Stonewall every June in America as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month; and, earlier this month, the National Park Service added the Stonewall Inn, as well as the nearby park and neighborhood streets surrounding it, to the National Register of Historic Places.

"I am proud of the measures my Administration has taken to end discrimination against gays and lesbians and ensure that they have the same rights guaranteed to their fellow Americans. Last year, I signed an Executive order that amends Federal equal employment opportunity policy to prohibit discrimination in the Federal civilian work force based on sexual orientation. We have also banned discrimination based on sexual orientation in the granting of security clearances. As a result of these and other policies, gay and lesbian Americans serve openly and proudly throughout the Federal Government. My Administration is also working with congressional leaders to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would prohibit most private employers from firing workers solely because of their sexual orientation.

"America's diversity is our greatest strength. But, while we have come a long way on our journey toward tolerance, understanding, and mutual respect, we still have a long way to go in our efforts to end discrimination. During the past year, people across our country have been shaken by violent acts that struck at the heart of what it means to be an American and at the values that have always defined us as a Nation. In 1997, the most recent year for which we have statistics, there were more than 8,000 reported hate crimes in our country -- almost one an hour. Now is the time for us to take strong and decisive action to end all hate crimes, and I reaffirm my pledge to work with the Congress to pass the Hate

(Continued on page 4)



NEXT MEETING JULY 11

PFLAG Houston in conjunction with HATCH will award this year's college scholarships to the selected recipients. The recipients will share their personal stories of what it is like to be openly gay at their age and their experiences in the high school setting.

Please come and be a part of this event that honors and blesses these gifted students.

We meet from 2:00pm - 4:30pm at Christ Church Cathedral, 1115 Texas Avenue at San Jacinto in downtown Houston. After our large group session, please attend one of our small groups.

The small groups are the heart of our monthly meetings. These groups provide everyone an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns and celebrations with others in a safe, confidential environment. There are also special groups for Spouse Support, HIV Concerns, & Advocacy.

If you have announcements for the monthly meeting, please contact Sue Null with the announcement by Friday July 9th, at 12:00 noon. She can be reached at 713-664-1083 or via email at Suenull@rice.edu

Here's what's inside...

Donations to PFLAG	2
Strength In Numbers	3
Nature or Nurture	4
Letter to Governor Bush	5

Schedule of Events

July 11 PFLAG Houston Monthly Meeting
2:00-4:30pm
Christ Church Cathedral
1117 Texas Ave.
Downtown Houston

July 18 PFLAG Woodlands Satellite Meeting

July 18 PFLAG Galveston Monthly Meeting
Health Merchant at 27th and
Broadway in Galveston

July 20 Mid Month Discussion Group, 7:30-
9:00pm, Church of the Epiphany, 9600
S. Gessner at Bissonnet

NEXT MONTH

August 1 PFLAG Houston Monthly Meeting

August 15 PFLAG Woodlands Satellite Meeting

August 15 PFLAG Galveston Monthly Meeting

August 17 PFLAG Houston Mid-Month Meeting

THOUGHT TO CONSIDER

"I am wounded, but not slain.
I'll lay me down and bleed awhile,
And then I'll rise again!"

I am unaware who said this, but whom-
ever you are or were, I thank thee for your
simple words that speak to my spirit, in
this month of Liberation.

JM

PFLAG Houston holds Mid-Month Discussion Group

On Tuesday, July 21, PFLAG Houston will hold a mid-month discussion group for those of our members who would like to meet more than once a month or are unable to attend our Sunday meetings. These groups will have a facilitator and focus on small-group sharing and discussion.

The meeting will be at Church of the Epiphany at 9600 S. Gessner at Bissonnet from 7:30-9:00pm. This meeting will be held on the third Tuesday of every month! All are welcome. For directions or more information, contact the PFLAG Helpline.

DONATIONS TO PFLAG

PFLAG would like to thank the following people for their generous donation to the chapter. We truly appreciate their support.

Suzanne Anderson Properties
In honor of Elizabeth
In memory of Fritz Kohl Hausen
John W. Bush
Kenneth A. Croft
Roger S. Donley
Carma and Glen Gibler
In memory of Mary K. Jones
The Grey Party
Robert L. Jones
Russell G. Jones
Doris and Lane Kalmin
kati headwear, inc.
John W. Kellet
Mary Lou Kurtz
In memory of Mary K. Jones
Phil Lacy
Marc and Jo Ann Levine
Naurice Martin
Rebecca S. Miller
Sue and Jim Null
Terri and David Odom
Jane and Irv Smith
Carolyn and Merill Stiles
Alan and Judy Stubblefield
Don and Susan Upchurch
Blake and Gordon Weisser
If you or someone you know would like to make a donation, please contact a board member or call the help line, 713/867-9020.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

By Terri Odom

Those who attended the April 11, 1999 meeting were able to view slides and photographs of the "March for Our Families" in Austin, Texas, marking the beginning of the nationwide Equality Begins at Home week. The following is a personal report of that March 21, 1999 event.

I am a "newbie" in PFLAG. My first monthly meeting was in February. I joined PFLAG to be an ally and an advocate of gay and lesbian persons and to do what I could to promote tolerance in general. I was very excited about going to Austin to march with my new PFLAG friends and I invited my sister, Jennifer DeWinne, a San Antonio resident, to come with me.

Jennifer and I arrived in Austin the evening before the march and stayed overnight at the townhouse of my friends, Steven and Richard. If they had been in Austin, I'm sure they would have joined us at the march, but their permanent residence is in Berkeley, California. It seemed appropriate to be staying in the Austin home of a gay couple I first met about 23 years ago. Their loving, longtime commitment to each other is evident in the décor of their mutual homes, and is further evidence that families should not always be defined as man, woman and children.

After registering as marchers, my sister and I found the Houston PFLAG group. We were pleased to spot the San Antonio PFLAG group nearby, and we spoke to them briefly. While waiting for the march to begin, we were honored to meet and speak to Rep. Glen Maxey.

The weather on the day of the march could not have been better. Brilliant sunshine, comfortable temperature and a cloudless sky enhanced the celebratory atmosphere. I thought to myself that the only thing that would make it more perfect would be a rainbow. Although Mother Nature could not produce a rainbow on such a day, we marchers made our own rainbow with colorful balloons, signs and all manner of dress. Of course, a number of marchers carried the beautiful rainbow flags or banners. Drummers, singers and children of all ages further enhanced the festive atmosphere. A few marchers even brought their dogs.

After a while the somewhat chaotic gathering began the march up Congress Avenue to the Capitol. Jennifer and I hadn't brought our own signs, but we were able to obtain signs and balloons from the organizers before the march began. We became separated along the way, but thanks to our signs and balloons we were able to find each other when we reached the steps of the Capitol. "Exhilaration" is the only word I can think of to describe the emotions I experienced as we marched. There were only a few people on the streets to see our throng—on Sundays most of the Congress Avenue businesses are closed. But occasionally a shout or yell of joy would ripple through the marchers. At one point I heard someone on a rooftop shout "Yeah PFLAG!" as we passed. I was pleased me to see gay and lesbian couples feel free to express affection for one another in public by holding hands or with their arms around each other. It made me feel good to be a part of the loving, accepting atmosphere of the day. After all, that's what PFLAG is all about.

The only negative incident occurred just outside the Capitol grounds where a very small group of haters had gathered to protest our presence. I was thrilled to pick up the chant "NO MORE HATE!" as we streamed past them. I hope that the size of our group was discouraging to them, but I know better. People who hold that much hate are not so easily dissuaded from their beliefs. But there is strength in numbers, and I read estimates ranging from 2,000 to 8,000 marchers. I know it was more than the former, but I question the latter number. We definitely out numbered the haters. I think I saw about a dozen of them.

At the Capitol we heard remarks from a long list of speakers. I won't list all the names, but among those who spoke to us were Representatives Maxey, Debra Danburg and Harryette Ehrhardt, Col. Margarethe Cammeyer, and Chastity Bono. I was surprised and thrilled by the presence of such nationally known figures as Col. Cammeyer and Chastity Bono. I have to say that a small number of the speakers seemed to stray from the day's agenda to present different causes, but their remarks did not detract from the overall event.

When the program concluded, Jennifer and I said goodbye to our friends. We thanked a few of the state troopers who were on hand to provide security before joining the stream of people walking back to the staging area. We left Austin that day happy to have participated in such a powerful event. I strongly urge anyone who hasn't participated in this kind of event to give it a try. I plan to participate in the Gay Pride Parade in June, and I'm going to bring my own sign and balloons. I hope to see you there and at the next march in Austin!

HOMOSEXUALITY: NATURE OR NURTURE?

From Lansing, MI newsletter

The condition known as homosexuality is no longer simply regarded as a perversion or a mental illness. Scientific researchers, sociologist, and even the clergy are racing to discover the true cause of sexual orientation toward the same gender. The following theories have yet to be published in medical or academic journals.

Genetic/Pre-natal Theories

1. The Broadway Theory: Scientists have discovered a gene in gay men that bears a vague resemblance to Ethel Merman.
2. The Gray Flannel Theory: Studies have shown that pregnant women who worked at Macy's cologne counters were 15 times more likely to have gay sons than those who worked in footwear.
3. The Acid-Rain-Got-Nothing-on-This Theory: Strong evidence exists that an "acid wash" can turn a straight fetus gay. Physicians advise pregnant women to avoid excessive intake of cola drinks, vinegar and batteries.

Social Theories

4. Spank the Toadstool Theory: A prominent social research team theorizes that all homosexuality is a direct result of childhood trauma, such as abuse or eating bad mushrooms before the age of three. The margin for error on this study has been cause for considerable controversy.
5. The Mommy-Dearest Theory: Long standing evidence indicates that boys raised primarily by their mothers grew up to be gay men. Girls raised primarily by their mothers also grew up to be gay men.
6. The Good New Theory: Christian researchers have known for decades that homo-

sexuality can be cured by prayer. Subsequent studies have shown, however, that most gay men and lesbians are praying for a significant other.

(Continued from page 1)

and I reaffirm my pledge to work with the Congress to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

"But we cannot achieve true tolerance merely through legislation; we must change hearts and minds as well. Our greatest hope for a just society is to teach our children to respect one another, to appreciate our differences, and to recognize the fundamental values that we hold in common. As part of our efforts to achieve this goal, earlier this spring, I announced that the Departments of Justice and Education will work in partnership with educational and other private sector organizations to reach out to students and teach them that our diversity is a gift.

In addition, the Department of Education has issued landmark guidance that explains Federal standards against sexual harassment and prohibits sexual harassment of all students regardless of their sexual orientation; and I have ordered the Education Department's civil rights office to step up its enforcement of anti-discrimination and harassment rules. That effort has resulted in a groundbreaking guide that provides practical guidance to school administrators and teachers for developing a comprehensive approach to protecting all students, including gays and lesbians, from harassment and violence."

"Since our earliest days as a Nation, Americans have strived to make real the ideals of equality and freedom so eloquently expressed in our Declaration of Independence and Constitution. We now have a rare opportunity to enter a new century and a new

millennium as one country, living those principles, recognizing our common values, and building on our shared strengths.

"NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 1999 as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month. I encourage all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that celebrate our diversity, and to remember throughout the year the gay and lesbian Americans whose many and varied contributions have enriched our national life.

HAVE A HAPPY 4TH!

LETTER TO GOVERNOR GEORGE W. BUSH

By PFLAG-er Alan Montgomery

Dear Mr. George W. Bush, Governor of Texas,

I am writing to you on behalf of my daughter. During your next session, you will be considering several bills that affect her and our family.

My daughter was a soldier in Desert Storm and lives with the officially non-existent "Desert Storm Syndrome." Her doctors have strongly recommended that she not bear children. You will be considering a bill that will prevent her from being a mother (and my wife and me the joy of being grandparents). I am referring to Bill #382.

Yes, my daughter is a lesbian. But, she works everyday, pays taxes, votes, and has certainly served our country. Yet, some people want to deny her the option to adopt a child. This also will deny an unwanted child a home, family and the opportunity to grow up being loved and cared for (as all children deserve).

I fail to understand why in this period of continual family crisis in Texas and America that anyone would deny a child the opportunity to be loved. State homes are full, foster families are in short supply and some people still want to deny an entire sector of our society from helping solve the crisis of loved, unwanted and orphaned children.

Are all gay and lesbian people suitable for one of the most important jobs in life: being a parent? No! They need to be screened, as any other prospective parent would be. However, their sexuality should not be a factor.

You cannot "catch" homosexuality. Our family has been around our lesbian daughter her entire life, and none of us have "caught" it. These children will not catch it either.

I hope that you will both support all of the children that need to be loved in a home of their own, as well as the millions of want-to-be grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. I also hope that you will support my daughter and all other gay and lesbian people.

Thank you for your time. G-d bless you and your decisions.

Sincerely,

Alan G. Montgomery

Editors note: Alan, this letter not only spoke for you and your family, but also for the thousands of gays and lesbians who share your thoughts. Thank you from one gay man who someday in the next ten years wishes to adopt a child. Thank you for standing up for me. JM

Please also read the Governor's response on the next page, page six.

RESPONSE FROM GOVERNOR BUSH TO ALAN MONTGOMERY'S LETTER

April 12, 1999

Mr. Alan G. Montgomery
Woodallen Photography
3505 Louisiana Street
Houston, TX 77002

Dear Mr. Montgomery:

Thank you for your letter about House Bills 382 and 415. I understand this issue is very important to you. The job of parenting — teaching, protecting, and nurturing children — is one of the most important responsibilities adults can assume.

Single parents, both mothers and fathers, often do an outstanding job raising children, sometimes against all odds. However, I believe, and the research shows, that children's needs are best served in a loving home with both a mother and father present to provide regular and consistent nurturing. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the child for the State to seek traditional mother and father families for adoption or foster placements.

I encourage you to contact your state representative and state senator to let them know your thoughts about these two bills. I appreciate your letting me know your thoughts on this issue.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Editors note: You can write or call Governor of Texas, George W. Bush at:

PO Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711
(512) 463-2000 (voice)
(512) 475-3165 (TDD)

NOTES FROM THE EDITORS-

Happy Fourth of July everybody!

Remember none of us are free, until all of us are free, until then there's PFLAG.

Steve and I will no longer be doing the PFLAG Flyer. Rest assured though, we have a new crew that will be taking over the production of the newsletter. And from what I hear, you all are in for a big surprise. Don't worry it is a good thing!

The last Flyer that Steve and I will be doing is the August issue. Our new crew will assume all

responsibilities.

We have learned many things about doing the newsletter and feel that we have done a good job, amidst all the challenges of life.

We look forward to seeing you all soon, until then have a blessed Holiday and a beautiful summer.

If you have any items that you would like to see in the newsletter for the August issue, please email Jeffrey Mikael at: tolife@flash.net or call 713-942-1050.

In hopes of wholeness,

Stephen

Jeffrey Mikael



PFLAG Houston helps families understand their gay family member(s) and is totally committed to educating the community at large. To accomplish these purposes, we:

- Operate a help line to give information and help to anyone who needs us.
- Distribute educational material such as newsletters and booklets.
- Organize educational events for helping professionals in the city.
- Staff an information booth at city-wide functions.
- Have an active speaker's bureau. We speak out!
- Advertise in local newspapers and magazines to reach parents that might not know about us.
- Maintain an active Internet site with helpful information.
- Testify at legislative hearings.
- Provide scholarships to deserving gay & lesbian high school seniors.

We do all of the above and much more. Your support is crucial to PFLAG Houston continuing to reach out to our community, our state, and our nation! Please take a moment and fill out the membership form on the right and mail it to:

PFLAG Houston
P.O. Box 53796
Houston, TX 77052-3796

Join us in our mission and.....Be a part of Our Rainbow!

Be a Part of Our Rainbow!

Names): _____

Email Address: _____

Address: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

Phone/Fax _____ / _____

Other Information: _____

Check here if this is for address/phone/fax change only.

Check here if you prefer PFLAG mail come in a sealed envelope.

Check here if you do NOT want to receive the PFLAG Flyer Newsletter.

Membership Category (Check One)	Amount
<input type="checkbox"/> Red	Student/Limited Income \$10
<input type="checkbox"/> Orange	Individual \$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow	Family/Couple \$40
<input type="checkbox"/> Green	Supporter \$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue	Patron \$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Purple	Sponsor \$500
<input type="checkbox"/> Silver	Benefactor \$1,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Gold	Advocate \$2,500

Special Contribution: \$ _____

\$8 of your dues go to PFLAG's National organization. Please make checks payable to **PFLAG Houston**.

Your donation may be tax deductible. PFLAG Houston is a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Organization. [I.D. # 76-0372-170]



PFLAG Flyer

Special Edition

July 15, 1999
P. O. Box 53796
Houston, TX 77052-3796
2700 Albany, Suite 304
Houston, Texas 77006

PFLAG has a new HOME at Hollyfield Center

Hollyfield Foundation and PFLAG Sign One-Year Agreement to Facilitate Move In July 1

By DONNA PINNICK
Newsletter Editor

PFLAG Houston has signed a lease with The Hollyfield Foundation and Convention Center effective July 1, 1999. The agreement moves the previously home-based non-profit volunteer group into a 927 sq. ft. suite at 2700 Albany for one year.

"We were looking for a home, not just an office," said PFLAG Co-President Jeanne Edmonds. "The Hollyfield offers us an ideal situation to expand our organization yet keep the feeling of family and home. It is spacious, convenient and welcoming," she added.

The three-story Renaissance Revival building, constructed in 1913, is located about half a dozen blocks north of Westheimer and

west of Louisiana. Listed on the National Historic Registry, the building is surrounded by gardens and boasts plentiful parking.

"The Hollyfield offers us an ideal situation to expand our organization yet keep the feeling of family and home. It is spacious, convenient and welcoming." — Jeanne Edmonds

The Hollyfield Foundation awarded PFLAG Houston a grant to facilitate PFLAG's expansion into the Convention Center. The two organizations share similar missions in the gay and lesbian community.

Before the ink was dry on the lease, donations began arriving. Suzanne Anderson made the first contribution of cash and a printer.

"The Home Team" committee, whose task it is to make ready the space for meetings, training sessions, project work, office and storage are preparing a specific and detailed "Wish List" much like a bridal registry.

They are also requesting grants from various foundations and businesses for furniture, equipment, services and supplies. More information to come soon.

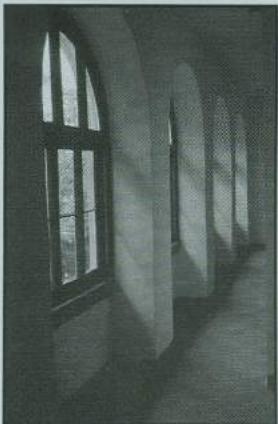
CONTENTS

- Photos
- Dates
- Wish List
- Home Team
- Plans
- Uses

•••POSSIBLE USES FOR Our New Home•••

- All PFLAG board and committee meetings can be held here.
- Part or all of the library could have a permanent home.
- People will be able to stop by and pick up information.
- The help line can be answered by a live person.
- We can bring in community leaders, officials or reporters.
- Mid-month groups can be expanded to weekly groups.
- A staffer can work with people in person, face-to-face.
- All of our files, records, trophies and archives will have a home.
- More opportunities for internships from schools of social work, etc.
- We can host the "Finding Our Voices" workshop regularly.
- A social space for members to come together and work on the projects. For example, Healing the Hurt can meet here, do follow-up calls to schools, put together information packets and more, creating a vital, lively place for parents and friends and gays to work together.
- When the space is ready, Theresa Wood, Social Chair, is planning a home warming party. It will be our opportunity to welcome the community and thank everyone for their generous donations and well wishes. Mid to late October is our target date.

HOLLYFIELD LOOKS GOOD and meets our needs



The Hollyfield Convention Center:

- Top left photo • The view of the space as you enter Suite 304.
- Top right photo • The main entrance to the Center. The Hollyfield Foundation office is to the left and elevator to the right.
- Bottom left photo • A view of the largest room in the suite. It is on display with borrowed tables and chairs. This is where the board and mid-month meetings are held.
- Bottom right photo • A large parking lot adjacent to the Convention Center. Parking is also available in front of the building.

Access to the Suite is by Key only:

Board officers, chair persons and project coordinators have keys to the elevator and suite.



PFLAG Houston, with its new home at the Hollyfield Convention Center, now offers a visual reminder to the gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender community of its commitment to support families, educate the public and advocate for equal rights. PFLAG Houston expects to grow and expand services to families.

If you . . .

- ★ If you have something on the wish list to **donate**, contact Blake Weisser or Cindi Murphy.
- ★ If you have a **check** to donate, send it to P. O. Box 53796 Houston, TX 77052-3796
- ★ If your company wants to fund a **more expensive** item, contact Donna Pinnick.
- ★ If you have files, archives, photographs, **storage** items, take them to Hollyfield, Suite 304 (Officers have keys).
- ★ If you **know someone who knows someone** with connections for office equipment or furniture, contact Donna Pinnick.
- ★ If you want to get **involved** in this project, contact Steve Carleton (Membership Involvement Chair).

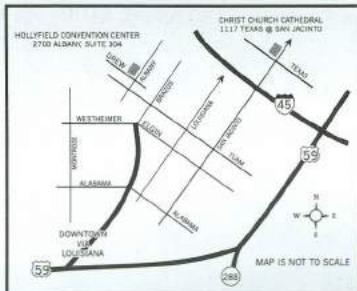
Other Home Team members: Jennifer Dial, Alice Wilson and Kyle Young

Call the Helpline to reach the Home Team Members 713.867.9020

- ◆ Tables & Chairs
- ◆ Computers
- ◆ Wastebaskets
- ◆ File Cabinets
- ◆ Paper & Pens
- ◆ Housekeeping Service
- ◆ Ceiling Fan Globes
- ◆ Coffee Pot

Tentative **WISH** list

- ◆ Framing
- ◆ Display Case
- ◆ Shelving
- ◆ Telephones
- ◆ TV & Stand
- ◆ Copier
- ◆ Door Plaque
- ◆ Fax
- ◆ Lighting
- ◆ Stapler
- ◆ Software
- ◆ VCR



From Southwest Freeway, take the "Downtown via Louisiana" extension exit. Follow it to its end (stop light at Elgin Street.) Continue toward downtown on Brazos Street for three blocks to Tuam Street. Turn left onto Tuam for four blocks, to Albany Street. Turn right onto Albany. Go one block. The parking lot is on your right or there is parking in front of the building at Drew.

NEWS • NOTES • QUOTES

Community Newspaper Ads Run July-October
Bunnies on the Bayou Grant Funds Ad & Calendar Campaign
The community newspaper ad campaign, which started the last week of July, features PFLAG's print ad "Your Gay Child Needs You..." and will run in 13 Houston community papers until October because of a grant from the Bunnies on the Bayou organization. The ads, measuring 3X2 inches, will run the week prior to the general meeting. The weekly Community Calendar section will also receive a press release announcing the meetings. Additionally, 14 city zones of the Houston Chronicle's "This Week" will also receive general meeting announcements for its calendar. —Submitted by Jeanne Edmonds, Co-President

WANTED: Positive Impact from Speaking Out

"Finding Our Voices" stories are part of November Program
We are looking for members who have a short story that affirms the changes that occurred in their lives once they made the decision to speak out. PFLAG needs volunteers to contribute their experiences of responding to "gay bashing" language or action that had a positive effect on the situation. Maybe your story is about the time when being a part of PFLAG made your journey easier and when you began to learn and grow. This will be a very short (1-2 minute) part of the November program **"Finding Our Voices"** Please contact Jeanne Edmonds or Barbara Winston.

MEETING NEWS

Luttrell's Story Featured in August Program

Sunday, August 1, 1999 Smoky Mountain Homecoming

PFLAG member Dean Luttrell talks about his "Smoky Mountain Homecoming-A Story of Reconciliation." Dean shares the experiences of his 13 year journey to reconnect with family.

We meet from 2-4:30 pm at Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Avenue at San Jacinto in downtown Houston.

Please attend one of our small groups. The small groups are the heart of our monthly meetings. These groups provide everyone an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns and celebrations with others in a safe, confidential environment.

If you have announcements for the general meeting, please contact Sue Null, Secretary by 6pm Thursday, July 29. She can be reached at 713.664.1083 or via email: suenull@ruf.rice.edu

Woodlands Features Judge Edie Connelly

The Woodlands satellite meeting is August 15, 2pm at Northwoods Unitarian Church, 1370 North Millbend Dr. The Program is "Oppression - It Can Happen to YOU!" presented by Judge Edie Connelly.

Judge Connelly has been the precinct three Justice of the Peace for 13 years. She was the founder and presiding judge of precinct three Teen Court.

Judge Connelly is a member of PFLAG Houston and a strong supporter of The Woodlands satellite. Small group sharing will follow presentation.—Submitted by Bob Long

Galveston Moves Meetings to New Location

Note the new location of Galveston PFLAG meetings: The offices of the AIDS Coalition of Coastal Texas, 1405 39th Street on the third Sunday of each month at 2 pm. — Submitted by Janet



\$50,000 Raised & Awarded to Youths

Eight Scholars Awarded PFLAG/HATCH Scholarships

Through generous donations from NR 99, The Matthews Foundation and numerous individuals, PFLAG & HATCH was able to award \$50,000 in college scholarships to eight area sexual minority students.

Austin Ku received one year \$1,000 scholarship while Michelle Kilgore and Cornelio Medellin received one year \$2,000 scholarships.

Claudia Brown and Manuel Cavazos received three year \$7,500 scholarships. Christopher Cardenas, Jennifer Guest and Laura Springel received four year \$10,000 scholarships.

Pat Rickey and Gary Van Ooteghem presented the scholarships during the PFLAG monthly general meeting.

PFLAG Houston and HATCH joined forces in 1998 to raise and award college scholarships. They raised \$34,500 their first year and over \$50,000 in 1999. PFLAG & HATCH Committees have presented 23 scholarships totaling \$99,500 since 1995. — Submitted by Pat Rickey, Scholarship Chair

Mid Month Meeting News . . .

Hollyfield Group Meets Second Tuesday

The Hollyfield Conference Center, 2700 Albany, Suite 304, August 10, 7:30-9pm — By Cindi Murphy

Epiphany Group Meets Third Tuesday

The Church of the Epiphany, 9600 S. Gessner at Bissonnet, August 17, 7:30-9pm — By Cindi Murphy

Deadline for including materials in the newsletter: 15th of the month. Contact the editor: skeeter3@wt.net or 281.879.4455

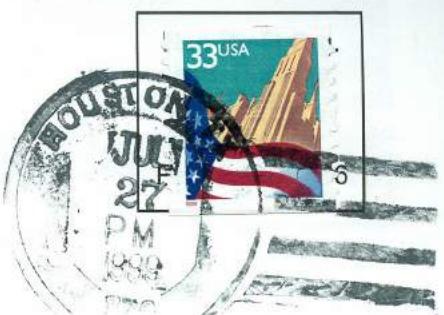
MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

If you've been thinking about joining or renewing your PFLAG membership, now is a good time.



**AUGUST 1999
P. O. Box 53796
Houston, TX 77052-3796**

Address Service Requested



PFLAG Archives
1034 W 17th St
Houston TX 77008-3436