

# PFLAG FLYER

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

PO Box 53796

Houston, Texas 77052-3796

HelpLine: 713-867-9020

WWW: <http://www.insync.net/~pflagwww>

February 1996

## Next Meeting February 4

### Discrimination in the Workplace

More and more corporations are recognizing gay and lesbian employees and the need to protect them from discrimination. Recently Disney & MGM even announced benefits for domestic partners of gay and lesbian employees. What is involved in setting up anti-discrimination policies? Do they work?

Join us this month as we hear from representatives of 3 companies that have implemented anti-discrimination policies for gays and lesbians. Dale Carpenter of Vinson & Elkins, Sister Pauline Troncale CCVI of St. Joseph Hospital, and Bridget Langdale of Texas Commerce Bank will be joining us to discuss their companies efforts at protecting gays and lesbians from discrimination in the workplace.

Join us from 2:00pm-4:30pm at St. Francis Episcopal Church, 345 N. Piney Point, off San Felipe between Voss & Gessner.

After our large group session, join us in one of our small groups. The small groups are the heart of our monthly meetings. These groups provide everyone with an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns, and celebrations with others in a safe environment. If you are new to PFLAG and have recently found out about your gay or lesbian loved one, than our Family & Friends First Timers group is for you. There are also special groups for Spouse Support, HIV Concerns, and Advocacy. So plan to join us this month! We hope to see you there!

## Hate Crime in Katy Sparks Fire of Support and Activism

By Tom Jackson,

Special to the TEXAS TRIANGLE

HOUSTON--Sixteen-year lovers Fred Mangione and Kenneth Stern, who made their living as waiters and selling cosmetics on the side, frequently ended their days at Dolly's Place, a neighborhood pub in Katy on the outskirts of Texas' largest city.

But a jarring halt to the relationship and their routine came last week when both were attacked and one died at the hands of two half-brothers--self-proclaimed members of a California-based neo-Nazi organization



said that they were "going to get a fag." Later, they bragged: "We cut up this fag real bad."

The suspects, both from Columbia Falls, Mont., and visiting their mother in the Katy area, have been charged and are in custody. Harris County Sheriff Tommy Thomas lost no time declaring the killing "a hate crime."

Stern told police that the four had met at the bar and taken a drive together to get cigarettes. They returned to the bar 30 minutes later, with Stern and one of the suspects going inside, where Stern was attacked. When he returned to his van, he found Mangione dying.

The suspects were caught running from the scene, covered in blood. They confessed to the crime but claimed it was provoked by sexual advances.

Carolyn Mobley, associate pastor of Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection, termed the murder "heinous."

Mobley said: "The fact that these people would brag about it like there was no consequence indicates to me that they actually thought someone would approve. I hope and pray that our society is ready to stand up and say, 'no more, we will not tolerate this kind of hate, this kind of barbarism'."

Meanwhile, the German Peace Corps, the California-based neo-Nazi group with which the suspects claim affiliation, is under investigation by the FBI. Norma Graves, co-president of P-FLAG Houston, said she has been "pleased by the response from the FBI to this horrible act because they immediately classified the crime as a hate crime and are investigating it as domestic terrorism."

"I think only when our leaders in government respond in this way will it result in a greater understanding of the importance of stiffer hate crimes penalties," added Graves.

The suspects have been charged and are being held in the Harris County jail on \$50,000 bail each. "This was good work by law enforcement and the deputy who apprehended them," said Annise Parker, who serves as law enforcement liaison to the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus.

## Upcoming Events

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Feb. 3</b>     | <b>Hate Crimes Community Meeting, Sponsored by PFLAG Project Open Mind, 1:00pm at Bering Methodist (See article)</b> |
| <b>Feb. 4</b>     | <b>PFLAG Meeting</b>   |
| <b>Feb. 17</b>    | <b>"Homosexuality and Education" Seminar sponsored by PFLAG Houston, PFLAG Victoria and H.A.T.C.H (See article)</b>  |
| <b>Feb. 26</b>    | <b>Workshop on Sexual Minority Youth, 8:30am - 5:00pm at Zion Lutheran Church, 3606 Beauchamp (See article)</b>      |
| <b>Mar. 3</b>     | <b>PFLAG Meeting</b>   |
| <b>Mar. 6</b>     | <b>"Voices of Hope" Catholic Parents Network (See article)</b>   |
| <b>Mar. 16-22</b> | <b>PFLAG Bus Trip to DC (See Page 3 Articles)</b>  |

hate crime." Harris said the suspects said they committed the crime because one of the assaulted men had placed a hand on one of them in their van. The brutal murder--the tenth slaying of a gay man in Texas in recent years--left a statewide community in mourning but no more so than the mothers of Stern and Mangione, who lived with them.

The Rev. David Welles of the Thai Presbyterian Church of Houston, who last Sunday participated in a memorial service for Mangione, said he knew Mangione and Stern as neighbors. He said Mangione "was friendly with everyone... almost naively that way" and termed his neighbors "reliable, trustworthy, good community members."

"Fred cared for both his own mother and Kenny's mom," said Welles. "He could not imagine not caring for them. I'm proud to have known Fred."

U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-



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But a jarring halt to the relationship and their routine came last week when both were attacked and one died at the hands of two half-brothers--self-proclaimed members of a California-based neo-Nazi organization.

Stern said Mangione, 46, suffered more than 35 knife wounds. "He bled to death in my arms," reportedly said Stern. "I said, 'Breathe with me, breathe with me', but he was gone."

Witnesses told police that, earlier, the suspects--Daniel Christopher Bean, 19, and Ronald Henry Gauthier, 21--had

real bad." The suspects, both from Columbia Falls, Mont., and visiting their mother in the Katy area, have been charged and are in custody. Harris County Sheriff Tommy Thomas lost no time declaring the killing "a hate crime."

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Meanwhile, the German Peace Corps, the California-based neo-Nazi group with which them suspects claim affiliation, is under investigation by the FBI. Norma Graves, co-president of P-FLAG Houston, said she has been "pleased by the response from the FBI to this horrible act because they immediately classified the crime as a hate crime and are investigating it as domestic terrorism."

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Patrol Deputy Tim Navarre spotted the two suspects running near the police department's new storefront on Katy's Clay Road, as he was about to end a late-night shift. He later learned about the murder scene they were fleeing.

Harris County Sheriff Tommy Thomas promptly declared: "This was definitely a

Sponsored by PFLAG  
Project Open Mind,  
1:00pm at Bering  
Methodist (See article)

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US Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Houston, announced that she will ask the House Judiciary Committee, on which she serves, to hold hearings on hate crimes.

"Why is this happening? What is the climate in this society?" asked Houston activist Brandy Merritt of the Houston

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# PFLAG In Action

## STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART, by Mary K. Jones

How can we promote love and tolerance for our gay children? Let me share what I have been doing.

When I saw Dee Mosbacher's powerful video "Straight From the Heart", I knew I had to order this video and try to get this information into our Sunday School Classes at my church. After I received the video, I showed it to my friends individually, then to small groups of friends, always trying to get someone to present it as a Sunday School Lesson.

Finally, I decided that if it was to be done, I would have to do it myself. Praying for courage, I took the video to the staff member in charge of approving teachers and the material that would be presented to the adult Sunday School classes. I told him that there was so much misinformation about the Gay Community that I wanted to share with my friends and acquaintances at the church that our son was gay and to tell them how much we loved and cared for him. Also, to let them know how proud we are of our children, both gay and straight.

After he previewed the video, he approved it, and I was on the list. I felt excited and nervous! Keep in mind that this was the first time I had ever taught adult classes, even though I have a background of teaching children and teens. I belong to Memorial Drive Methodist Church which has a large membership with 20 adult classes. Now the next step would be to get invited to some of these classes.

The new list of teachers and their subjects went out last January, and it was April before I was asked to teach. However, I have now been invited to eight different classes, and I have had some really good feed-back. One woman told the class after the video that she had five close friends that had gay children, and she asked for extra hand-outs (material from "Healing the Hurt" conferences that I had copied) to send to her friends. Also, she called me later to find out how her friends could order the video.

Each time I presented my lesson, there were always some members in the class that acknowledged their support for what I was doing and told me that the church needed to hear and act out this message of love and tolerance for all people. This video does the work for you, so all you have to do is find someone to watch it. By the way, I just found out that I will be on the new teachers list coming out in 1996.

## Making Our Schools SAFE Places for All Students

Free Seminar for Parents, Educators, Counselors and Everyone Else!

If you are committed to making our schools safe places for all students, then you need to be at this free seminar. Sponsored by GLSTN (The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Teachers Network), PFLAG Houston, PFLAG Victoria, & H.A.T.C.H. the seminar will feature GLSTN Executive Director and Healing the Hurt Conference Speaker Kevin Jennings. Kevin will discuss the work which led to Massachusetts becoming the first state in the nation to ban discrimination against students in K-12 public schools as well as GLSTN's ongoing national efforts to make school safe places for all youth.

GLSTN (Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Teachers Network) is the largest national federation of local organizations which brings together gay and straight teachers and administrators, parents, and concerned community members to work to create schools where respect for all is taught. Since homophobia and heterosexism undermine a healthy school climate, GLSTN works to educate teachers, students, and the public at large about the damaging effects these forces have on youth and adults alike.

**WHEN:** Sat, Feb. 17, 1996, 2:00pm

**WHERE:** Grace Lutheran Church,  
2515 Waugh Dr., Houston

For more information call 713-942-7002 and press 4. Mark your calendars now and plan to attend!!

## Digital PFLAG: Update on the Internet!

Our World Wide Web site is up and running!!!

At the address, <http://www.insync.net/~pflagwww>, PFLAG Houston will have the ability to communicate numerous amounts of information to "Net Surfers"

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(Continued from page 1)

Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals. "Until we educate people in high schools, and even in junior high and elementary schools, about gays, then hate crimes will not be a surprise and will constantly occur."

Aaron Masterson, president of the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Alliance at the University of Houston, said Mangione's murder is another example of the link between hate speech, political rhetoric and violence. "Certain religious people say it's okay to hate sin but to love the sinner," he said.

"Some get this message but many don't. They are taught that homosexuality is wrong and they use it to justify killing in the name of God.

"Stopping hate-related violence will continue to be one of our top priorities in Texas," said Diane Hardy-Garcia, executive director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas. She noted that Ft. Worth police are still investigating the stabbing death last month of Jackie Wayne Myers, who was gay.

Reprinted from Texas Triangle.

## Moms & Dads Go to Washington Project Needs Your Help

Can you help sponsor a PFLAGer go to Washington?

P-FLAGers from across the country are responding to our call to participate in the Moms and Dads Go to Washington project. In addition to promoting this project nationally, our chapter is sponsoring a Southern Route Bus, which will travel from Houston to D.C., picking up passengers at P-FLAG chapters along the route.

In order to participate, bus riders from Houston have already made a major commitment. They'll spend 8 days participating in the project--3 days on the road to and from D.C., and 2 days in Washington. They are spending many hours planning and organizing the trip. Some are making innumerable phone calls, at their own expense, to P-FLAG members across the country, asking for their participation in the project and following up on the details of the project.

Can YOU help put a mom, dad, other family member, or supportive ally WHO COULD NOT OTHERWISE PARTICIPATE on that bus? Our chapter is paying for the cost of the bus itself, but riders have the added expense of lodging and



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# **Surf the Net With PFLAG Houston**

Home Page: <http://www.insync.net/~pflagwww>

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Can YOU help put a mom, dad, other family member, or supportive ally WHO COULD NOT OTHERWISE PARTICIPATE on that bus? Our chapter is paying for the cost of the bus itself, but riders have the added expense of lodging and meals, which we are estimating is approximately \$800 per person.

If you can contribute to this project, we promise to make your donation go as far as possible in enabling potential riders to make the trip. For more information, call Gail Rickey at 440-0353. Mail contributions to the P-FLAG address at PO Box 53796, Houston, Texas 77052-3796.



# TOGETHER, WE WILL

## WHY WE FEEL PRIDE AND GRATITUDE TOWARD OUR GAY AND LESBIAN CHILDREN AND ANGER AT SOCIETY'S CRUELTY TO THEM

by Bob Bernstein

We are grateful to our gay children for what they taught us about truth-telling and respect for human differences.

We are proud of their courage in refusing to lie--despite society's fierce hostility to their honesty--about an important aspect of who they are.

We are outraged at the discrimination and physical violence that is commonly their lot.

That's why moms and dads, brothers and sisters, grandparents, and supportive people in communities across the country are going to Washington on March 19 and 20.

By reasonable estimate, there are at least 15 million gay Americans, most of whom are valuable citizens and valuable family members. They and their nongay loved ones--parents, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends--number in the scores of millions.

So we are Moms and Dads with a dream: the dream that these millions will one day coalesce in a powerful crusade for the dignity and safety of our gay citizens. Our love for our children has brought anger and impatience.

- ▼ Impatience with talk about "family values" that translates into hatred toward our gay daughters and sons.
- ▼ Impatience with those who prevent schools from providing the courses and counseling that could save gay teenagers from despair, addiction and suicide.
- ▼ Impatience with those who in the name of religion preach love but practice oppression.

Our gay children have decided--in defiance of a massive social tide of misinformation and hostility--that accepting their God-given natures is part of their quest for authenticity and wholeness. They have shown us honesty, courage and compassion. They are gifted and giving Americans.

*That's why we are proud of them.*

*That's why we are grateful to them.*

*That's why we are going to Washington.*

Bob Bernstein is the author of *Straight Parents, Gay Children*, published in 1995.

### Have you taken The Pledge?

LGRL Project to End Hate Crimes

On January 15, over 25 people joined Dianne Hardy-Garcia with Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL) for a special training session on LGRL's new "Pledge Project." The Pledge is a new campaign to get Texans across the state to sign a pledge to help end hate crimes in Texas. With a great logo and a message that all Texans can commit to, LGRL is hoping to get thousands of signed pledge cards returned before the next legislative session.

This friendly campaign will allow us to talk to our neighbors, family members, friends, and co-workers about the hate crimes issue in a way that will make sense to people of all political and philosophical backgrounds. There will be plenty of extra Pledge cards at the February Meeting for you to pick up and use during the next few months. If you know of a civic group, organization, religious group that would be open to a presentation on Hate Crimes and The Pledge, please contact the Speaker's Bureau by leaving a message on the helpline at 867-9020. Let's get the message out and STOP THE HATE!

### We keep growing & growing & growing...

So where do we go from here?

Attendance continues to increase at our monthly meetings. Often we have more than 125 attendees!! We are happy to report that we have plenty of room for all of these people--and more--in our meeting space. The part of this success that we need to manage, however, is the pre-meeting time, when a flood of people arrives minutes before the meeting, and gather in the church foyer, and greet old and new friends--all in a small, crowded space.

**We need YOUR help:**

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### Grad Students Raise \$927

Support PFLAG Houston Bus Trip

When a group of graduate students at the University of Houston School of Social Work heard about PFLAG Houston's project to send a busload of parents to Washington to focus national attention on ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act), they decided to get involved.

The class that the students were enrolled in was titled Countering Oppression. Recognizing the oppression of gays and lesbians in the workplace, they wanted to support the efforts of PFLAG in Moms and Dads Go To Washington.

The project that they created, organized, and implemented was selling lottery tickets for chances on prizes that they arranged to get donated. They sold tickets at public events, such as the Westheimer Arts Festival, and announced the prize winners on KPRC. As a result, they not only raised much-needed funds for the Moms and Dads project, but they expanded public awareness of PFLAG's project.

P-FLAG Houston is deeply appreciative of these students. Heartfelt thanks to Sharon Clark, Joann Szabo, Lisa Anundson, Stephanie Smith, Shayna Rosen, Khristina Friman, and to our own Phillip Winston, the member of the U of H class who led his classmates, many of whom are non-gay, to recognize the need for such a project.

### Bus Trip Logo Shirts Available

Shipping will be after February 2, but we need your order as soon as possible so that we can determine what sizes and what quantity to order. There are 2 choices of type of shirt: a Navy Blue Hanes Beefy-T short sleeved shirt and a Navy Blue Hanes 50% cotton, 50% poly sweat shirt. The D.C. trip logo is on the front, and "P-FLAG" is on the sleeve. The shirts are available in Large, X-Large, and XX-Large.

The cost is \$9 for the short sleeved shirt; \$11 for the sweat shirt. (These reduced rates are possible through the generosity of Houston P-FLAGers Lane and Doris Kalmin and Kati Sport Caps. This is NOT a money-maker for us; we are pricing the shirts as inexpensively as possible.) The prices quoted above are in effect through March 30, 1996.

Place your order ASAP, indicating type



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### ***We need YOUR help:***

- ▼ First of all, we'd like to ask "veteran" P-FLAGers to arrive early--1:30 PM, if possible. In addition to lessening the last-minute crunch, you can help watch out for newcomers, taking time to make them feel welcome.
- ▼ Second, be on the alert for whatever new space-saving/crowd control methods we try at meetings, and help us implement them. At the February meeting, we're going to move the library/resource display to classroom 1 or 2 just outside of the church foyer.

So head for the library, with the intent of having others following your example.

the University of Houston School of Social Work heard about PFLAG Houston's project to send a busload of parents to Washington to focus national attention on ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act), they decided to get involved.

The class that the students were enrolled in was titled Countering Oppression. Recognizing the oppression of gays and lesbians in the workplace, they wanted to support the efforts of PFLAG in Moms and Dads Go To Washington.

The project that they created, organized, and implemented was selling lottery tickets for chances on prizes that they arranged to get donated. They sold tickets at public events, such as the Westheimer Arts Festival, and announced the prize winners on KPRC. As a result, they not only raised much-needed funds for the Moms and Dads project, but they expanded public awareness of PFLAG's project.

P-FLAG Houston is deeply appreciative of these students. Heartfelt thanks to Sharon Clark, Joann Szabo, Lisa Anundson, Stephanie Smith, Shayna Rosen, Khristina Friman, and to our own Phillip Winston, the member of the U of H class who led his classmates, many of whom are non-gay, to recognize the need for such a project.

## **Bus Trip Logo Shirts Available**

Shipping will be after February 2, but we need your order as soon as possible so that we can determine what sizes and what quantity to order. There are 2 choices of type of shirt: a Navy Blue Hanes Beefy-T short sleeved shirt and a Navy Blue Hanes 50% cotton, 50% poly sweat shirt. The D.C. trip logo is on the front, and "P-FLAG" is on the sleeve. The shirts are available in Large, X-Large, and XX-Large.

The cost is \$9 for the short sleeved shirt; \$11 for the sweat shirt. (These reduced rates are possible through the generosity of Houston P-FLAGers Lane and Doris Kalmin and Kati Sport Caps. This is NOT a money-maker for us; we are pricing the shirts as inexpensively as possible.) The prices quoted above are in effect through March 30, 1996.

Place your order ASAP, indicating type of shirt, size, and quantity, by emailing Norma Graves at [NRGraves9@aol.com](mailto:NRGraves9@aol.com). You can also order by writing to Norma at 2419 Lexford Lane, Houston, TX 77080, or by calling her at 713-467-4105.

By receiving your shirt ahead of time, you'll be able to wear it in route, however you travel, helping to spread the message of this project along the way.



# PFLAG Community Forum

## Hate Crimes in Houston

On January 4, Houston was once again jolted by the vicious murder of one of our gay citizens. This hate crime is only 1 in a legacy of hate crimes that has plagued Texas and Houston. In an effort to "Stop the Hate," PFLAG Houston and Project Open Mind are sponsoring a Community Forum to discuss Hate Crimes in Houston. Initiated by U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, this meeting is designed to call attention to the growing problem of hate crimes against people because of their sexual orientation, race, sex, or religion.

PFLAG Houston has invited over 300 different organizations and officials to join together in an open discussion of what's being done to end hate crimes. Project Open Mind, PFLAG's campaign to end hate speech, is a major force behind this meeting. "Project Open Mind is more than just ads on TV," says Susan Upchurch, PFLAG Houston's Project Open Mind Director. "It's about opening up a dialog regarding hate speech and its effects on our gay and lesbian loved ones."

On Saturday, February 3 at 1:00pm, representatives from across Houston and Texas will meet at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church (1440 Harold) to share and hear what is being done to stop hate crimes. Join us to show your support for ending hate crimes!



**I PLEDGE**  
**FOR A BETTER TEXAS**

### What can YOU do??

1. Take the Pledge.
2. Ask a friend take the Pledge.
3. Attend the PFLAG Community Forum

### A Workshop on Ministry with Sexual Minority Youth

Presented by Rev. Don Carlson at Zion Lutheran Church

On February 26th, Zion Lutheran Church will host a very special workshop on reaching out to gay, lesbian, & bisexual youth. This full day workshop is designed for ministers and religious professionals, but is open to anyone interested. Speakers will include the PFLAG Houston Speaker's Bureau, Dr. Robert McLaughlin, Patricia Kolodney of H.A.T.C.H., Rev. Don Carlson of Zion Lutheran Church (ELCA), Rev. Kristine Franke of Grace Lutheran Church (ELCA), Rev. Marilyn Meeker-Williams of St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Baytown, clinical psychologist Dr. David Ogren, and former theology professor Rev. Marlin Wogstad.

From the Workshop's Brochure...

Why should you attend this workshop?

- ▼ Whether you know it or not, you have had and will have gay/lesbian/bisexual youth in your spiritual care. How helpful have you been? How helpful will you be?
- ▼ Whether you are aware of it or not, you know people who are parenting sexual minority youth. Do you know how to be helpful to them?
- ▼ There is a crucial socialization process heterosexual youth undergo in "learning to be straight." Do you know what happens if gay/lesbian youth are not allowed to undergo a similar process?

This workshop is an EXCELLENT opportunity to learn more about the needs of sexual minority youth and what you can do to help them in your religious group.

**WHEN:** Monday, February 26 from 8:30am - 5:00pm

**WHERE:** Zion Lutheran Church, 3606 Beauchamp at Pecore

**COST:** \$25 includes materials, refreshments, & lunch. Checks should be payable to Zion Lutheran Church and memo them Youth Workshop.

## PFLAG FLYER



February 1996  
Page 4

### Voices of Hope Seminar by Catholic Parents Network

PFLAG Houston recognizes the religious diversity in our community and is excited to see many religions becoming more open and accepting of our gay and lesbian loved ones. To that end, PFLAG Houston is co-sponsoring a special seminar along with the Catholic Parents Network.

*Voices of Hope: Pastoral Ministry and Spirituality for Gay & Lesbian Christians* is a full day seminar designed to examine some of the new things being done with Catholic groups around the country. Catholic Parents Network is an outreach in the Catholic church for parents of gay and lesbians. The seminar will be presented by Fr. Robert Nugent, SDS and Sr. Jeannine Gramick, SSND on Wednesday, March 6 at the Dominican Sisters Meeting Room at 6501 Alameda Rd.

Registration is either \$35 in advance or \$45 at the door. For registration information, contact the Catholic Parents Network at 301-927-8766. Please bring a lunch; coffee & tea will be provided.

## HATE is not a Family Value

### Come Early, Visit, Start on Time

A request to PFLAG Regulars

So you come to PFLAG every month. You show up about 1:55 or later, get your name tag, sign in, and take a seat just before, or after, the meeting begins. Same thing month after month...excuse for your first month. You were nervous and unsure of what you would find at this group called PFLAG. You arrived early with the hope that someone would help you understand what you were going through.

Each month there are anywhere from 10-30 newcomers that are in that same situation. They are nervous and need some assistance in learning the "PFLAG ropes." The PFLAG Houston Board wants you to be that assistant. If you see someone that you don't know, welcome them and introduce yourself. Make sure they know where the library is and how to get their nametag. Help them find their small group and make them feel com-



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**WHERE:** Zion Lutheran Church, 3606 Beauchamp at Pecore

**COST:** \$25 includes materials, refreshments, & lunch. Checks should be payable to *Zion Lutheran Church* and memo them *Youth Workshop*.

**REGISTER:** Mail your check, name, address, phone number, and church affiliation to: Youth Workshop, Zion Lutheran Church, 3606 Beauchamp, Houston, TX 77009. For more information, call 713-869-1493. **The deadline for registrations is February 12.**

"Amid all the hateful and unproductive religious rhetoric the 'issue of homosexuality' has generated, take advantage of this opportunity to understand that it's not an 'issue.' It's about young people whom we have promised to nurture!" -- from the workshop brochure

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Each month there are anywhere from 10-30 newcomers that are in that same situation. They are nervous and need some assistance in learning the "PFLAG ropes." The PFLAG Houston Board wants you to be that assistant. If you see someone that you don't know, welcome them and introduce yourself. Make sure they know where the library is and how to get their nametag. Help them find their small group and make them feel comfortable.

If you're still not ready to reach out this way, then help our membership chairpersons out by coming early and finding a seat in order to make room for the newcomers. With over 100 people at each meeting, that foyer can get really crowded. Make a plan to come 15-30 minutes early this month. See you there!



## Notes and Memos

- ▼ PFLAG Houston wants to apologize for the change in program for the January meeting. Many attendees asked about the Rev. Jim Bankston of St. Paul's United Methodist Church. PFLAG Houston looks forward to hearing from Rev. Bankston at a future meeting.
- ▼ The PFLAG Board held an all day planning session in January to prepare for all the exciting opportunities in 1996. We are looking forward to the many activities planned for the new year.

## Notes from the Editor

by Doug Upchurch

1996 has started off on a rather sad note. Another one of our gay loved ones was brutally murdered on January 4. My emotions have run the gamut from anger to sadness to helplessness. I hope that whatever your emotions are, that you put them to use to STOP THE HATE! A hate crime is not just a crime against the victim. It is a crime of terrorism against all members of the group being hated. All gays and lesbians are affected when a hate crime occurs. The often used quote states, "You must be taught to hate." I guess that means you can be taught to love and accept in the same manner. *As members of PFLAG Houston, it is our responsibility to reach out and teach love and acceptance for our gay and lesbian loved ones and speak out against the hate speech and crimes that destroy our loved ones.* Continue to send in your articles, ideas or letters for the Flyer. I can be reached at either 528-3684 by phone, 1903 Portsmouth #21, Houston TX 77098 by mail, or [dougupc@blcinc.com](mailto:dougupc@blcinc.com) by e-mail! The deadline for the March newsletter is February 16. ☺ ♥ ▼

## Join Us in the Work of P-FLAG

P-FLAG Houston belongs to the national organization Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc, with more than 350 local chapters and contacts. Our chapter is made up of parents, families and friends of lesbian and gay persons, and of lesbians and gay men. The financial support of members and contributors enables our chapter to expand our outreach to the community.

I / We would like to join P-FLAG HOUSTON.

Family/Couple: \$40 \_\_\_\_\_

Individual: \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

Student/Limited Income: \$10 \_\_\_\_\_

Your donation is tax deductible

P-FLAG Houston is a Non-Profit

501 (c)(3) organization

(I.D. #76-0372-170)

I / We don't wish to join, but would like to contribute to the work of P-FLAG HOUSTON \$ \_\_\_\_.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\*Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City & State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip+4: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Ph: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Please mark

Office Ph: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) confidentiality

FAX: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) required on

Pager: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) these phones.

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

\* The P-FLAG National Newsletter will be mailed "open" to this address unless you check here: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please make all checks payable to and mail to P-FLAG, PO Box 53796, Houston, TX 77052-3796.



# PFLAG FLYER

The Official Newsletter of  
**Parents, Families, and Friends of  
 Lesbians and Gays of Houston, TX**  
 PO Box 53796, Houston, Texas 77052-3796  
 HelpLine: 713-867-9020  
 Email: pflagwww@insync.net  
 WWW: <http://www.insync.net/~pflagwww>

March 1996

## Next Meeting March 3

### Grief Process and Coming Out

When an individual announces to his family and friends that he/she is gay or lesbian, the responses may vary from silence to disbelief, anger and acceptance, to the full range of emotions in between. In many ways these emotions are similar to those we experience in grief.

Grief is a process of transformation that can provide potential for living life more fully. This month, Khrist Ford, co-founder of Transitions: Centre for Grief, Growth, and Aliveness, will discuss the emotional process we go through as parents, family members, friends, gays, and lesbians in the coming out journey. Khrist comes recommended by well-known PFLAGer Bob McLaughlin.

Join us from 2:00pm-4:30pm at St. Francis Episcopal Church, 345 N. Piney Point, off San Felipe between Voss & Gessner.

After our large group session, join us in one of our small groups. The small groups are the heart of our monthly meetings. These groups provide everyone with an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns, and celebrations with others in a safe environment. If you are new to PFLAG and have recently found out about your gay or lesbian loved one, then our Family & Friends First Timers group is for you. There are also special groups for Spouse Support, HIV Concerns, and Advocacy. So plan to join us this month! We hope to see you there!

## Announcing Announcements!

### Monthly Meeting Agenda

Beginning this month, all announcements will need to be turned in to Gail Rickey by noon on the Friday before the meeting. This will allow us to place these announcements on the agenda and keep our to our meeting schedule. So remember to send any announcements for the monthly meeting to Gail Rickey by phone at 713-440-0353 or by email at [PatRickey@aol.com](mailto:PatRickey@aol.com). Thanks for your support!

## PLEASE NOTE: New Address

Email for PFLAG Houston



## Moms & Dads Go to Washington Project

The Bus Trip Begins March 16th!

After months of planning, emails, phone calls, letters, and meetings, the Moms & Dads Go to Washington Project is finally here. On Friday, March 15th, PFLAG Houston will sponsor a Kick-Off Pep Rally to get everyone excited (See article below). Then early Saturday morning, approximately 30 moms, dads, friends, and family members will board a Gray Line bus headed for Washington, DC to lobby in support for ENDA.

So you're not going? That's OK, the PFLAGers at home will need to be busy with letters and phone calls to let their legislators know we support ENDA (See articles page 3). We even have a way for you to send your family to DC without ever leaving home!!! Learn more on page 3 of the flyer. Regardless of your travel plans, this trip is about our loved ones, it is about PFLAG Houston, it is about justice. **Look out, Washington! Here comes, Mama! (And a lot more!)**

## PFLAG Houston Makes Donation to Holocaust Memorial Museum

As part of the Bus Trip to DC, 100 of the participants will get to visit the National Holocaust Memorial Museum. This moving memorial commemorates all those who were killed in Hitler's Germany including the many gays and lesbians that were given the pink triangle to wear in the concentration camps.

As a part of PFLAG Houston's visit to the Memorial, the Board of Directors has voted to commit at least \$500 in donation to the Gay and Lesbian Project at the Holocaust Museum. We believe that with your help we can go with a check for \$1,000 or more.

If you would like to add your contribution to the \$500 committed by the Board, then either bring your check payable to "PFLAG Houston" with a memo for "Holocaust Museum" to the March 3

## Upcoming Events

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| Feb. 28    | NAMES Quilt and Candlelight Vigil at Rice University (See article)                             |
| Mar. 3     | PFLAG Meeting, 2:00-4:30pm at St. Francis Episcopal Church, 345 N. Piney Point                 |
| Mar. 6     | "Voices of Hope" Catholic Parents Network (See article)  |
| Mar. 15    | Bus Trip Kick-Off Rally 7:00-9:30 pm at Christ Church Cathedral, 1117 Texas Ave. (See article) |
| Mar. 16-22 | PFLAG Bus Trip to DC (See Special Section)   |
| Apr. 14    | PFLAG Meeting, **Note date change**  |
| Apr. 27-28 | PFLAG Booth at Houston International Festival 1996   |

# Bus Trip Pep Rally

## Kick-Off Rally for Bus Trip to DC

If you don't know by now, PFLAG Houston is sponsoring the **Moms and Dads Go to Washington** project which will bring together parents and friends from all over the country to our nation's capital in support of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). Here in Houston we are sending over 30 PFLAGers to Washington, DC, on the Southern Route Bus Trip.

To show our support for these folks and to send them off in a right way, PFLAG Houston will be sponsoring a Bon Voyage Kick-Off Rally for those folks leaving from Houston. Held in the Great Hall



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### PLEASE NOTE: New Address Email for PFLAG Houston

As of February 15, PFLAG Houston has a brand new email address! If you need to send any information to PFLAG Houston, the email address is:

pflagwww@insync.net

This inbox is checked regularly by a PFLAG Board member and emails will be forwarded to the appropriate person.



### Moms & Dads Go to Washington Project

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If you would like to add your contribution to the \$500 committed by the Board, then either bring your check payable to "PFLAG Houston" with a memo for "Holocaust Museum" to the March 3 meeting or mail it to the PFLAG Houston PO Box. The Board believes strongly in supporting this National Memorial to those who lost their lives because of hate and misunderstanding.



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To show our support for these folks and to send them off in a right way, PFLAG Houston will be sponsoring a Bon Voyage Kick-Off Rally for those folks leaving from Houston. Held in the Great Hall at Christ Church Cathedral on 1117 Texas Avenue from 7:00pm - 9:30 pm, this exciting event will be fun for all.

We are inviting numerous gay and lesbian organizations and are hoping for a Houston-size gathering. Bring some soda, some chips, or some dip, and join in the fun as we send off the Southern Route Bus Trip.



# PFLAG In Action

By Irv Smith

Intrigued by the several stories about PFLAG and public libraries I had read in my email, I stopped by my local public library branch. First, I searched on keyword "homosexual" and was dismayed to find only 2 books - both perhaps outdated having been published years ago. However, searching on "gay" found 56 titles - one about a parrot named "Gayneck" and all the others about our topic. "Lesbian" revealed over 20 books - some of course on former list, having "gay" in title also.

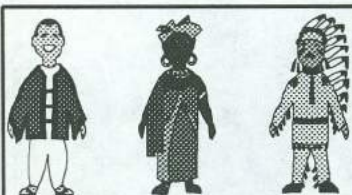
I was a bit surprised to find Bob Bernstein's new book "Straight Parents, Gay Children" on the shelves, considering how new it is. Eric Marcus's "Is It a Choice" was there, too. Some of you reading this know I am a "DittoHead" (80% dittos), and may not be pleased to hear that Rush Limbaugh's books are shelved in the same rack between the 2 above-mentioned volumes. (Such are the workings of the LC or Dewey Decimal System or however books are cataloged.)

Anyway, I took Bernstein's book up to the middle-aged lady at the reference desk, and said I wanted to complement the library for having such book. Her eyes lit up and she said they try to carry books for all needs of their patrons. She then showed me where, almost hidden as on purpose, Cassell's "Dictionary of Gay Language" or some such (I think published by the language-dictionary people.) resided in the reference stacks among unrelated tomes. She said some patrons had objected to its presence, so they had it tucked away. She rolled her eyes in agreement when I commented about RRR people trying to dictate what books are in libraries.

She then showed me where P-FLAG's helpline number was listed in a Houston-area notebook of organizations. Next we looked in the card-catalog computer, in a section I didn't know existed, for Fort Bend County organizations but didn't find P-FLAG, so she is going to add Jane & me as local contacts as well as put in the helpline number.

I gave her a P-FLAG brochure ("About Our Children"), which I always carry in my backpack "just in case" and she filed it away with other brochures. But not before a young lady behind the reference desk saw it and said "Oh, P-FLAG!" I turns out she has a gay cousin and knew all about P-FLAG. She's been to one meeting and said she will attend the next.

Anyway, this librarian is open for suggestions for other books to acquire and definitely will be a helpful person if any patrons enlist her help in finding books on homosexuality. The only bad thing now is that I may not be able to follow Emily's hint of putting P-FLAG business cards in the books - because she knows I would be the culprit.



1996 International



Festival of Houston



## PFLAG Houston will be Out & Proud at The International Festival 1996

P-FLAG plans to have a booth at the International Festival. This will be a chance to inform thousands of Houstonians of our existence, give out literature, and sell T-shirts and buttons. More importantly, it will be a chance to spread the message that it really is O.K. to be gay, or to have gay friends and family.

In order to have this booth, however, we must have your help. We need volunteers to staff the booth for 2 hour slots on the weekend of April 27th - 28th. The hours are from 10:30 A.M. to 8:30 P.M. (Including setup and breakdown time.) We plan to have two people staffing the booth at all times, so round up a friend!

Please call Tim Curfman at 528-3589 if you would be interested in being an Out and Proud P-FLAGer at the Houston International Festival.

Martha Carey

and

Elisabeth Fidler

cordially invite all PFLAG parents and members to

## PFLAG FLYER



March 1996  
Page 2

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Registration is either \$35 in advance or \$45 at the door. For registration information, contact the Catholic Parents Network at 301-927-8766. Please bring a lunch; coffee & tea will be provided.

### Famous Parents Speak Out

Recently, some well known parents said that if one of their children told them he or she is gay, they would:

"Love the child, support the child and feel compassion; family means putting your arms around each other and being there." - **Barbara and George Bush**

"In a moment of stress or crisis in a family, the most important thing that a parent can communicate to a child is love and acceptance. Especially if the situation involves a difference of values, what is needed is mutual understanding and support." - **Tipper and Al Gore**

"With love and understanding, Every child needs to know that he or she is a valuable human being in the eyes of God, the family and community. Besides, we don't have anybody to waste in this country." - **Hillary and Bill Clinton**

The majority of us lead quiet, unheralded lives as we pass through this world. There will most likely be no ticker-tape parades for us, no monuments created in our honor. But that does not lessen our impact, for scores of people waiting for someone just like us to come along. Someone who will live a happier life



Anyway, I took Bernstein's book up to the middle-aged lady at the reference desk, and said I wanted to complement the library for having such book. Her eyes lit up and she said they try to carry books for all needs of their patrons. She then showed me where, almost hidden as on purpose, Cassell's "Dictionary of Gay Language" or some such (I think published by the language-dictionary people.) resided in the reference stacks among unrelated tomes. She said some patrons had objected to its presence, so they had it tucked away. She rolled her eyes in agreement when I commented about RRR people trying to dictate what books are in libraries.

She then showed me where P-FLAG's helpline number was listed in a Houston-area notebook of organizations. Next we looked in the card-catalog computer, in a section I didn't know existed, for Fort Bend County organizations but didn't find P-FLAG, so she is going to add Jane & me as local contacts as well as put in the helpline number.

I gave her a P-FLAG brochure ("About Our Children"), which I always carry in my backpack "just in case" and she filed it away with other brochures. But not before a young lady behind the reference desk saw it and said "Oh, P-FLAG!" I turns out she has a gay cousin and knew all about P-FLAG. She's been to one meeting and said she will attend the next.

Anyway, this librarian is open for suggestions for other books to acquire and definitely will be a helpful person if any patrons enlist her help in finding books on homosexuality. The only bad thing now is that I may not be able to follow Emily's hint of putting P-FLAG business cards in the books - because she knows I would be the culprit.



1996 International



Festival of Houston



### PFLAG Houston will be Out & Proud at The International Festival 1996

P-FLAG plans to have a booth at the International Festival. This will be a chance to inform thousands of Houstonians of our existence, give out literature, and sell T-shirts and buttons. More importantly, it will be a chance to spread the message that it really is O.K. to be gay, or to have gay friends and family.

In order to have this booth, however, we must have your help. We need volunteers to staff the booth for 2 hour slots on the weekend of April 27th - 28th. The hours are from 10:30 A.M. to 8:30 P.M. (Including setup and breakdown time.) We plan to have two people staffing the booth at all times, so round up a friend!

Please call Tim Curfman at 528-3589 if you would be interested in being an Out and Proud P-FLAGger at the Houston International Festival.

*Martha Carey  
and*

*Elisabeth Fidler*

*cordially invite all PFLAG parents and members to  
celebrate with them at a ceremony of holy union,*

*April 13, 1996 at 7pm,*

*Bering Memorial United Methodist Church,  
1440 Harold*

open and accepting of our gay and lesbian loved ones. To that end, PFLAG Houston is co-sponsoring a special seminar along with the Catholic Parents Network.

*Voices of Hope: Pastoral Ministry and Spirituality for Gay & Lesbian Christians* is a full day seminar designed to examine some of the new things being done with Catholic groups around the country. Catholic Parents Network is an outreach in the Catholic church for parents of gays and lesbians. The seminar will be presented by Fr. Robert Nugent, SDS and Sr. Jeannine Gramick, SSND on Wednesday, March 6 at the Dominican Sisters Meeting Room at 6501 Alameda Rd.

Registration is either \$35 in advance or \$45 at the door. For registration information, contact the Catholic Parents Network at 301-927-8766. Please bring a lunch; coffee & tea will be provided.

### Famous Parents Speak Out

Recently, some well known parents said that if one of their children told them he or she is gay, they would:

"Love the child, support the child and feel compassion; family means putting your arms around each other and being there." - **Barbara and George Bush**

"In a moment of stress or crisis in a family, the most important thing that a parent can communicate to a child is love and acceptance. Especially if the situation involves a difference of values, what is needed is mutual understanding and support." - **Tipper and Al Gore**

"With love and understanding, Every child needs to know that he or she is a valuable human being in the eyes of God, the family and community. Besides, we don't have anybody to waste in this country." - **Hillary and Bill Clinton**

The majority of us lead quiet, unheralded lives as we pass through this world. There will most likely be no ticker-tape parades for us, no monuments created in our honor. But that does not lessen our impact, for scores of people waiting for someone just like us to come along. Someone who will live a happier life merely because we took time to share what we have to give. Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word...all of which have the potential to turn a life around. It's overwhelming to consider the continuous opportunities there are to make our love felt. - **Leo Buscaglia**

Reprinted from PFLAG South Bend, IN Newsletter.



# Moms and Dads Go to Washington

## March 19-20, 1996

On March 16, about 30 Houston PFLAGers will board the Southern Region Bus headed to Washington for an eight-day adventure. Whether you are actually participating in the trip or not, this IS your project, and you are GREATLY NEEDED.

Nationwide, the lobbying strategy is two-fold: PFLAGers going to Washington are making appointments to call on their two Senators and 1 U.S. representative.

Other PFLAGers are contacting their Members of Congress at home, calling on them in person and writing them to urge their support of ENDA (Employment Non Discrimination Act).

### That's where YOU come in.

We are asking you to contact YOUR Members of Congress--Senator Phil Gramm, Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, and your Representative.

Don't know who your U.S. Representative is? NOW is the time to find out, not just for this issue, but for all those that lie ahead of us. Here's some ways to find out:

- ▼ Call the County Clerk for your county. For Harris County, that's 755-6411. OR
- ▼ Call the League of Women Voters, at 784-2923 (M-F, 9 AM-3PM). You can also stop by the League's office, at 2650 Fountainview, Suite 328, to pick up a copy of their Voters Key, which tells you everything you need to know.

If you attend the March 3 PFLAG meeting, we'll have a Voters Key available for you to look up the relevant information. You will need to know your Precinct Number.

AND, we'll have postcards for you to sign and address, which we'll mail for you. (Donations appreciated for the stamps!) NOW, what is your message to your Members of Congress? (Use your own words. But to be sure you know each one's status, in relation to ENDA)

### To Representative Sheila Jackson Lee Representative Gene Green:

Thank you very much for being a co-sponsor of ENDA. We want you to know that we are here, that we support you, and that we appreciate your support. (The more support Members of Congress know they have, the taller they can stand the next time around.)

### To Representative Ken Bentsen:

I am a ----- (mom of a gay man, or person who is lesbian/gay, or person who believes in fairness), and I support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. As your constituent, I urge you to sign onto the bill as a co-sponsor.

[Bentsen is the only Houston-area Member of Congress on HRC's "target" list, meaning those they are working the hardest to get to sign on. Writing letters to Bentsen is VERY important. 128 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20525]

### To all other Members of Congress from Houston area:

A message letting them know how much you, their constituent, care about this bill.

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R)  
283 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202)224-5922

Senator Phil Gramm (R)  
370 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202)224-2934

Rep. W.R. (Bill) Archer (R)  
1236 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202)225-2571

Rep. Jack Fields (R)  
2228 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202)225-4901

Rep. Steve Stockman (R)  
417 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202)225-2525

Rep. Tom DeLay (R)  
203 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-5951

Rep. Ken Bentsen (D)  
128 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202)225-7508

Rep. Gene Green (D)  
1024 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202)225-1688

### Send Your Family to DC!

You Oughta be in Pictures!

Let the Houston Bus Riders take YOUR family to D.C. Bring photos of your family to the March 3 meeting, or mail them to PFLAG's PO Box

# PFLAG FLYER



March 1996  
Page 3

## The Tentative DC Itinerary

If you are planning on meeting the group in DC, please let Gail Rickey know as soon as possible so we can have an accurate count of those that will be in DC. Here is the TENTATIVE itinerary:

### March 18th

#### Arrive in Washington, DC

**Headquarters Hotel:** Doubletree Park Terrace, 7 blocks from White House, off Scott Circle

### March 19th

**Lobby Training** at 8 AM with Kickoff Event possibly at the White House

**Press Conference** around noon

**Lobbying** on March 19 and 20. This is very important. We will be meeting with legislators from our own region asking them to support ENDA

**Senate Hearing on ENDA 2 - 4pm**, This tentative hearing could be a critical part of the trip.

**Candelight Vigil**, 7PM on northern steps of Nation's Capitol

### March 20th

**Holocaust Museum Visit**, 9:15; VERY limited number, Reservations are required with Gail Rickey ASAP.

## Bus Trip Logo Shirts Available

The Bus Trip Shirts and Sweatshirts are Here! But they're going fast, so get your's today! There are 2 choices of type of shirt: a Navy Blue Hanes Beefy-T short sleeved shirt and a Navy Blue Hanes 50% cotton, 50% poly sweat shirt. The D.C. trip logo is on the front, and "P-FLAG" is on the sleeve. The shirts are available in Large, X-Large, and XX-Large.

The cost is \$9 for the short sleeved shirt; \$11 for the sweat shirt. (These reduced rates are possible through the generosity of Houston P-FLAGers Lane and Doris Kalmin and Kati Sport Caps. This is NOT a money-maker for us; we are pricing the shirts as inexpensively as possible.) The prices quoted above are in effect through March 30, 1996.

Place your order ASAP, indicating type of shirt, size, and quantity, by emailing Norma Graves at NRGraves@aol.com



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(202)225-4901

Rep. Steve Stockman (R)  
417 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202)225-6565

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D)  
1520 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202)225-3816

Rep. Tom DeLay (R)  
203 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-5951

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Whether you are going on the trip or not, these shirts are a great way to show your support for ENDA and start a discussion about why you support the legislation! And if that's not all, they're really cute!



## New Arrivals in the PFLAG Library

Don't Forget the New Location and New Hours!

Be sure to look over several new books in the library next time you have an opportunity. Don't forget that the library will open at 1:30 before our monthly meeting and will stay open approximately 30 minutes after our monthly meeting in order for you to take advantage of the numerous resources available to PFLAG members and visitors. The PFLAG Library will now be in Classroom 2 just outside of the church foyer. We may even think of moving the coffee here too just to get you to take a look at these exciting new books!! Here are just a few of the new arrivals we have received lately.

**Seasons of Grief and Grace: A Sister's Story of AIDS** by Susan Wiltshire. Former Governor, Ann Richards, describes the book as "A powerful reminder that the tragedy of AIDS extends beyond personal sadness and grief to issues of family and community -- and ultimately to the very heart of our nation's life."

**I'll Not Go Quietly: Mary Fisher Speaks Out** by Mary Fisher. "Some of us will only have these insights on our deathbed -- if then -- and at that point it may be too late to use that knowledge. Or else, we can read Mary Fisher's wonderful, sagacious, and transforming document and have our epiphany here on earth." Abraham Verghese, author of *My Own Country*

**My Own Country: A Doctor's Story** by Abraham Verghese. In Johnson City, Tennessee, in 1985, Dr. Verghese became by necessity the local AIDS expert. Out of his experience comes a startling but ultimately uplifting portrait of the American heartland as it confronts -- and surmounts -- its deepest prejudices and fears.

**The Journey Out: A Guide For and About Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Teens** by Pollack and Schwartz. The Journey Out includes: Common sense advice on how (and whether) to "come out," health, religion in a gay life and more; personal stories; practical strategies to prepare you for whatever may come your way on the journey out.

**Joining the Tribe: Growing Up Gay and Lesbian in the '90's** by Linnea Due. "A compelling tribute to human suffering and determined resiliency, *Joining the Tribe* shatters the formidable myths facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth today. Ms. Due has done a marvelous job of showing how LGBT youth are eloquent warriors and leaders in their own rights." Jenie Hall, Director, Bridges Project, Philadelphia

**School's Out: The Impact of Gay and Lesbian Issues on America's Schools** by Dan Woog. From the scared teenager who doesn't want his teammates to know he's gay, to the straight teacher who wants to honor diversity by teaching gay issues in the classroom, Woog puts a human face on the people who truly are fighting for "liberty and justice for all." Together, the stories that make up *School's Out* shed light on a brave new era in American education.

### WHY DO I KEEP GOING TO PFLAG MEETINGS?

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At that meeting I related some of the important conversation my daughter and I had. I told of my worry that I had let her down in my response, and my fear that her life from here on would be erratic, rootless and difficult.

The other parents, without any attempt to sound like psychologists, enlightened and encouraged me. They relieved my guilt. And, most important, the Lesbians and Gays told me, in open discussion and one-to-one during the break, that many of their experiences paralleled my daughter's: going through career and social upsets while coming out to themselves. And they reassured me that I had not let her down.

I was given several very helpful pamphlets, but I knew they were not to substitute for the human contact I was to have. They were to help me frame further questions and reinforce all I was learning.

But gratitude for the help I received more than five years ago, and the wish to help other parents as I was helped, is only one reason I keep coming to meetings. Another big reason is that my Lesbian daughter and I live many miles apart. The Gays and Lesbians who come to PFLAG, whom I've come to know and consider friends, provide me with continuing insight that help me understand my daughter though I can't be with her very much.

Some of my daughter's Lesbian friends have told me that their parents refused to have anything to do with them after they came out. If any of the Gays and Lesbians who come to our meetings are in that position, perhaps I fill a need for them.

# PFLAG FLYER



March 1996  
Page 4

### AIDS Quilt & Candlelight Vigil at Rice University, Feb. 28

Portions of the AIDS Quilt will be on display at the Grand Hall of the Student Center at Rice University from Feb. 27 through Feb. 29. Sponsored by the Rice University Gay and Lesbian Student Group, this is a wonderful opportunity to view part of the AIDS Quilt.

On February 28th, there will be a candlelight vigil in the Rice University Chapel beginning at 6pm. The service will begin in the chapel and will then move into the courtyard for a candlelight ceremony.

Representatives from PFLAG Houston will be there and we encourage all that can to attend. To get to Rice University and the Student Center, take entrance 13 off Rice Blvd. At the second stop sign the student center will be diagonally across the street on your left. There are two adjacent parking lots across from the student center (on your right). You may park in either one. Enter the double doors of the student center which face the parking lots. Walk through the building and out the double doors at the other end of the building. Follow the outdoor corridor and take a right at the end. The chapel is immediately on your left.

### Resolution and Petition Against Radical Right

A Resolution to Condemn the false and inflammatory anti-homosexual campaign of Pat Robertson, Founder, the Christian Coalition & CEO, the Christian Broadcasting Network.

His intolerant rhetoric and his unjust and discriminatory political actions against homosexuals contribute to the suffering of God's gay, lesbian, and bisexual children.

Please, Pat, your media and print campaign against homosexuals is polluting the moral environment of the nation. Educate yourself and your co-workers about homosexuality and about homosexuals before your anti-homosexual campaign leads to more suffering for the innocent Americans and their families. We, the undersigned, ask this in the name of God!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_



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Some of my daughter's Lesbian friends have told me that their parents refused to have anything to do with them after they came out. If any of the Gays and Lesbians who come to our meetings are in that position, perhaps I fill a need for them.

I wish PFLAG wasn't thought of by some people as a bunch of accepting parents sitting around congratulating themselves. I wish parents who need our meetings and haven't admitted that to themselves would give it a try. I wish I could tell them how un-awkward and immediately comfortable they would feel. I'd like to give them a personal welcome.

- A PFLAG Parent, SE Connecticut PFLAG  
Shared from Northern New Jersey PFLAG Waver via NYC Newsletter 11/95

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The above petition will be presented to Pat Robertson and the national media on Pride Sunday in June 1996 by Rev. Mel White. Please send signed petition with name & address to Dr. White, PO Box 609, Ennis, TX 75120, or fax it to 214-875-4858. Copy and distribute freely.



## New PFLAG Chapters in Area

- ▼ **PFLAG Victoria** formed late last year with several Houston members. They have had over 18 people attend their meetings. Here's how you can contact PFLAG Victoria: P.O. Box 5490, Victoria, TX 77903-5490, 512-576-5603, email: pflagvict@aol.com.
- ▼ There is an interest in starting a chapter in **Galveston**. If you or someone you know is interested in a PFLAG Galveston, contact Janet Cohen at 409-744-3200.

## Notes from the Editor, by Doug Upchurch

Two years ago, I came to my first PFLAG meeting. I had no idea what to expect. Having been kicked out of a fundamentalist church when I acknowledged my sexuality, the wounds were still a little raw. In June of that year, I came out to my parents. They accepted me with love, concern, and questions. Mom & Dad came to PFLAG in July '94 to hear me speak. This past January, Mom was on TV what seemed like every other day as a part of her role as director of Project Open Mind Houston. Now my mother is going to Washington, DC to lobby congress on my behalf and at Dad's urging. My father will be holding the fort down so she can go and not worry about things here in Houston. What a difference, PFLAG and 2 years have made in my life! Thanks Mom and Dad! Thanks to all PFLAG Moms & Dads, Families & Friends for your support, your compassion, and your activism. What would we do without you! Send your ideas and articles to me at either 528-3684 by phone, 1903 Portsmouth #21, Houston TX 77098 by mail, or dougupc@blcinc.com by e-mail! The deadline for the April newsletter is March 27. ☺ ♥ ▼

## Join Us in the Work of P-FLAG

P-FLAG Houston belongs to the national organization Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc, with more than 350 local chapters and contacts. Our chapter is made up of parents, families and friends of lesbian and gay persons, and of lesbians and gay men. The financial support of members and contributors enables our chapter to expand our outreach to the community.

I / We would like to join P-FLAG HOUSTON.

Family/Couple: \$40 \_\_\_\_\_

Individual: \$25 \_\_\_\_\_

Student/Limited Income: \$10 \_\_\_\_\_

Your donation is tax deductible

P-FLAG Houston is a Non-Profit

501 (c)(3) organization

(I.D. #76-0372-170)

I / We don't wish to join, but would like to contribute to the work of P-FLAG HOUSTON \$ \_\_\_\_.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\*Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City & State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip+4: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Ph: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Please mark

Office Ph: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) confidentiality

FAX: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) required on

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# PFLAG Flyer

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

August 1996

<http://www.pflaghtx.org>

HelpLine: 713-867-9020



PFLAG Houston  
PO Box 53796  
Houston, TX 77052-3796

## Employment Non-Discrimination Act & Defense of Marriage Act in Spotlight

Two pieces of gay/lesbian-related legislation with very different agendas have recently been in the spotlight. On July 12, the US House of Representatives voted by 5 to 1 margin in favor of the anti-gay Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA. This bill defines marriage as a legal union between a man and a woman and allows states to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages performed in another state. It also excludes same-sex couples from any possible federal benefits - such as Social Security or veteran's benefits, even if legally married under the laws of a state.

While this bill has yet to go to a vote in the Senate, unfortunately President Clinton has stated his support of DOMA and the fact that he would sign it if it reaches his desk. In what is seen by some as an interesting twist, the Human Rights Campaign, a gay and lesbian political lobbying group, is urging the Senate to amend the Nickles Bill, the Senate's companion bill to DOMA, with the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. This would force anti-gay Senators to pass legislation they are opposed to in ENDA in order to pass the Nickles Bill. In other words, it would likely stall the process. More on this issue is sure to come.



**An Update on ENDA & Defense of Marriage Act**

(Continued on page 2)

## 1996 Houston Black Tie Dinner Announced PFLAG Houston is Named A Beneficiary

On November 2, 1996, the annual Houston Black Tie Dinner will be held in the lobby of the First City Bank Building, at 1021 Main, downtown. This evening of "Unity, Equality, and Community" is a fund raiser benefiting twelve local non-profit organizations and the Victory Fund.

Once again, PFLAG Houston is honored to have been named as one of the local non-profit organizations that will benefit from the proceeds of the Houston Black Tie Dinner. This event is a major fund-raiser for our chapter. Last year we received over \$9,400 from this event; thanks to the commitment of many people in our chapter as well as our many friends in the community who supported this event.

Ticket sales for the dinner have now begun and already a group of 10 PFLAGers have started the ball rolling by purchasing one of the first tables for the '96 dinner.

We encourage as many PFLAG members as possible to be a "Table Captain," asking their friends to join them at a table. This year's Black Tie Dinner contact is PFLAG Board Member Tim Cuifman. Contact Tim via email at [TimCuifman@aol.com](mailto:TimCuifman@aol.com) or via phone at 713-869-1890 if you want to become a Table Captain or to purchase tickets.



## Next Meeting Aug. 4 Methodists Speak Out

With the recent events in the Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, & Reformed Judaism arenas, it seems that the discussion of religion and how it affects our gay and lesbian loved ones continues to be one of significance. This month we will be joined by Reverend Jim Bankston, Senior Pastor of St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Houston and Marilyn Bennett Alexander, co-author of "We Were Baptized Too", to discuss the struggle that many churches are engaged in to reconcile their position on gay and lesbian issues.

Marilyn, the daughter of our own PFLAGer Adele Bennett, is the executive director of relations for Perkins School of Theology at SMU. She will talk about her experience as a lesbian and how it affected her role as a seminarian and in her current directorship. (See pg. 5)

Rev. Jim Bankston will discuss the Methodist church's current position, where it is heading, and the work that he has been doing at St. Paul's UMC to promote tolerance. Both speakers will discuss what can be done inside and outside of the church to help spread tolerance and acceptance of homosexual family and friends.

Join us from 2:00pm - 4:30pm at St. Francis Episcopal Church, 345 N. Piney Point, off San Felipe between Voss &

(Continued on page 2)

### Here's what's inside...

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More About Marilyn	5



## Schedule of Events

Aug. 4	PFLAG Monthly Meeting, Speakers: Marilyn Bennett Alexander and Rev. Jim Bankston St. Francis Episcopal Church 345 North Piney Point
Sep. 8	PFLAG Monthly Meeting
Oct. 6	PFLAG Monthly Meeting
Oct. 11-14	PFLAG National Convention in Washington, DC, See pg. 6
Oct. 14	National Coming Out Day
Nov. 2	Houston Black Tie Dinner, See pg. 1
Nov. 3	PFLAG Monthly Meeting

### *This Month's Meeting (Continued from page 1)*

Gessner. After our large group session, join us in one of our small groups. The small groups are the heart of our monthly meetings. These groups provide everyone with 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. So plan to join us this month! We hope to see you there! If you have announcements for the monthly meeting, please contact Gail Rickey with the announcement by Friday, July 12 at 12 Noon. She can be reached at 440-0353 or PatRickey@aol.com.

## Kroger Share Cards Now Available Support PFLAG When You Buy your Groceries

Recently PFLAG Houston received approval from Kroger Grocery to become a beneficiary of the Kroger Share Card Program. If you have not gotten your Kroger Share Cards for PFLAG Houston, you may do so at the next meeting or by calling Norma Graves at 464-7105.

Then each time you shop at any Houston area Kroger Grocery Store, simply present your PFLAG Houston Share Card to your checker **BEFORE** they begin to ring up your purchases. Ask the checker to scan the card and that's it. Kroger will track your purchase and a percentage of your purchase will be refunded back to PFLAG Houston. So as they say, "Go Krogering" and Help PFLAG Houston!



August 1996

### *"House Urged to Pass ENDA" (Continued from page 1)*

Meanwhile, the Senate recently held hearings on ENDA that included a number of supporters. According to Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, Employers in 41 states are free to fire any employees because he or she is gay. State laws forbid on-the-job discrimination in the remaining nine but anti-gay bias "remains sanctioned by federal law, or rather by the absence of any law prohibiting it," she told the subcommittee.

No one spoke against the bill — named H.R. 1863 after the year President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation — at the hearing although opponents were invited to testify, subcommittee Chairman Peter Torkildsen, R-Mass., said. In a written statement, however, the conservative Family Research Council denounced the bill as a "gay jobs bill" that "will not only endanger the freedom of millions of Americans to conduct their businesses according to their most deeply held moral beliefs, but .. will entangle businesses of all types in expensive litigation."

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., plans to introduce the bill as an amendment to another bill that has drawn the anger of gay-rights groups and the applause of some conservatives who say "homosexual extremists" are trying to force all Americans to accept gay marriage.

The Human Rights Campaign released a study this week reporting that 251 of the nation's Fortune 500 companies have policies forbidding discrimination based on sexual orientation. They include IBM, Time-Warner, American Express, and Johnson & Johnson. The study also stated that 66 of the 100 US Senators and 238 of the 435 House members have similar staff-hiring policies.

***"Never doubt that a small group  
of thoughtful, committed people  
can change the world.***

***Indeed,  
it's the only thing that ever has."***  
- Margaret Mead

## Good News from Bryan-College Station New "Open & Affirming Congregation"

PFLAG Bryan-College Station is happy to announce that the members of Friends Congregational Church (UCC) voted on June 16th to become "Open and Affirming." After a year-long process examining issues surrounding the acceptance of gay persons in the church, Friends Congregational Church adopted a statement that says, in part, "that in the Spirit of love and openness we welcome into this community of faith persons of every sexual orientation, race, nationality, ability, age and gender to participate in all aspects of our church's life and ministry."

Page 2



## Gay/Lesbian Billboards to be Displayed in San Diego During GOP National Convention

San Diego, CA - Gay and Lesbian Families of America recently released photos of the first of three billboard themes appearing in selected San Diego area during the weeks surrounding the upcoming GOP convention. The first billboard an actual 4-generation family photo in a backyard barbecue-style setting. The tag: "Someone you know and love is gay." Media interest in receiving a photo of the billboard should call (619) 435-6299. The billboards can be viewed on the Gay & Lesbian Families of America webpage at <http://www.electricti.com/~family/>

Gay and Lesbian Families of America (GLFA) has rented 12 billboards and 17 bus shelter ads strategically placed throughout the Downtown, Hillcrest and Harbor areas of San Diego. The ads will be located on all the city's major arteries. They will be visible to San Diego residents and visitors.

GLFA is a non-profit organization dedicated to presenting positive image of Gays and Lesbians during the weeks coinciding with the upcoming GOP Convention. The organization, launched by Brad Diskin, Gene Burkard and Don Belcher has been endorsed by the City of San Diego Human Relations Commission and Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), San Diego Chapter.

GLFA will also place several display advertisements in key San Diego publications, designed to attract both local and national media attention. The ambitious media blitz is scheduled to begin July 15 and continue through August 15. The estimated cost of the entire project is \$37,000.

"Those appearing on the billboards are real people from all walks of life," said Brad Diskin, committee member of GLFA.

Diskin and his life partner, Alex Urbano, along with GLFA's advertising firm, recently flew to Arizona for the photo shoot of the first billboard. Urbano and Diskin planned the shoot during a 4 generation family gathering.

"We're fortunate that our families have been extremely supportive of our ten year relationship," said Diskin. Diskin noted that one of the most memorable moments of the photo session came from the mouth of Urbano's 81 year old grandmother. She said, "I'm so glad to be apart of a campaign that's helping to combat hatred". He said the photo session was a typical American family spending a day together in the backyard, "After the shoot, we ate Kentucky Fried Chicken," said Diskin.

The billboard campaign will focus on three themes: family, workplace and basic human rights. The objective is to deliver a positive message to mainstream America from the gay community and to direct national attention to the broad spectrum of diversity that exists among Gay and Lesbian families.

Gay and lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD)/San Diego has taken on the official sponsorship of the media campaign. All donations (payable to GLAAD/San Diego) are tax deductible. For more information, or to donate funds please call Brad Diskin at (619) 542-0817, or write 3156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 110, San Diego, CA 92103. Email address: [family@electricti.com](mailto:family@electricti.com).

Here are some of the sample billboards...



...Wonder what we could do in Houston?



## A Congressional Speech to Remember...

The following is taken from the Congressional Record of the 104th Congress during debate on the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) on July 11, 1996. This speech given by Rep. John Lewis, an African-American Democrat from Georgia's 5th District, is one to remember.

Let me say to the gentleman that when I was growing up in the south during the 1940s and the 1950s, the great majority of the people in that region believed that black people should not be able to enter places of public accommodation, and they felt that black people should not be able to register to vote, and many people felt that was right but that was wrong. I think as politicians, as elected officials, we should not only follow but we must lead, lead our districts, not put our fingers into the wind to see which way the air is blowing but be leaders.

Mr. Chairman, this is a mean bill. It is cruel. This bill seeks to divide our nation, turn Americans against Americans, sew the seeds of fear, hatred and intolerance. Let us remember the Preamble of the Declaration of Independence: We hold these truths self-evident that all people are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. Among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

This bill is a slap in the face of the Declaration of Independence. It denies gay men and women the right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Marriage is a basic human right. You cannot tell people they cannot fall in love. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. used to say when people talked about interracial marriage and I quote, "Races do not fall in love and get married. Individuals fall in love and get married."

Why do you not want your fellow men and women, your fellow Americans to be happy? Why do you attack them? Why do you want to destroy the love they hold in their hearts? Why do you want to crush their hopes, their dreams, their longings, their aspirations?

We are talking about human beings, people like you, people who want to get married, buy a house, and spend their lives with the one they love. They have done no wrong.

I will not turn my back on another American. I will not oppress my fellow human being. I have fought too hard and too long against discrimination based on race and color not to stand up against discrimination based on sexual orientation. Mr. Chairman, I have known racism. I have known bigotry. This bill stinks of the same fear, hatred and intolerance. It should not be called the Defense of Marriage Act. It should be called the defense of mean-spirited bigots act.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill, to have the courage to do what is right. This bill appeals to our worst fears and emotions. It encourages hatred of our fellow Americans for political advantage. Every word, every purpose, every message is wrong. It is not the right thing to do, to divide Americans. We are moving toward the 21st century. Let us come together and create one nation, one people, one family, one house, the American house, the American family, the American nation.

## An Olympic Book Review

*Gay Olympian: The Life and Death of Dr. Tom Waddell*, by Tom Waddell and Dick Schaap, Alfred A. Knopf, \$23

How much can be said about a decathlete who finished only sixth in the 1968 Mexico City Games, when the event's history includes Jim Thorpe, Rafer Johnson, Bob Mathias and Bill Toomey? A bookful can be said, and *Gay Olympian*, which alternates between Schaap's narrative and Waddell's letters to his daughter, is more than worth a pre-Atlanta read.

Waddell lived a couple of lifetimes in the 49 years he had before he died of AIDS in 1987. He earned a medical degree, became an expert in infectious diseases, excelled in one of sports' most grueling tests, created the Gay Games and forced anyone who met him to reconsider his or her notions about homosexuals. One such man was '68 gold medalist Toomey, who admitted to feelings of homophobia before he was reunited with his rival early in '87. Said Toomey when the meeting was over: "He's a very valuable person to this planet."

Not everyone agreed with that, least of all the USOC. After Waddell announced plans to found the Gay Olympic

Games in 1982, the USOC got an injunction that forced him to drop the word Olympic from the title of what became known as the Gay Games. Fourteen years earlier in Mexico City, Waddell, an Army captain, angered the USOC by supporting Tommie Smith and John Carlos, who had raised black-gloved hands during the national anthem. Waddell, who was serving as U.S. team physician even as he pursued a decathlon medal, said the protesters "have been discredited by the flag more often than they have discredited it."



Those and other comments led to a threatened court-martial by Col. Don Miller, later executive director of the USOC. Miller never followed through, perhaps because Waddell performed so well, losing a chance at a medal only because he was a relatively poor runner.

That's ironic because Waddell never stopped running. He was not perfect—his high-risk promiscuity is chronicled in the book—but he was unique, a Renaissance man who, as Schaap says, found success in the event designed for the Renaissance athlete.

Reprinted from SPORTS ILLUSTRATED, July 1, 1996, "Scorecard" Section Edited by Jack McCallum and Kostya Kennedy



## Author & this month's speaker Marilyn Bennett Alexander talks about her new book

CHRISTINE WICKER, *Dallas Morning News*

DALLAS -- Marilyn Bennett Alexander was looking over a Montana lake in the summer of 1992 and talking about justice with the daughter of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. "Oppression is not only evil but blasphemous because it makes a child of God doubt that he or she is a child of God," said Mpho Tutu, quoting her father.

With one sentence, Mpho Tutu crystallized the pain that Alexander, who is a lesbian and lifelong United Methodist, felt about her church's stance toward gays and lesbians. Mpho Tutu also set off a process of change that has altered Alexander's life considerably.

Today, Alexander is the co-author of a new book, "We Were Baptized Too: Claiming God's Grace for Lesbians and Gays." And last month, she left her job as executive director of Perkins Relations, which handles public affairs, alumni relations and development at Southern Methodist University's Perkins School of Theology.

She had been at the school for 10 years, first as a graduate student of divinity and then as an employee at SMU. The preface to the first-time author's book bears an illustrious name -- Archbishop Tutu himself. In it, the South African clergyman aims harsh words at churches that condemn homosexuality. "We reject them, treat them as pariahs, and push them outside the confines of our church communities, and thereby we negate the consequences of their baptism and ours. We make them doubt that they are the children of God, and this must be nearly the ultimate blasphemy."

The premise of the book Alexander wrote with Chicagoan James Preston is that the Christian church makes a covenant to support and love those it baptizes. She thinks she fulfilled her end of the contract, biblical injunctions against homosexuality notwithstanding. Last month, the general conference of the United Methodist Church affirmed that "homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching."

Among the book's main contention is that homosexuality is a state created by God, but Alexander argues that even if homosexuality were wrong, churches are singling out that particular sin for special condemnation. Many churches put other issues, such as slavery and the ordination of women into historical perspective, but are so fearful of allowing gender roles to slip that they continue to preach against homosexuality, she says.

For gay and lesbian Christians the church's current policy is devastating, Alexander says. "When you're told that you're an abomination, that's a long way from saying you're a child of God."

Alexander told her own story in the book as well as those of many other gay and lesbian Christians. Before publication, she says, she helped prepare a crisis management plan for Perkins to head off negative reactions. But there has been no outcry about her or the book, as far as she knows. Some people have said that they are concerned that her public acknowledgment might hurt the school, Alexander says.

She also says some alumni supported her. "Some people said,

"I'm so glad Perkins has a prophetic voice -- that's what Perkins used to be," she says. Soon after the book was released, responsibility for major fund raising and development at Perkins was transferred to someone else's department. She believes the change was linked to her public admission that she is a lesbian.

"Personnel changes that have been made in the university and in Perkins have been made as a result of university-wide strategic planning and were not motivated by personnel matters with regard to particular people," says Perkins Dean Robin Lovin, who added that he received no feedback critical of the book.

"I've never had a single person call or write," he says. "I think that's because people are becoming used to the idea that these are issues in the life of a church that are going to have to be addressed more openly."

Alexander left Perkins and now works for the Foundation for Human Understanding, a gay and lesbian social service group. She says her book is directed not at fundamentalists, but at the liberal and moderate church. She says such churches' tolerance for non-practicing homosexuals is not enough. Neither is the idea that homosexuals ought to be succored because they are the "stranger" that Christians are asked to protect, she says. "I am not a stranger," says the lifelong church member. "We're equal. I am a child of God."

Alexander says she struggled for much of her adult life against accepting that she is a lesbian. "I was one of those who told (gay and lesbian) people that if only they would accept Jesus, everything would be OK," she says. "I've since had to make amends, to go back and say, 'I was afraid to deal with my own feelings.'"

The question of whether gays and lesbians can change their sexual orientation is one she can't answer for others, she says. "But I've met many people who've known since they were children," she says. "It's not like we got together and said, 'This will be a fun sin. People will hate us and we won't have children and our children will be taken away from us. We'll lose jobs. But let's do it anyway.'"

Five years ago when she fell in love with her partner, she finally began coming out. "I didn't want to commit to secrecy. I was very happy with her and with our life, and I wanted to share it ... I also felt that it was a gift from God and a measure of grace," she says.

The book ends with liturgies to affirm gay and lesbian Christians. One pledges to "act-up with marches, singing, and hosannas until ... (God's) will is done." Alexander sees the book as an extension of her faith's mandate. "Lay down your life for a friend. Reach out and bring hope to the desperate," she says. "My only mistake was that I took that seriously."

Reprinted from *Dallas Morning News*, May 30, 1996  
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E-Mail: DMNeditor@aol.com or tdmned@pic.net



# PFLAG National Conference 96

October 11-14, 1996 in Washington, DC at the Crystal Gateway Marriott

## 1996 Conference Highlights

**Family to Family:** Thursday, October 10 - Volunteer to be part of PFLAG's unique toll-free national family help-line. Family To Family gives families of gay, lesbian, bisexual, & transgendered people an opportunity to talk with PFLAG family members about the emotional impact of learning their child is gay.

**Leadership Training Institute:** Friday, October 11 - Join PFLAG's grassroots leaders and discuss how to reach out to your community, how to get your community actively involved in PFLAG, and how to spread PFLAG's message. If you consider yourself a PFLAG leader, register now!

**Computer Training w/Digital Queers:** The Digital Queers' computer gurus will be on hand to teach you everything you ever wanted to know about email, the Internet, and how to organize on-line. Let us know what topics you would like covered at Conference '96.

**Lobby Day:** Let your voice be heard on Capitol Hill. Meet your representatives and senators to speak out on the issues that affect your family and community. PFLAG will provide training & help coordinate lobbying visits for conference participants.

**Exciting Workshops:** A large selection of workshops that address the issues affecting all of us.

**Exhibits:** This one stop shopping place is your opportunity to be exposed to products and services that meet your needs.

**Plenary Speakers:** Inspiring, motivating and informative!

**Networking Opportunities:** Visit with old friends and meet new acquaintances.

## Thoughts on National Conferences by Dean Luttrell

My thoughts go back three years ago to my first national P-FLAG conference in New Orleans. If the city had not been exciting enough, the conference was certainly that! But it was more than just excitement. It was also very moving, joyful, healing, liberating, sad, hopeful and empowering. We made new friends, shared our stories, learned new stories, and encouraged one another in our mutual quest to create a more understanding and compassionate world.

We saw old friends and deepened the bonds of those friendships. We experienced the impassioned efforts to understand and to be understood from those new to the knowledge of homosexuality. We were stirred by those struggling with same sex marriage, or transgender issues. And we paused to give special remembrance to those whose journeys include HIV and AIDS.

All in all, seeing other American families representing so many parts of our country and society in a common quest is at once comforting and empowering.

I'm planning to go to the convention in D.C. this year, and I hope you will be able to join me. Tomorrow's chances come from today's efforts. Come be a part of those chances.

**Editor's Note:** Join Dean and the Graves, the Weissers, the Blacks, the Jones, the Smiths, the Sinclairs, Mary Parker, & Peg Nevers! Register today and then call Dick or Norma Graves at 467-4105 to let them know you're planning to attend.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate if you would like to participate in any of the following:**

☐ Digital Queers Computer Training

☐ Lobby Day

☐ Family to Family

☐ Is this your First PFLAG National Conference?

### Method of Payment:

☐ Check (Payable to PFLAG National Conference)

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this registration form and your payment or you may fax your credit card registration to:

### PFLAG Conference Fees:

	Before Aug. 16, 1996	After August 16
Full Conference	\$190	\$235
Saturday Only	\$125	\$125
Leadership Training Institute	\$75	\$75

August 1996

### PFLAG National Conference

19528 Amaranth Drive  
Germantown, MD 20874

FAX: (301)353-1808

Registrations will not be accepted after October 1, 1996.



*One day  
society will accept  
all its members as equals  
regardless of their sexual orientation.*

*One day our sons and daughters,  
brothers and sisters,  
spouses, friends and parents  
will be accepted  
as the valuable human beings they are.*

*Until that day,  
there is PFLAG.*

## Notes from the Editor, by Doug Upchurch

I recently had the privilege to do some computer work for the group OLOC, Old Lesbians Organizing for Change. I spent some time doing data entry for this group's national conference this summer. As I entered the names and birth years of the conference attendees, I found myself overwhelmed with a sense of history and legacy that I had not been that close to. I began to cry realizing for the first time the history that I have as a homosexual. I know I've never said it, so "Thanks to those who have walked before." I have a new respect for my gay & lesbian history.

If you hear of any good story that should be retold, make sure you get it to me by the next deadline. So send your ideas and articles to me at either 528-3684 by phone, 1903 Portsmouth #21, Houston TX 77098 by mail, or dougup67@aol.com by e-mail! The deadline for the September newsletter is August 20. ☺



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

## Be a Part of Our Rainbow!

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Here if you would prefer that any PFLAG mail come in a sealed envelope.

Check here if you do not wish to receive the PFLAG Flyer Newsletter.

Membership Category (Check One)	Amount
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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]

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



# PFLAG Flyer

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

September 1996

<http://www.pflaghtx.org>

HelpLine: 713-867-9020



PFLAG Houston  
PO Box 53796  
Houston, TX 77052-3796

## ACTION ALERT--ENDA & DOMA

*Contact your Senators Today!*

As we mentioned last month, the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is likely to arrive at the Senate in the next few weeks. This bill would exclusively define marriage as being between 1 man and 1 woman. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) is also soon to be voted on in the Senate. Here is what we are hearing from our contacts in Washington.

The push is to get Senators to support adding ENDA to the DOMA bill. They have 40 out of 100 to date, so it IS do-able. Even if the strategy doesn't work, any new "signers-on" will add to the overall ENDA sponsorship.

So, NOW is the time to write Senators Kay Bailey Hutchinson & Phil Gramm to let them know we want their support for attaching ENDA to DOMA. We want to overwhelm their Houston and DC offices with information about why ENDA should be passed. Include any personal stories about discrimination that you are aware of. Although Gramm probably won't vote for us, at least he'll know we're out here.

Use Texas contact info through August.

**Phil Gramm**, 712 Main St., Suite 2400, Houston, 77002; 713-718-4000  
in DC: 370 Russell Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510

**Kay Bailey Hutchison**, 1919 Smith, Suite 800, Houston, TX 77002  
in DC: 283 Russell Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510



## Judge Rules in Favor of Benefits for Homosexual Couples

PORTLAND, Ore.—For the first time in the United States, a judge has required a public agency to extend to homosexual couples the medical, life and dental insurance benefits that married couples often have. Judge Stephen L. Gallagher of Multnomah County Circuit Court ruled on Aug. 8 that Oregon Health Sciences University here was discriminating by denying benefits to the domestic partners of three gay employees.

Gallagher said Oregon had to provide insurance to the partners of all gay state workers who sought coverage. "Constitutional law may mandate, like it or not, that customs change with an evolving social order," the judge wrote.

The decision could be stayed if the state appeals before Sept. 9. A spokesman for the state attorney general's office, Peter Cogswell, said the state would decide on an appeal by "the end of next week or the first

(Continued on page 2)



## Next Meeting Sept. 8 PFLAG Speakers Bureau

One of PFLAG's 3 missions is that of Education. We educate our community, our neighbors, and each other. The Speakers Bureau is a wonderful example of this educational outreach. They have spoken to churches, schools, professional groups, and much more. Their personal and challenging stories provide others with the opportunity to learn about gays and lesbians in a non-threatening environment.

At our September 8 meeting, come hear what others have heard when a panel from the Speakers Bureau gives their presentation. Learn more about how you can help spread the word about PFLAG Houston Speakers Bureau.

Join us from 2:00pm - 4:30pm at St. Francis Episcopal Church, 345 N. Piney Point, off San Felipe between Voss & Gessner. After our large group session, join us in one of our small groups. The small groups are the heart of our monthly meetings. These groups provide everyone with 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. So plan to join us this month! We hope to see you there! If you have announcements for the monthly meeting, please contact Gail Rickey with the announcement by Friday, September 6 at 12 Noon. She can be reached at 440-0353 or [PatRickey@aol.com](mailto:PatRickey@aol.com).

### Here's what's inside...

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## Schedule of Events

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Sept. 8</b>     | <b>PFLAG Monthly Meeting,<br/>PFLAG Speakers Bureau<br/>St. Francis Episcopal Church<br/>345 North Piney Point</b> |
| <b>Sept. 26-29</b> | <b>Waco, TX Gay Pride Parade &amp;<br/>Celebration, For More info, contact<br/>PFLAG Waco at 817-753-1065.</b>     |
| <b>Oct. 6</b>      | <b>PFLAG Monthly Meeting</b>   |
| <b>Oct. 11-14</b>  | <b>PFLAG National Convention in<br/>Washington, DC, See pg. 6</b>  |
| <b>Oct. 11</b>     | <b>National Coming Out Day</b>   |
| <b>Nov. 2</b>      | <b>Houston Black Tie Dinner, See pg. 1</b>   |
| <b>Nov. 3</b>      | <b>PFLAG Monthly Meeting</b>   |

(Continued from page 1)

part of the following week."

The ruling will not make Oregon the first jurisdiction to extend benefits to homosexual couples. The state of Vermont and about 50 county and city governments, including Boston, San Francisco, Seattle and Portland, Ore., do so. But all those jurisdictions offer the benefits voluntarily or because legislation forces them to.

The Oregon decision is significant, said Beatrice Dohrn, legal director for the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, a gay-advocacy group based in New York, because it sets a precedent that will aid lawyers who are fighting for homosexuals in other states.

Christine Tanner, a professor of nursing at the university, filed the suit, along with another nursing professor and a university pharmacist, in 1992. Ms. Tanner sought to obtain insurance for her partner, Lisa Chickandonz. "It was a long, slow process," Ms. Tanner said in an interview after the ruling, "and now we've attained fairness and equality under the law."

"For me, it was more practical than that," said Ms. Chickandonz, a midwife who is insured through her employer. "I was concerned. What if I became disabled and had no access to health insurance?"

Some conservative groups have denounced the rule. The chairman of the state chapter of the Christian Coalition, Jim Adkisson, said the decision "opens up a Pandora's box." "What's to say now that the courts can't do the same for someone who's married to two or three people?" he asked. "As an employer, I'm worried about the cost impacts." Dan Kennedy, administrator of the state human resources division, said the economic effects would be slight. "Other jurisdictions have extended their benefits," Kennedy said, "and it's had a very minor effect."

## A Long Overdue Word of Thanks

### Update on PFLAG Houston Project Open Mind

Many of you are aware that Project Open Mind is a national campaign to stop hate speech against our gay and lesbian friends and family. Although our local stations would not air the original TV ads, there are many other things that we have been going on locally to make an impact.

Fortunately, in 1995 PFLAG Houston Project Open Mind received a grant from the John Steven Kellett Foundation to help fund our efforts against hate speech. During the year, this grant has enabled us to sponsor the Hate Crimes Community Meeting, speak at Rodney Ellis's Town Meeting on Hate at the Jewish Community Center, speak with a congregation at Bryan/College Station about their Open and Affirming process, speak with a gay and lesbian student group about Project Open Mind. In addition to those speaking engagements, we had buttons created for distribution at these functions saying "Stop Hate." We also created book marks with ideas to help end discrimination against gay and lesbian people. These were given out to individuals at the International Festival.

Now, we come to a crossroads with Project Open Mind and we will be making some decisions with the two new commercials.

None of this would have been possible without the John Steven Kellett Foundation Grant for 1995. The foundation is committed to funding organizations which work to end violence and discrimination, provide education in these areas, and/or seek to develop public policy in areas where such policy is lacking or inadequate.

The Board of PFLAG Houston is honored and grateful for the grant we received. Sincere thanks to the John Steven Kellett Foundation for making so much of this possible.



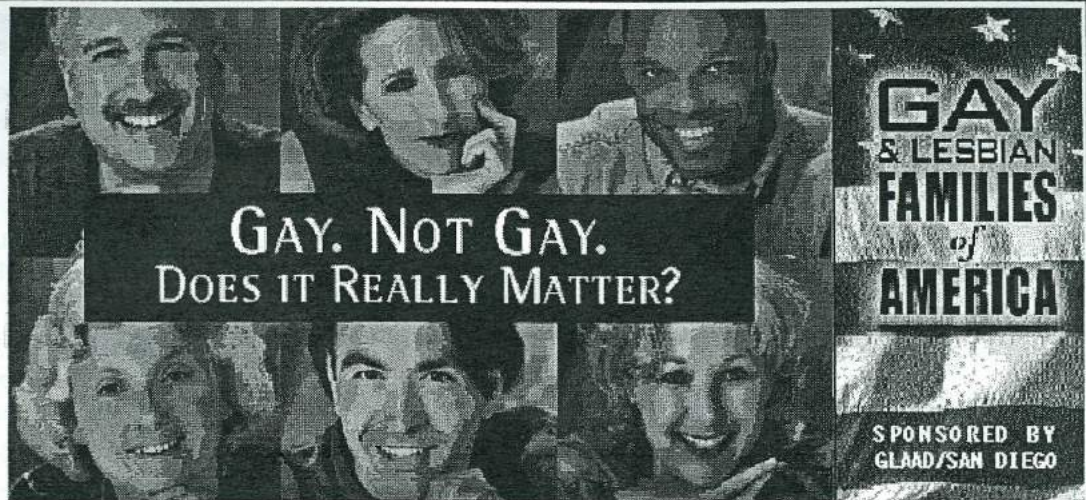
*One day  
society will accept  
all its members as equals  
regardless of their sexual orientation.*

*One day our sons and daughters,  
brothers and sisters,  
spouses, friends and parents  
will be accepted  
as the valuable human beings they are.*

*Until that day,  
there is PFLAG.*



## What if you saw this billboard on I-10 or Loop 610?



*Join PFLAG Houston in bringing this billboard to Houston!*

Imagine you are an average Houstonian, stuck in traffic. You look up, and above you is a simple message, "Gay. Not Gay. Does it really matter?" along with the PFLAG logo. Needless to say, this billboard stands out among the soft drink and car ads. Needless to say, this billboard will make you think.

You may remember the article about the group GLAAD/San Diego in last month's PFLAG Flyer. That group raised over \$37,000 to place 12 billboards and 17 bus shelter ads all over San Diego during the Republican National Convention. The campaign focused on three themes: family, workplace and basic human rights. The objective is to deliver a positive message to mainstream America from the gay community and to direct national attention to the broad spectrum of diversity that exists among Gay and Lesbian families.

The PFLAG Houston board has become very excited about bringing the San Diego billboards to Houston. A single billboard along I-10, Loop 610, or Highway 59 costs a minimum of \$2,800 for one month. PFLAG Houston has \$2,000 left for the year for special advertising projects. This is obviously only a start. Several board members have already come forward and made generous donations toward this project, enough to go forward with the project and get us minimum coverage in Houston.

We are extending this project to all PFLAG members and friends. We expect our billboards to generate positive news media coverage for gays, lesbians, and PFLAG that goes beyond the effect of the billboards themselves. The number, size, and timespan of our billboards will depend on the amount of contributions we receive. At a minimum, we can put up other billboards for two thousand dollars apiece. All donations that you make to this project will go exclusively to putting the "Gay. Not Gay. Does it Really Matter?" billboard message on the major thoroughfares of Houston.

Please send in any donations for the billboard project to:

PFLAG Houston  
Attn: Billboard Project  
P.O. Box 53796  
Houston, Tx 77052-3796

Please memo your checks for "BILLBOARD PROJECT." We will get the billboards up as soon as we can get the artwork from GLAAD/San Diego, and purchase Houston billboard space. If you are interested in being involved in the billboard project, please call the PFLAG Helpline at 867-9020.

## *A Journey to -- Where? from PFLAG St. Paul/Minneapolis*

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child who is gay - to try to help people who may not share this unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it feels. It is like this...

When you are having a baby and raising a child, it's something like planning a fabulous vacation trip to Italy. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make your wonderful plans -- the Coliseum, Michelangelo's David, the gondolas in Venice. You learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very well-planned and exciting.

After months or even years of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives and your journey begins. Much, much later the plane finally lands. The flight attendant comes on the air and says, "Welcome -- to Holland."

Now, there are some choices to make. You may scream, "Holland? What do you mean Holland? I signed up for Italy and by God, Italy it will be!"

You may refuse to get off the plane. But no matter how long you stomp and fume, no matter how long you rant and rave about your plans and all you've invested to get to Italy, it's still Holland.

You may even go so far as to try to convince the Dutch that deep, deep down, they are really Italians operating under some delusion. You press your handbook of handy Italian phrases into their hands, hoping that if they repeat "Buon Giorno" often enough and practice gesturing significantly and enthusiastically when they speak, that

*(Continued on page 4)*



## American Express Extends Employee Benefits to Domestic Partners

by Jack Olson, CFP

Harvey Golub, Chairman of American Express, has announced that the financial services company will extend employee benefits to the domestic partners of its employees as of January, 1997.

Members of the company's Gay/Lesbian Employee Network and Gay/Lesbian Organization to Build Equality applauded the decision, which they had worked for during the past four years. According to the company's official statement, "Our decision does not represent a corporate judgment on a way of life, but rather support for the people who work here. American Express is committed to being the best place to work for all of its employees regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or disability."

During the past year, American Express has also expanded financial services to lesbian and gay clients by offering a financial plan specifically designed for same-sex or other unmarried couples. The company has also granted domestic partners the right of accumulation in mutual fund investing, by which they can qualify for discounts on investments on the same basis as married couples do.

Executives who oppose granting employee benefits to domestic partners of employees usually raise several objections: that it would be unduly expensive, that it would be impossible to administer, or that the customers would object. As more companies like American Express either solve these problems or show that they don't exist, it will weaken the objection to employee-benefit equality for domestic partners until equality becomes the rule in American industry rather than the exception.

## Show your Support for Disney Supportive Shopping Planned

All lesbians/gays, their advocates, and supporters are invited to meet at the Walt Disney Store in the Galleria on Saturday, September 7 at 1:00pm. We will be gathering in support of the Disney Corporation for not backing down to the religious right.

The Disney Corp. is being boycotted by both the Southern Baptist & Assemblies of God churches who oppose Disney's "declining moral compass" when it comes to gay and lesbian issues. Those items that especially irked the RR include Disney's providing benefits for their employees in same-sex relationships and their Gay and Lesbian Days at the Disney theme parks.

Reprinted from LiB (Lesbians in Business) newsletter.

*A Journey to -Where? (Continued from page 3)*

they will eventually discover their true nature.

A surprising number will try to accommodate you, because your happiness is important to them, but the truth is that this is Holland and they really **are** Dutch.

On the other hand, you might hear "Welcome to Holland" and choose the easier, and I believe, more respectful course: "Holland?!" you say, "Really? Imagine that!"

And with your heart pounding in your chest, with a suitcase full of clothes meant for Italy, and useless guidebooks and dictionaries, frightened and disoriented, you walk off the plane and into a country you never dreamed you'd visit.

And after you've been there a while and had a chance to catch your breath, you look around and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills and tulips; Holland has Rembrandt's and canals! And, best of all, Holland has a whole new group of people you would never have met if you hadn't landed there. you find new guidebooks and dictionaries and find that most of what you brought with you will do just fine after all.

Of course, nearly everyone else you know is busy coming and going from Italy, and they're all talking about what a wonderful time they had there. And that's okay -- because though you may wonder, from time to time, what it would have been like to go to Italy, you have come to love the very special beauty of Holland.

## Top Ten Ways to Come Out at a Family Reunion

**Editor's Note:** This came from the Gay & Lesbian Community Forum on America Online. Just in case, please do not try this at home. It is meant only in fun. Hope you enjoy! ☺

1. When they ask you that annoying question, "When are you going to get married?", say "When it is LEGAL!"
2. Start your showgirl routine when you hear the song "We Are Family" on the radio.
3. Hand out P-FLAG meeting schedules.
4. While watching basketball with the guys, make it clear that despite not understanding the game, you're a big fan of Dennis Rodham.
5. Return your sister's bridal bouquet (which you valiantly fought for) to your cousin Sarah, and say "it really doesn't matter, Clinton says he'll sign the bill."
6. Wear your International Ms. Leather Finalist T-shirt
7. Formally thank your relatives for passing the "gay gene" on to you, a delighted recipient, just before the BBQ begins.
8. Wear more make-up than aunt Edna.
9. Sign on the Village people to perform while you sweat to the oldies with Richard Simmons.
10. Bring a carload of your fruitiest friends to put in the fruit salad.



## A PFLAG Houston member speaks out on ENDA & Discrimination

*By Craig Stephens*

My family just observed a wonderful event this month: the marriage of my half-brother and his new wife. Something kept me from fully celebrating this union, however. As I greeted my new sister-in-law, a recent immigrant from Japan, I realized that she now enjoys more legally-protected rights in this country than I do, for one simple reason. I am a gay man.

I thought about the most obvious right she has--the right to legally marry the person she loves. She also has the right to serve as her husband's guardian should a medical emergency arise, inherit his military and Social Security benefits, work at her job without fear of being fired for who she is, and have the complete backing of the courts under Hate Crime legislation if she is ever harassed or harmed by bigots. I have none of this.

While I do not begrudge her any of these rights and truly wish her "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," I keep wondering when will I be protected and supported by the laws of my country. How many more thousands of dollars do I need to pay in taxes and how many more letters to my representatives do I need to write before I am no longer treated like a second-class citizen?"

My mother, along with other parents from our local chapter of PFLAG (Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) just returned from a trip to Washington, DC where they met with their elected officials and asked for the passage of ENDA (the Employment Non-Discrimination Act). This bill would make it illegal to fire someone based on their sexual orientation. I am truly thankful to this group and hope that other fair-minded Americans will support this legislation so we as a nation can begin to recognize that the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights applies to us all. As for the other rights I mentioned, I'll just keep hoping, praying and working to make them a reality, someday.

## There's Still Time for you to Attend the 1996 Houston Black Tie Dinner

The Black Tie Dinner is an annual social event that is PFLAG's major fund-raiser for the year. Last year the Black Tie Dinner presented P-FLAG with \$9,500.00, much of which we used for the Parents Go to Washington trip. The Black Tie Dinner funds allow P-FLAG to do projects like the Parents Go To Washington trip that allow us to reach out to the world at large.

The Black Tie Dinner will be held on Saturday, November the 2nd at the First City Bank Lobby, at 1021 Main downtown. It will be a wonderful event starting with cocktails, followed by a formal dinner, great cabaret style entertainment, and then dancing. Dancing and mingling will continue through midnight. There will also be a silent auction going on through the evening.

Tickets are \$150.00 per person, and tables will be assigned on a first come, first serve basis. So the faster we can get our ticket orders in, the better tables we can get. To purchase a ticket for the Black Tie Dinner, please call Tim Curfman at 869-1890 and let him know you are interested. Please mail your checks to:

Tim Curfman  
1339 Allston  
Houston, TX 77008

\$25.00 of each ticket goes to the Victory Fund. The Victory Fund is a fund for supporting political candidates that are openly gay or lesbian, and that are working for equal rights for gays and lesbians. You must make out one check for \$25.00 to the Victory Fund. Make out another check for \$125.00 to Houston Black Tie Dinner. Unless you otherwise specify, all the proceeds from this donation will go to P-FLAG. The \$125.00 check to the Black Tie Dinner is a tax-deductible donation.

There are other ways to help raise money for the Black Tie Dinner. The most important is for you to be a salesman for the Black Tie Dinner. Anyone who knows of someone that would be interested in attending the Black Tie Dinner, please let Tim Curfman know, either after the meeting or by calling him.

There are other ways to help raise money for the Black Tie Dinner. One is a silent auction. If you have any goods or art that you think would bring a price at a silent auction, let me know. If you have a vacation house that you would be willing to donate for a week or weekend, that can also be auctioned off.

Once again, a strong attendance to the Black Tie Dinner gives P-FLAG the financial resources it needs to continue our advocacy work in the community.



# Unitarian Universalists Pass Historic Stand On Gay Marriage

*What a wonderful resolution!*

**Indianapolis, IN - June 25, 1996**--In an historic vote, delegates to the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly became the first representatives of a denomination to affirm their support of same-sex marriage. The General Assembly, which has been in session with over 1,500 delegates and 3,000 attendees from 49 states and 7 Canadian provinces, voted overwhelmingly to endorse support of a Resolution of Immediate Witness which was introduced on the Plenary floor in yesterday's session.

The resolution, which was voted on June 25, 1996, passed by a vote of 667 to 19. The resolution supported is printed in its entirety below.

The Unitarian Universalist Association, with continental headquarters in Boston, MA, has had a history of support of social justice causes, and has been an outspoken voice in support of civil rights for gays, lesbians and bisexuals. Unitarian Universalism is a creedless religion with Jewish and Christian roots. For more information, contact Deborah Weiner or Julie Parker Amery at 617-742-2100 x103 or email [info@uua.org](mailto:info@uua.org).

## Resolution of Immediate Witness In Support of the Right to Marry for Same-Sex Couples

BECAUSE Unitarian Universalists affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person; and

BECAUSE marriage is held in honor among the blessings of life; and

WHEREAS many states, the Congress, and the President of the United States are acting to void the recognition of same-sex marriages and to deny "full faith and credit" to such marriages formalized in Hawaii or any other state;

WHEREAS debate about extending legally recognized marriage to same-sex

couples has focused on the objections of certain religious communities, while the Unitarian Universalist Association has adopted numerous resolutions over the last twenty-six years supporting equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons, including support of Ceremonies of Union between members of the same sex; and

WHEREAS the Unitarian Universalist Association Board of Trustees and the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association have voted their support for the right to marry for same-sex couples;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that 1996 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association adopts a position of support of legal recognition for marriage between members of the same sex;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 1996 General Assembly urges the Unitarian Universalist Association to make this position known through the media; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the 1996 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association urges the member congregations to proclaim the worth of marriage between any two committed persons and to make this position known in their home communities.

## A Friendly Reminder from Fred Wilson

It has been over a year now since I spoke to many of you about passing out PFLAG cards like the one to the right. Pass these cards out to every person you meet, each time you shop, and include one with each bill you pay. If you are already doing this, congratulations. If, for whatever reason, you haven't started this wonderful habit, start. You won't believe the reward you get when that waiter or store clerk smiles knowingly when they read your card.

We must let everyone everywhere know how we feel. They must know that we are out here and that we support those that support our gay and lesbian loved ones. Unless each of us does our part, the myths, stereotypes, and discrimination will continue to prevail.

Your business has just been supported by  
the loving family of a gay/lesbian person.



P-FLAG HOUSTON  
713-867-9020  
P.O. Box 692444  
HOUSTON, TX 77269-2444

KEEPING  
FAMILIES  
TOGETHER

P-FLAG Houston is one of 340 affiliate  
chapters and contacts across the country.

**WE LOVE OUR GAY FAMILY MEMBERS.**

The 25 million gay men and lesbians in the U.S. have mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, grandmothers and grandfathers, uncles and aunts, totalling countless millions.



## Check Your Bookshelves

### *A Reminder from the PFLAG Library*

You may have noticed the wonderfully remodeled space our library is located in. With more room to browse and review the books, stop by this month and take a look.

We are always interested in receiving new books and videos for our library. If you would like to purchase a book or video that you think would be valuable to the PFLAG library, please speak with Gail & Dale Adcock, our librarians.

For those of you that have taken a look in the past few months, be sure you are up to date on your library checkouts. Be sure to check your bookshelves, video cabinets, cars, and homes for any books, videos, or tapes from the PFLAG Houston Library. Don't forget to check for those overdue books, after all, we don't charge late fees. ☺

## Notes from the Editor, by Doug Upchurch

Wow! Can you imagine what it would be like to be driving into work and see a billboard that is sponsored by PFLAG Houston? I think that would just blow me a way each time I passed it. What an incredible opportunity we have as a chapter to help our neighbors ask themselves, "Gay or not gay? Does it really matter?" If you can assist with this exciting project, please do so. When I first saw these billboards I was filled with the idea of what we could do in Houston. Just think, the office coffee talk will be, "Did you see that new gay billboard by the Summit?" WOW!

If you hear of any good story that should be retold, make sure you get it to me by the next deadline. So send your ideas and articles to me at either 528-3684 by phone, 1903 Portsmouth #21, Houston TX 77098 by mail, or dougup67@aol.com by e-mail! The deadline for the October newsletter is September 18. ☺



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!

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Here if you would prefer that any PFLAG mail come in a sealed envelope.

Check here if you do not wish to receive the PFLAG Flyer Newsletter.

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



PFLAG Houston  
PO Box 53796  
Houston, TX 77052-3796

October 1996

<http://www.pflaghtx.org>

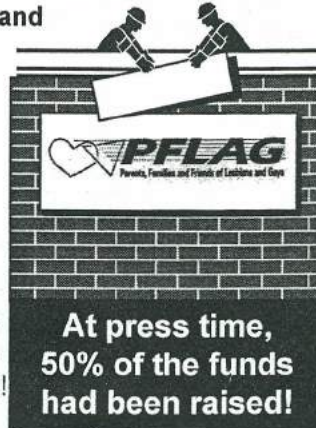
HelpLine: 713-867-9020

## Hey Houston: Did you see that billboard!

### PFLAG Houston's billboard campaign begins

As we reported last month, PFLAG Houston has decided to place at least 10 billboards in prominent places in the city from mid-October to mid-November. These billboards were originally created by GLAAD and posted all over San Diego during the Republican National Convention. With captions such as "Someone you Know and Love is Gay," "Gay. Not Gay. Does it really matter?," and "Millions can't share in the American Dream. Just Because they're gay," PFLAG Houston believes that this is a message that needed to be brought to Houston.

At press time, 50% of the estimated \$45,000 had been raised to place these full-size billboards around the city. If all 10 billboards are placed, over 1 million people will see the messages each day!!!! But now is the time to act!!! Although the original deadline for funds was September 25th, we will try and get as many billboards placed as we have funds to do so. If you would like to participate in this exciting campaign, mail your contribution to **PFLAG Houston, c/o Arden Eversmeyer, 4123 Swarthmore, Houston, TX 77005**. Please specify that your contribution is for the **Billboard Campaign**. If you have questions or would like for your group or business to sponsor a billboard, please contact Kyle Young as soon as possible at 713-521-7793. Time is running out, so act now and let's make this the most memorable billboards Houston has seen!



## PFLAG Houston is moving on December 8!

### Join us for a Holiday Housewarming Party!

After a great deal of searching, the Board of Directors has located a new location for PFLAG Houston's monthly meetings. Beginning December 8th, our new home will be at Christ Church Cathedral at 1117 Texas Ave. This wonderful facility will provide us with more space as well as a more central location that is easily accessible and served by public transportation.

As a celebration of the holidays and our new home, PFLAG Houston is celebrating with a "Holiday Housewarming Party" on Sunday December 8th at 3:00pm. Although the party will replace our monthly meeting, small groups will be meeting from 2:00-3:00pm at Christ Church before the party.

Plan on joining us for this incredibly exciting time of friends, family, food, & fun! The party will be catered and reservations are required. Reservations are \$10 per person and can be made at the October meeting or by calling Susan Upchurch at 995-9777 or via email at [susanup44@aol.com](mailto:susanup44@aol.com). Look for more information at the October meeting and in the November issue of the Newsletter.



## Next Meeting Oct. 6

### All About Coming Out

For many of us, it was the coming out of a loved one that brought us to PFLAG. And for many of us, that is where our journey began. But what about our gay and lesbian loved ones? What happened before that point? How did coming out of the closet affect their lives?

Since October 11 is National Coming Out Day, we thought this month would be a great opportunity for us hear more from some of our gay and lesbian members. In a panel discussion, four individuals will share their unique journey as they acknowledged their sexual orientation to themselves and to others.

Join us from 2:00pm - 4:30pm at St. Francis Episcopal Church, 345 N. Piney Point, off San Felipe between Voss & Gessner. After our large group session, join us in one of our small groups. The small groups are the heart of our monthly meetings. These groups provide everyone with 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 Gail Rickey with the announcement by Wednesday, October 2 at 12 Noon. No announcements will be accepted after this point.** She can be reached at 440-0353 or [PatRickey@aol.com](mailto:PatRickey@aol.com).

### Here's what's inside...

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## Schedule of Events

- Oct. 6**      **PFLAG Monthly Meeting,  
All About Coming Out  
St. Francis Episcopal Church  
345 North Piney Point**
- Oct. 11-14**    **PFLAG National Convention in  
Washington, DC, See pg. 6**
- Oct. 11**      **National Coming Out Day**
- Nov. 2**      **Houston Black Tie Dinner, See pg. 1**
- Nov. 3**      **PFLAG Monthly Meeting**
- Dec. 8**      **Holiday Housewarming Party for  
PFLAG Houston's New Home  
Christ Church Cathedral  
1117 Texas Ave.  
Downtown Houston**

## Calling All Presbyterians!

Several PFLAGers are helping to form a chapter of PLGC (Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns) in Houston. The first meeting is on Monday, Oct. 28, 7:30 PM, at Northwoods Presbyterian Church. For more information, call Gail Rickey at 440-0353, or email at patrickey@aol.com.

## You don't have to be a teacher...

### ...to attend the Houston GLSTN Meetings

The Houston Chapter of the Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Teacher's Network of Houston will be meeting Wednesday, October 16, 1996, at the First Unitarian Universalist Church, 5200 Fannin at Southmore. The October program will be a Gay youth panel presentation. For updates: contact (713) 529-4571. The November 13, 1996 meeting will be a Parent panel presentation.

GLSTN is a national organization focused on making all schools a safe place for all students including those that are gay and lesbian. Whether you are a teacher, counselor, parent, or a supportive individual, you are encouraged to attend!

## A note of sympathy...

PFLAG Houston extends our sympathies to the family and friends of PFLAGer David Turner who passed away on August 8. David and his mother Marguerite attended PFLAG meetings together regularly as well as marching in the Houston Pride Parade. David will be missed. Remembrances can be made to Bering Spiritual Support Group.

## There's Still Time for you to Attend the 1996 Houston Black Tie Dinner

The Black Tie Dinner is an annual social event that is PFLAG's major fund-raiser for the year. Last year the Black Tie Dinner presented P-FLAG with \$9,500.00, much of which we used for the Parents Go to Washington trip. The Black Tie Dinner funds allow P-FLAG to do projects like the Parents Go To Washington trip that allow us to reach out to the world at large.

The Black Tie Dinner will be held on Saturday, November the 2nd at the First City Bank Lobby, at 1021 Main downtown. It will be a wonderful event starting with cocktails, followed by a formal dinner, great cabaret style entertainment, and then dancing.

Dancing and mingling will continue through midnight. There will also be a silent auction going on through the evening.

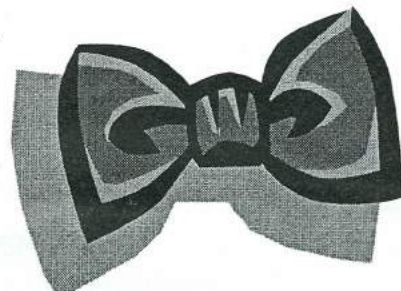
Tickets are \$150.00 per person, and tables will be assigned on a first come, first serve basis. So the faster we can get our ticket orders in, the better tables we can get. To purchase a ticket for the Black Tie Dinner, please call Tim Curfman at 869-1890 and let him know you are interested. Please mail your checks to:

Tim Curfman  
1339 Allston  
Houston, TX 77008

\$25.00 of each ticket goes to the Victory Fund. The Victory Fund is a fund for supporting political candidates that are openly gay or lesbian, and that are working for equal rights for gays and lesbians. You must make out one check for \$25.00 to the Victory Fund. Make out another check for \$125.00 to Houston Black Tie Dinner. Unless you otherwise specify, all the proceeds from this donation will go to P-FLAG. The \$125.00 check to the Black Tie Dinner is a tax-deductible donation.

There are other ways to help raise money for the Black Tie Dinner. The most important is for you to be a salesman for the Black Tie Dinner. Anyone who knows of someone that would be interested in attending the Black Tie Dinner, please let Tim Curfman know, either after the meeting or by calling him.

There are other ways to help raise money for the Black Tie Dinner. One is a silent auction. If you have any goods or art that you think would bring a price at a silent auction, let me know. If you have a vacation house that you would be willing to donate for a week or weekend, that can also be auctioned off. Once again, a strong attendance to the Black Tie Dinner gives P-FLAG the financial resources it needs to continue our advocacy work in the community.



**The Houston Black Tie Dinner**

*An Evening Celebrating  
Unity. Equality. Community.*



# One Vote: Reflections on the Defeat of ENDA

by Gail Rickey

**Editor's Note:** By now, all of you have realized that in early-September, the Senate passed the anti-gay Defense of Marriage Act and defeated the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. Both of these events caused a lot of us to think about what had happened. What could we do differently? Here are the thoughts of one of our presidents Gail Rickey.

As the dust began to settle after the U.S. Senate defeated ENDA by a vote of 50 to 49, the image of "one vote" started to form in my mind. For me, it has now become a symbol for the work that we in P-FLAG do as we speak up for full human and civil rights for gays and lesbians. Its symbolism is multiple, addressing our present and our future.

- The more that each of us recognizes the injustices that gays and lesbians face, the more committed we become to exercising our right to cast our **one vote** in elections, and to the need for us to cast that one vote wisely, educating ourselves on the candidates whether they are running for the local school board or the president of the United States.
- If we had been able to get one more U.S. Senator to endorse ENDA, this landmark legislation would have passed the Senate. Similarly, in the last Texas legislative session, the Hate Crimes Bill, which included sexual orientation, was tabled in the Texas House by a vote of 70 to 68, which means that if one more state representative had voted in favor of discussing the bill, and the tie had been broken in our favor, the bill had a good chance of becoming law in our state (it had already passed in the Texas Senate).

Consequently, every visit that we make to a lawmaker, every letter that we write, every phone call, every fax, every email does matter, because it is entirely possible that we are only **one vote** away from victory. Each lawmaker that agrees to stand up for us--and with us--is invaluable, not just for the vote at hand, but for all the votes that will follow.

- ENDA failed to pass the U.S. Senate by only **one vote**. In fact, Senator David Pryor of Arkansas, who was absent due to his son's surgery, intended to vote in favor of ENDA. In the event of a tie, Vice President Al Gore, who was away from Washington, was prepared to return via helicopter and vote for ENDA.

It is important for us to understand that over the past Congressional session, support for ENDA grew from the handful of Senators who originally co-sponsored it to 43 who had signed on as co-sponsors before the act was voted on. And when the final vote was cast, 49 U.S. Senators voted to protect gays and lesbians against employment discrimination.

We were close--really close. No, ENDA would not have become law even if the Senate had passed the legislation, because there was not enough time--or enough votes--to pass it in the House. But progress has indeed been made, and with that encouragement, that incentive, we can re-commit ourselves to the task--not just in passing ENDA, but in passing legislation at every level of government that will make our city, our state, and our country a safer, healthier place for all persons, whatever their sexual orientation.

One vote. Use it in November. Be challenged by the value of each one lawmaker whose support you gain. Be inspired by the progress we've made, and the attainability of the goal. **One vote.**

## Gay Partners of IBM Workers to Get Benefits

By David W. Dunlap

A steady march by Corporate America toward providing benefits for the partners of lesbian and gay employees took its largest step forward Thursday when IBM announced that it would do so for its domestic work force beginning in January. With 110,000 employees in the United States, IBM is the largest employer yet to extend health-care coverage to couples of the same sex. It follows a trend set by prominent companies in entertainment, communications and technology, including its own subsidiary, Lotus Development Corp.

"We want to make sure we can attract and retain a full range of talented people," said Jill Kanin-Lovers, vice president of human resources at IBM. "The other consideration is that we have a longstanding policy of fairness and equity toward employees." The company, based in Armonk, N.Y., has barred discrimination against gay employees since 1974.

Under the new benefits policy, a lesbian or gay worker who wishes to enroll a partner must sign a notarized affidavit stating that the couple live together in the same home, have a "committed relationship" and are "financially interdependent." The policy does not cover unmarried heterosexual couples. "Heterosexual couples have the option of getting married," Ms. Kanin-Lovers said. "What we wanted to do was allow an opportunity for gay and lesbian employees who don't have that opportunity to have access to our benefits program."

(Continued on page 5)



# A Voice of Experience: Sexual orientation can't be changed

by John Bush

**Editor's Note:** The following is from a letter that PFLAGer John Bush wrote to the radio station (WABC) who happened to have a talk show with a man by the name of Dr. Charles Socarides that said many invalid things about gays and lesbians. Dr. Socarides promotes the theory that sexual orientation can be changed. Unfortunately for Dr. Socarides, his gay son doesn't think this is possible. Neither does John nor the hundreds of ex-"ex-gays", or "Dos Equis" (2 X's) that have spent much of their life trying to change their sexual orientation unsuccessfully.

I am a 30 year old gay male. I did not choose to be this way and have finally come to this decision after many years of turmoil over my sexuality. I grew up in a small town and was taunted by all the bullies because I was different than everyone else. I had no one to talk to about my feelings. I went to college and suppressed every feeling I had. I then graduated from college and moved to Houston where after 2 years I felt I had to deal with my feelings. I got involved with several ex-gay support groups (Homosexuals Anonymous and 2 that were at individual churches). I also spent thousands of dollars on psychotherapy to rid my homosexual feelings.

The basic premise of these meetings and psychotherapy sessions was to blame everything on your father, mother, or some sexual abuse that may have occurred during childhood. The blame was always on someone else and the answer to becoming free of the feelings was to get in touch with God and also address the past. My problem with these groups and psychotherapists is that I was in touch with God and I had nothing in the past to get in touch with. I grew up in a loving family (my mom and dad have been together for 35 years), my father was always there for me, my mother was not smoldering, and I was not sexually abused as a child. I also have a brother that is 2 years younger than I. He and I spent a lot of time together and he happens to be straight! So how is it that I'm gay and he's not?

I've heard some people say 'Well maybe he hasn't met the right girl yet?'. I dated women, in fact I met a girl in Houston that I thought could become my wife. We had everything going for us except I was not sexually attracted to her, in fact I've never been sexually attracted to women. We dated for almost 2 years when I decided to call it quits. I hurt her, her family, my family, and me because of my dishonesty.

My homosexual feelings never went away, instead they intensified. I had had enough of the ex-gay groups and church because I was miserable. I then found a wonderful organization called PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) that helped me understand my feelings and also showed me the love, understanding, and acceptance that I had been longing for all of my life. Because of this support I was able to come out to my family, friends, and work. My family has been very loving and supportive along with my work and friends. I even feel that we've become closer because there are no secrets anymore. Yes, you can find people that say that they were homosexual but now lead either a celibate life or have married in the traditional sense, but on the other hand you will find people that entered the ex-gay realm and found only empty promises such as myself. I applaud these people because they have found their own form of happiness but I don't want to be punished because I was not able to find happiness the way they did. I'm happy with myself and my life, why can't people accept that? Also keep in mind that there is a very high turn over rate in these groups. There are even support groups and therapists offering to help people de-program themselves from the harmful effects of the ex-gay ministries.

I am in a monogamous and loving relationship with a guy and I am hopelessly in love with him as he is with me. We are emotionally as well as sexually attracted to each other. I think it's the kind of love that Jesus talks about in the Bible. Isn't it strange that he never mentioned homosexuality as a sin?

## Moms & Dads Gather in DC...Take 2

During the PFLAG National Convention from October 10-14, the Moms & Dads Go to Washington Project will be hosting several tables during the Roundtable Luncheon in DC.



Any and all PFLAGers interested in knowing more about the project or in reuniting with others from the DC trip are invited to join PFLAG Houston during this time. This will be a special time for networking with other chapters as well as learning more about what has happened with those that joined us on the trip.

## Survivors of Hate Crimes Counseling Svcs. New offering of Montrose Counseling Center

Experiencing a hate crime can be an extremely traumatic situation. People experience a variety of emotions and feelings including fear, guilt, shame, confusion, anger, sadness, isolation, and withdrawal. For many these feelings may result in relationship and family problems.

Montrose Counseling Center now offers hate crime victims trauma counseling, assistance with filing for Crime Victim Compensation, assistance throughout legal procedures, case management advocacy in the community, education, complete confidentiality and dignity. If you or someone you know has been victim of a hate crime, have them contact Montrose Counseling Center at 713-520-0037.



## "A Coming-Out Story" by Jane Smith

Irv & I just spent 5 days in Georgia. We traveled with Irv's 2nd cousin Al and wife Phyllis, whom we met by chance several years ago while all were doing genealogy. Irv is the recorder; Al the raconteur.

We visited Atlanta's Oakland Cemetery and found the great-great-aunt who arranged the funding for the "Wren's Nest" of Uncle Remus fame. We found the grave of the spinster aunt lost at sea - whose shark-eaten body was tossed ashore several days later. We saw the grave of a great-great-great-grandfather who was supply officer for Andersonville Prison. (We also visited this historic site and knew that he must have anguished as empty supply wagons kept arriving - pilfered no doubt by the starving Confederate citizens.)

In Dahlonga we saw the Methodist Church where stained-glass windows are dedicated to various long-gone family members. In LaGrange we saw the grave of Irv's uncle who died at 13 after being kicked by the family horse. Irv's grandfather brought the body from Roswell, NM, to lie in the family plot. The horse remained in the family - which speaks well for this gentle Methodist minister. We also visited Smith Hall at LaGrange College. Irv's dad was born in this building 92 years ago when it was the girls' dorm. (Irv's grandparents were faculty members, and his great-grandfather was college president.)

Irv tramped into heavy brambles 200 yards off a dirt road hunting the patriarch of the Smith family (b 1790). Shaving cream rubbed onto the face of one tombstone in this secluded spot revealed the words: "Gone but not Forgotten."

I even visited my great-great-grandparents who lie alone, as they died before the War Between the States and their children were forced from Georgia after the war - they went by wagon to Missouri. Cornelius, a son, does lie somewhere in that Baptist church's cemetery - he fought the whole war in Lee's Army of Southern Virginia and surrendered at Appomattox. He died a pauper in a grave with no dates.

Al introduced us to several distant cousins. He had told us that a nephew, Bruce, was a closeted gay. (When we had first told Al about our gay son and our involvement in PFLAG, he expressed astonishment as his brother also is a closeted gay.) We fittingly met Bruce on the steps of that lovely Dahlonga-gold-encrusted state capital in Atlanta, and then followed his car to a nearby restaurant. The Human Rights Campaign "Equal Sign" bumper sticker provided the means of bringing up ENDA, PFLAG, etc. I showed our family pictures, which of course include Paul's partner Gary. At the end of our visit Bruce pulled me aside and said "If I'd ever been able to come out to my parents, they would have been just like you."

We had a grand 5 days in Georgia and so many memories. I'll always close my eyes and see Bruce's gray pony tail and remember his last warm hug. After many years, Bruce finally had come out to two strangers who shared a common bond. Al said he knew we'd be good for Bruce, but Bruce taught us one more lesson about relationships, the shortness of life and the importance of creating an atmosphere where everybody can come out.

## It's a boy!!

Colby Collier Hudson was born Friday, 8/23/96, weighing in at 8 pounds, 20 and 1/2 inches. Denay and Colby are both healthy and happy. Congratulations to Denay and Norrie! Denay and Norrie spoke at a recent PFLAG monthly meeting on gays and lesbians raising children.



## IBM & Domestic Partner Benefits (Continued from page 3)

Having taken considerable time to study the issue, IBM made its announcement coincidentally in the middle of a national debate on same-sex marriages. Last week the Senate overwhelmingly passed a bill that would deny federal recognition of same-sex marriages. But on the same day, it narrowly defeated a bill prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

"The IBM decision is an indication that employment protection is commonplace and common sense," said Elizabeth Birch, the executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, a gay and lesbian political group, who was previously the chief litigator at Apple Computer Inc., an IBM competitor.

"What they're doing in essence is valuing their employees and providing equity without using the 'M' word," Ms. Birch said. "It will have a resounding effect on the business world. Big Blue is still seen as so much at the heart of American business."

In 1991, Lotus, which specializes in computer software, became the first publicly traded company to offer benefits to the partners of lesbian and gay employees. When it was acquired by IBM last year, workers retained their existing benefit plan.

Other corporations that offer such benefits include Apple, Eastman Kodak, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, Microsoft, Sun Microsystems, Time Warner, Walt Disney and Xerox. All told, the Human Rights Campaign said, 313 employers have adopted benefits. The city of Denver did so Monday by an 11-1 City Council vote.

Based on the experience of others, Ms. Kanin-Lovers said, IBM did not expect more than 1 percent of its employees to take advantage of the policy. The company also announced that it would provide health care coverage for children under legal guardianship of employees.

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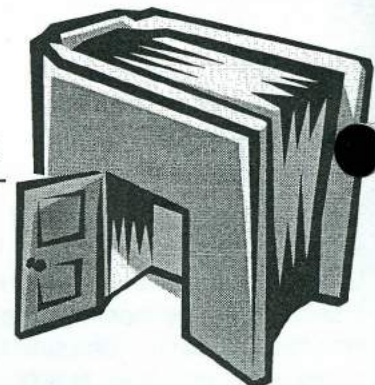
**Editor's Note:** Although there was little hoopla about this, the federally funded agencies Public Broadcasting System and National Public Radio recently become the **first government agency** to extend benefits to same-sex partners of employees. Watch out for the radical right to speak up about this one!!



## Book Review: *A Separate Creation*, by Chandler Burr

Reviewed by Pat Rickey

If you are interested in the biological origin of homosexuality, this book is required reading. The subtitle is "*The Search for the Biological Origins of Sexual Orientation*". Chandler Burr, who is not a scientist, does an almost unbelievable job of reducing some very detailed information on genetics and endocrinology to language that lay persons can understand and enjoy reading. It is concentrated stuff, and not something that makes light reading when you just have a few minutes to relax, but it is gripping and informative. Many of us feel that a strong case for a biological origin for sexual orientation can be a strong factor in future public understanding and acceptance of our gay children.



What this book does not do, is give us a pat, concise statement that proves beyond any doubt that sexual orientation is genetic and our gay children were born that way. It certainly gives evidence in that direction, but it also leads the reader to comprehend some of the complexity inherent in this field of research that makes such simplistic statements impossible, at least for now. Interestingly, Burr titles Chapter 2, "The Debate: Definitive Proof that Homosexuality Is Biological", and Chapter 3, "The Debate: Definitive Proof that Homosexuality Is Not Biological" to illustrate how the same facts can be interpreted in different ways.

He discusses at some length Dean Hammer's work on the "Gay Gene", which gives very strong statistical evidence that determination of sexual orientation has at least a genetic component. Hammer started with the premise that being gay is not chosen and not changeable, studied 114 family histories, and noticed a preponderance of gay males on the female side of family trees. This led Hammer to look in the X chromosome, contributed to each of us only by our mothers. He found that in one particular region of the X chromosome, 33 of 40 gay men shared the same gene "allele", or variant. The chance of this finding being coincidence is negligible. Hammer's finding is now listed in standard genetic reference works as GAY-1. Everyone has this same gene, but the alleles are different for different people. Confused? Get a copy of "*A Separate Creation*" and see how Chandler Burr makes it crystal clear if you take your time in reading.

Burr includes all sorts of other fascinating information on genetic traits such as handedness (left-handed or right-handed), which has the most similarities to sexual orientation as to how it occurs in the general population. The genetic nature of diseases, such as diabetes and cystic fibrosis, are also explained. He discusses how the gay genetic contribution might work and the ethics that may be involved when full understanding is gained, including how sexual orientation might be identified before birth. Burr even discusses how a GeneChip is now technologically possible, using integrated circuits similar to computer chips, to be able to give a complete assessment of a person's genetic makeup. A prototype GeneChip has already been made, containing some 3 billion different genetic probes within it.

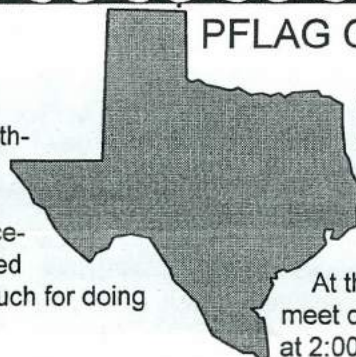
Are you fascinated with the latest in genetics research and how it applies to determination of sexual orientation? Good. Get a copy of "*A Separate Creation*" and read all about it.

## New Regional Director for PFLAG Southern Region

A huge welcome to the new regional director for the Southern Region of PFLAG, which encompasses Texas and Louisiana. Our new director is Jerry Schreiber, long an active member of PFLAG Houston, who now lives in Spicewood, Texas, about 30 miles northwest of Austin. "I retired to Spicewood to relax and play golf," writes Jerry. "So much for doing those things!"

Jerry and his wife Corrine have a lesbian daughter of whom they are very proud. Prior to living in Houston, they were members of the PFLAG chapter in Chicago, and in recent years they joined in the work of the Austin chapter. As 13-year-long-members of PFLAG, they have marched in parades, helped with conferences, stuffed envelopes, spoken to groups, and lent their support to PFLAG in innumerable other ways. "We have received support from PFLAG. Now we want to do more for our daughter and all the other gays and lesbians and their families and friends," writes Jerry.

Thank you, Jerry, for saying "yes" to the task.



## PFLAG Galveston has begun!!!

PFLAG Galveston held its first meeting on September 15th. Several Houston PFLAGers joined them for this exciting meeting of almost 25 people!!

At that meeting, the group decided to meet on the third Sunday of every month at 2:00 pm at the Health Merchant on the corner of 27th and Broadway in Galveston. Galveston County folks can also attend Houston meetings, and we encourage members from Houston and other chapters to attend the Galveston meetings.

If you plan on going to Galveston in the future, plan on joining PFLAG's newest Texas chapter in Galveston. They have let us know they would love to have visitors as the chapter gets started.



## Go, Moms, Go! You gotta love it!!

*A funny story from Ken Markert*

This afternoon I had the pleasure of speaking with one of my high school classmates of some 30 years ago. He is now doing art design for the American Bar Assoc in Chicago for their publications. No, he's not gay, but he is a Unitarian and very supportive of gays and lesbians. This is the story he told me:

Craig works with a gay man in Chicago. The man is from Florida. His mother has been most supportive and helpful. During the time Anita Bryant was doing her orange juice commercials and promotions in Florida, this fine mother had the opportunity to be present at one of Anita's presentations. She managed to sneak up behind her and dump a pitcher of orange juice on her head. Unfortunately, this mom has also had to spend a few nights in jail! May she be a model for us!!!!

No regrets---Ken Markert

## Notes from the Editor, by Doug Upchurch

What a month! I never expected to be so emotionally affected by the legislative activities of late. To have congress go out of its way to state that any marriage I may have is not recognized by the United States was quite a blow to many of us. Sure we expected it, but when it really happened it was quite a blow. At the same time, I found myself very excited about the trend in corporate America towards same-sex partner benefits and protection against workplace discrimination. Can anyone say three steps forward, two steps backward?

If you hear of any good story that should be retold, make sure you get it to me by the next deadline. So send your ideas and articles to me at either 528-3684 by phone, 1903 Portsmouth #21, Houston TX 77098 by mail, or [dougup@flash.net](mailto:dougup@flash.net) by e-mail! The deadline for the November newsletter is October 16. ☺



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!

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Here if you would prefer that any PFLAG mail come in a sealed envelope.

Check here if you do not wish to receive the PFLAG Flyer Newsletter.

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

November 1996

<http://www.pflaghtx.org>

HelpLine: 713-867-9020



PFLAG Houston  
PO Box 53796  
Houston, TX 77052-3796

## Count 'em: 11 Billboards grace Houston Over \$44,000 raised, but not everyone agrees...

We are VERY EXCITED to announce that beginning on Friday, October 11, National Coming Out Day, PFLAG Houston started placing 11 billboards all over the Houston high-traffic areas. **All in all, 1,230,600 Houstonians will see a board each day!** (Locations are listed on page 3)

As many of you know, we were overwhelmed at the generosity we received when we announced our plans to place the Gay & Lesbian Families of America Billboards all over Houston. To date, we have received over \$44,000 in just 8 weeks!

The local media has been incredibly supportive and open to hearing why we are placing these billboards.

With stories on every major network in Houston, several radio stations, and the Houston Chronicle, we have received tremendous feedback. **(Write Thank You Notes, Info on Page 3)** Unfortunately, not all Houstonians want our message to be seen. The large billboard on the Gulf Freeway at Woodridge which reads "Someone you know and love is gay" was spray-painted with the message "God forgive us and save us!!!"

"God forgive us and save us for our cruelty to people who are different," said PFLAG Houston member Donna DeCamp, a diaconal minister in the Methodist church. "Some of the most loving and spiritual people I know are lesbian and gay."

PFLAG co-president Barbara Winston said that the person who sprayed the billboard was motivated out of ignorance. Winston addressed Hous-



(Continued on page 3)

## PFLAG Houston is moving on December 8!

### Join us for a Holiday Housewarming Party!

As we announced last month, the PFLAG Houston Board of Directors has located a new home for PFLAG Houston's monthly meetings. Beginning December 8th, our new home will be at Christ Church Cathedral at 1117 Texas Ave. This wonderful facility will provide us with more space as well as a more central location that is easily accessible and served by public transportation.

As a celebration of the holidays and our new home, PFLAG Houston is celebrating with a "Holiday Housewarming Party" on Sunday December 8th at 3:00pm. Although the party will replace our monthly meeting, small groups will be meeting from 2:00-3:00pm at Christ Church before the party. Plan on joining us for this incredibly exciting time of friends, family, food, & fun! The party will be catered and reservations are required. Reservations are \$10 per person and can be made at the November meeting or by calling Susan Upchurch at 995-9777 or via email at [susanup44@aol.com](mailto:susanup44@aol.com). Look for more information at the November meeting.



## Next Meeting Nov. 3 Giving thanks for diversity

For many the next 2 months are often difficult times involving the holidays and extended family. It is important at this time to be thankful of our families and our diversity.

This month, Rev. Jan Vickery Knost, Sr. Minister of Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston. The Unitarian Universalist church was one of the first to openly perform same-sex unions. Rev. Knost has been serving Houston congregations for over 40 years. Join us this month as he brings us a unique perspective to the topic of diversity in life and community.

Join us from 2:00pm - 4:30pm at St. Francis Episcopal Church, 345 N. Piney Point, off San Felipe between Voss & Gessner. After our large group session, join us in one of our small groups. The small groups are the heart of our monthly meetings. These groups provide everyone with 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 Gail Rickey with the announcement by Friday, November 1 at 12 Noon. No announcements will be accepted after this point.** She can be reached at 440-0353 or [PatRickey@aol.com](mailto:PatRickey@aol.com).

### Here's what's inside...

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PFLAG Receives Grant	7



## Schedule of Events

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| Nov. 2 | Houston Black Tie Dinner   |
| Nov. 3 | PFLAG Monthly Meeting,<br>Giving Thanks for Diversity<br>St. Francis Episcopal Church<br>345 North Piney Point               |
| Dec. 8 | Holiday Housewarming Party for<br>PFLAG Houston's New Home<br>Christ Church Cathedral<br>1117 Texas Ave.<br>Downtown Houston |
| Jan. 5 | PFLAG Monthly Meeting at<br>our NEW HOME!!<br>Christ Church Cathedral<br>1117 Texas Ave.<br>Downtown Houston                 |

You don't have to be a teacher...

### ...to attend the Houston GLSTN Meetings

The Houston Chapter of the Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Teacher's Network of Houston will be meeting Wednesday, November 13, 1996, at the First Unitarian Universalist Church, 5200 Fannin at Southmore. For updates: contact (713) 529-4571. The November 13, 1996 meeting will be a Parent panel presentation

GLSTN is a national organization focused on making all schools a safe place for all students including those that are gay and lesbian. Whether you are a teacher, counselor, parent, or a supportive individual, you are encouraged to attend!

### Accolades and Awards for all of us *Recap of National Recognition*

At the 1996 National PFLAG Convention in Washington, DC, PFLAG's 2nd Annual Chapter Awards for support, education, and advocacy were given to affiliates who have created and implemented exemplary programs in each area of PFLAG's mission: Support, Education, & Advocacy. In 1995, PFLAG Houston received the Chapter Award for Education as a result of our 2nd Annual Conference on Homophobia. This year, PFLAG Houston was very proud to receive the Chapter Award for Advocacy as a result of our organization of "Moms & Dads Go to Washington" Project. Congratulations to all of you that continually make it happen!

Also this year, awards were given to PFLAG's Project Open Mind chapters in pilot cities Tulsa, Atlanta, Houston, Seattle, St Paul/Minneapolis and St. Louis for their pioneering efforts in the launch and evolution of POM.

## New Video from Dr. Mel White *"The Rhetoric of Intolerance"*

Our PFLAG library has recently received a copy of the video tape entitled 'The Rhetoric of Intolerance: An Open-Letter Video to Pat Robertson from Dr. Mel White'. Dr. Mel White was a minister and a ghost writer for Pat Robertson, Oliver North and other religious fundamentalists. Mel was married, had 2 children, and was the minister of a church. During this time, though, he was privately seeking therapy to rid himself of his homosexual feelings. He got so desperate that he even tried shock therapy. After many years of turmoil, Mel had decided that enough was enough and decided to quite denying his homosexual feelings. He divorced his wife and went on to become a minister at the Cathedral of Hope MCC (Metropolitan Community Church) in Dallas, TX. Cathedral of Hope is the largest gay/lesbian church in the world. Mel has also created watch groups to monitor the preachings of people like Pat Robertson and others who preach intolerance. Mel has invited Pat Robertson to meet face-to-face many times but his invitation has been refused each time. Mel has responded by creating a video to discuss Pat Robertson's false and inflammatory rhetoric. Mel has been sending the video to media, and anyone who is interested, in the hopes that he can educate people about Pat Robertson's teachings. You can order your copy of the video by calling (714) 224-9329 or send \$5.55 to the Justice Report, 1280 Bison, Suite B9-431, Newport Beach, CA. 92660.

Mel White has also written a book entitled **Stranger at the Gate** where he talks about his life and being a homosexual. video and book are great resources for people that are interested in learning about religion as it relates to homosexuality.

### Words of Support for the Billboard Campaign

Dear PFLAG Houston,  
Please know that we are behind you 100% with moral support. Your initiative and bravado are to be cherished and applauded. Thanks for all YOU do for PFLAG!

Thanks,  
George Neighbors, Jr,  
PFLAG Field Services Director

Dear Pat & Gail Rickey,

Your project using sign boards sounds so wonderful--I'm sure that this mindless act (of defacing 1 billboard) will only aid your campaign in the publicity that will come and the proof of homophobia in your area. I want to say that the Regional Director's Council says "Well Done". We can all learn a great deal from PFLAG Houston and the wonderful difference that you are making and the example that you setting that will influence other people and chapters.

Sally Morse  
PFLAG Regional Director's Council



## Billboard Project *(Continued from page 1)*

on City Council at 2pm on Tuesday to discuss the reasons for the project. A Council member had contacted PFLAG wanting more information about the billboards after receiving complaints from clergy in his district.

"Ignorance often promotes violent acts toward gays and lesbians," said Winston, the mother of a gay man. "Misinformation creates an atmosphere where young (gay) people take their own lives. It leads to parents throwing their children out on the streets, simply because their child is gay."

The Gulf Freeway board features a large family photo because one-in-four families has a gay or lesbian member, said PFLAG co-president Pat Rickey.

"Gay people are a part of our community and our families," Rickey said.

"The person who defaced the billboard is attacking my child and my family. When parents of gays and lesbians realize the prejudice our children face every day, we can't stand by anymore. The billboards are a positive way for us to take action, and a little spray paint isn't going to stop our message."

### Write a Letter, Make a Difference

Please write thank you notes to the following reporters:

Elma Barrera (did Friday's report on Channel 13)  
KTRK-TV  
P.O. Box 13  
Houston, Texas 77001-0013

Suzanne Boase (did excellent lead story on Channel 2)  
KPRC-TV  
8181 Southwest Frwy.  
Houston, TX 77074

Jim Grimes (did Friday's report on Channel 2)  
KPRC-TV  
8181 Southwest Frwy.  
Houston, TX 77074

Terri Johnson (Channel 26 report Friday night)  
KRIV-TV  
3935 Westheimer Rd.  
Houston, Texas 77027-5096

Alan Bernstein (Chronicle political writer, mentioned us in "Election Notes")  
Houston Chronicle  
PO Box 4260  
Houston, TX 77210-4260

Also, please write a special note to Shannon High. Shannon is a news producer at Channel 2 & is responsible for Wednesday's lead story & the follow-up story on Friday. She also was very supportive of the "Moms & Dads Go to Washington" project:

Shannon High  
KPRC-TV  
81 Southwest Frwy.  
Houston, TX 77074

**After all, you know the other side is writing these folks!!!!**

### Last, But Not Least

Last Wednesday's lead story on Channel 2 interviewed representatives from the local party headquarters on their impressions on the boards. Democratic National Committee representative Billie Carr said that the billboards are a "good idea" and that they are needed. Please offer her our gratitude for the public support. Harris County Republican Chairman Gary Polland was asked if the boards are needed. He sarcastically remarked, "I don't think so." We need some PFLAG parents who are willing to explain the need to him.

Billie Carr  
Harris County Democratic Party  
811 Westheimer  
Houston, Texas 77006

Gary Polland  
Harris County Republican Party  
8 Chelsea Place  
Houston, TX 77006

### So Where are the Boards???

Here is the current list of billboards as of October 22, 1996:

- I-45 North, Inbound, Just south of I-10
- Southwest Freeway, Inbound, East of Westpark
- I-45 North, Inbound, North of Tidwell
- Southwest Freeway, Inbound, East of Newcastle
- Katy Freeway, Inbound, @ Bunker Hill
- Gulf Freeway, Inbound, @ Woodridge (Vandalized)
- Highway 290, Inbound, North of Dacoma
- East Freeway, Outbound, East of Lathrop
- Eastex Freeway, Inbound, South of Loop 610
- Westheimer, Outbound, East of Gessner
- Richmond, Inbound, East of Hillcroft

Although nothing was planned at press time, there has been talk of a PFLAG Tour of the Boards. But don't wait for us, get some friends together, go out for dinner, and take a tour of the city!



## "Same-Sex Benefits: Where IBM goes, others may follow"

**Reprinted from *BusinessWeek*, Oct. 7, 1996**

It sees the strategy as a low-cost way to draw top talent. Five years ago, it would have rocked America's corporate Richter scale. But when IBM announced on Sept. 19 that it would extend medical benefits to its employees' same-sex partners—treating them, in essence, as spouses—the news produced nary a rattle. True, Big Blue was merely following the lead of its high-tech peers. Lotus Development Corp. was the first major employer to offer spousal benefits to gay and lesbian live-ins, in 1991. And the revolution was old news at Apple, Hewlett-Packard, and Oracle by the time IBM, which bought Lotus two years ago, adopted the policy.

Still, when such an Establishment icon buys in, can the rest of America be far behind? "The airlines are all studying it now," says an excited Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, a Washington-based gay political group. Although only 2% of America's publicly traded companies now extend benefits to gay and lesbian live-ins, the movement is growing. Employers in industries as diverse as telecommunications and chemicals are revamping benefits plans to include gays. Even Coors Brewing Co., whose founding family was long associated with right-wing politics, extended its coverage a year and a half ago.

Employers are changing policies because they need every edge in attracting and retaining all of the best workers. "In terms of business competitiveness, it made sense for us," says an IBM spokesperson. The gesture can also generate goodwill among employees and consumers. "In some ways, a little goes a long way with us. Even a partial response to us gains a lot of loyalty and respect," says Scott W. Walton, executive director of Digital Queers, a network of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transsexuals working in high tech.

Gender-blind benefits policies also don't cost much. IBM expects less than 1% of its workforce to register. That's partly because many partners already have other jobs, with benefits. Others prefer to keep their sex lives under wraps. Studies by Hewitt Associates, a human resources consulting firm, show that despite the AIDS epidemic, gay partners file for about the same number of claims as traditional spouses. They also have far fewer babies, greatly reducing a major medical expense.

So far, high-tech companies, where the bidding for so-called knowledge workers is the most intense, have led the way in offering same-sex benefits. Media and entertainment companies such as Disney, MGM, Sony Pictures, and The New York Times are joining the trend. To be sure, big industrial unions aren't yet mobilizing. "It's an issue that hasn't come up at a bargaining table, as far as I know," says an official at the United Steelworkers, which handles some 6,000 contracts. But with the wave of mergers and acquisitions, benefits policies can leapfrog into unexpected places. Indeed, IBM officials acknowledge that the 1994 Lotus acquisition, along with high-tech peer pressure, helped to push Big Blue toward its benefits shift. Fox and ABC offer same-sex benefits, and if CBS and NBC feel pressure to follow suit, activists hope it will build on their industrial parents, Westinghouse and General Electric.

Even in deeply conservative regions, resistance is waning. Three years ago, Williamson County in Texas blocked Apple Computer Co.'s proposed plant, objecting to its same-sex benefits policy. But after job-hungry state politicians twisted some arms, the resistance ebbed and Apple moved in. More recently, Walt Disney Co. stared down a threatened consumer boycott on the issue. Of course, even after deciding to embrace new policies, human resource pros have to wrestle with some prickly issues, from how to certify relationships to whether the policy covers a partner's dependent children. Then there's the question of offering benefits to heterosexual live-in partners. IBM limits it to same-sex couples, reasoning that men and women can marry. Other companies, such as Levi Strauss & Co., offer benefits regardless of gender. This pleases more employees, but raises the cost. While only 1% of Levi's U.S. workforce signed up their partners, two-thirds of those who did were straight. The considerable irony in all this is that President Clinton just signed legislation banning gay marriages. Politicians may condemn gay unions, but more and more companies are quietly moving to institutionalize them.

*By Stephen Baker in Pittsburgh, with Paul Judge in Boston*

## News on the Local Front from Dallas

The Dallas City Council voted 13-2 on Wednesday to adopt a package of proposals that includes a stronger hate crimes bill for the next session of Texas Legislature. The city will seek to pass a hate crimes bill that includes sexual orientation in its application. Inclusion of this measure is a first for Dallas, and should help LGRL and others who are seeking passage of this measure.





## Take the test...Are you an ACA-PFLAG

**Editor's Note:** *The following information was shared at the 1996 PFLAG National Convention in good fun by outgoing PFLAG president Mitzi Henderson's children. I hope you like it as much as I did.*

Here is the diagnostic test for children of PFLAG activists, to determine whether they can join ACA-PFLAG—"Adult Children of Addicts of P-FLAG". The charter members of ACA-PFLAG know that we appreciate our parents activism, but every once in awhile, we just plain need a break! If you can answer yes to 4 or more of the following questions, you may qualify for membership in ACA-PFLAG:

1. Do your parents find it hard to do PFLAG in moderation?
2. Do they ever blackout or forget where they've been, and then realize that they've been at a PFLAG meeting?
3. Do your friends ever tell you they've received letters from your mother, asking for money to support her PFLAG habit?
4. When your parents wake up in the morning, before they do anything else, do they switch on their computer to check their PFLAG e-mail?
5. Do you fear the day you will have to have that delicate conversation with your parents—telling them that none of your children are lesbian or gay?  
Do you ever find yourself in role reversal, saying to your parents "Why is everything gay, gay, gay—don't you do anything else?"
7. Do your parents find it difficult to talk in a group without asking everyone to "share their story"?
8. Did your parents attend several gay/lesbian weddings before you did?
9. Has your mother ever judged a Mr. Leather contest?
10. When your father speaks of royalty, is he more likely to be talking about imperial drag courts than Princess Di?
11. Have family portraits from your childhood been shown to more than 3 audiences, so they can guess which child turned out to be gay or lesbian? (And the audience usually guesses wrong!)
12. Upon seeing a scantily-clad man in her first gay pride parade, was your mother's reaction not "oh, dear", but "he looks like he needs some sunscreen."
13. Finally, as comedian Bob Smith put it, have your parents completed all 3 stages of dealing with your sexuality -- (1) not talking about it, (2) talking about it, and (3) talking about it on Oprah.

Test provided by the children of outgoing PFLAG National President Mitzi Henderson. Additional diagnostic test questions for ACA-PFLAG can be e-mailed to Jamie Henderson at swimmer@bbs.tde.com.

## A PFLAGer Speaks Out on the Plane by Sue Null

My flight home (from the 1996 National PFLAG Convention) this morning was memorable for a variety of reasons. First, an older French couple in the shuttle bus to the airport asked me why I had been in Washington. I explained why and that I was concerned about equal rights for gays, and the lady in a sympathetic tone said that she understood their plight, but that the extreme ones were problematic; I answered yes, but that equal rights must be available for ALL people, regardless of whether you agreed with them or not. The black cabbie let them out first, and then commented to me, "I LIKE your definition of equal rights." He warmed my heart, and I thanked him for saying so.

Then, who appeared on my flight but Sen. Phil Gramm from Texas, the renowned homophobe? Ah Hah, I thought, HERE is my opportunity. Those who sign up to lobby their Congress-people often end up speaking only to an aide, and here was a live senator, captive in an airplane for two and a half hours! He was sitting next to a mother with a baby, and one of my rowmates suggested it would be great if the baby puked on him. Later, she suggested I tell him we had taken a poll and we had voted to throw him off the plane! As intriguing as these suggestions appeared, I tried to play it more conventionally. As soon as breakfast was served, I went up to him and said I was a constituent and wanted to discuss an issue with him. The following is a brief summary of a frustrating conversation.

Sue: Sen. Gramm, You have said that MERIT is the principal issue in employment, not quotas. We have an area of agreement. You have a Korean-American wife and I have a Korean son. (I showed him a photograph). They will have the benefit of some legislation to protect them from job discrimination, but my son will have an additional impediment: he is gay. There is no legislation to protect him from being fired for being gay, and you recently voted against ENDA. I would like you to consider changing your vote the next time.

PG: I believe in non-discrimination, [familiar lip-service] but this bill places a burden on the employer to prove that he didn't discriminate. Affirmative action lawsuits are clogging the court system. The Constitution supports equality. ENDA is not necessary.

Sue: The Constitution may support equality, but it's NOT working. For that reason, we need legislation to guarantee non-discrimination in the workplace. Perhaps these lawsuits that you refer to are the price we pay to ensure fairness to all.

PG: Well, we have two opposing opinions. I'm not going to change my mind, so we will have to disagree.

The flight was crowded with gay men and gay-friendly people, as evidenced by various pins and T-shirts that they wore. Three of them told me thanks for speaking up, one kissed me and told me his story. Two of them made a brief comment to Sen. Gramm that indicated they agreed with the lady who had spoken to him.

(Continued on page 6)



# One Mom's Perspective on the 1996 National PFLAG Conference

by Sue Null

This P-FLAG mom just came back from the national conference in Washington DC and what a wing-ding it was for all of us. I was one of about 1000 who attended from across the country and one of 16 or so from Houston.

Everybody remembers a variety of special moments during this jam-packed long weekend of workshops, tours, lobbying, general meetings, regional meetings, and social events. I especially enjoyed meeting for the first time a number of online people from pflag-talk, people who knew each other by their loving, supportive messages, but who had never before met in person.

A few highlights: a reception in a congressional office building with our two retiring gay Congressmen and their mates, the Washington Gay Men's Chorus with Holly Near, speakers including Cher, whose daughter Chastity is a lesbian; the woman lawyer who was successful in fighting Colorado's Amendment 2 against equal rights for gays, and IBM's diversity director, who reminded us that extending domestic partnership benefits to same sex couples was simply good business: gays are the first disadvantaged minority group with economic power. Comedian Suzanne Westenhoefer suggested that gays take back the word "Sodomite," just as they had done with "queer," and turn it into something positive!

Saturday night was highlighted by the AIDS Quilt Candlelight March at the Lincoln Memorial. People whose lives had been touched by AIDS spoke to us in the audience, in a sea of thousands of candles in the dark. We huddled together in the chilly quiet evening, arms around each other, swaying in the dark.

Sunday evening closed with the children (and their spouses) of Mitzi Henderson, the retiring president of national P-FLAG, offering a delightful spoof of their mom's involvement in P-FLAG, entitled Adult Children of Parents Addicted to P-FLAG. Does your mom check her e-mail the first thing every morning?

The final dance was highlighted by people of all sexual orientations dancing together, EVEN straight dads dancing with gay young men! Next year's meeting is scheduled for Orlando. Start saving your dollars now and go for the time of your life!

## ***Speaks Out on the Plane*** (Continued from page 5)

I made my way down the aisle of the plane, speaking to several people whom I judged sympathetic to my point of view, and everybody was happy I had said something. One person suggested we start a petition against Gramm, and another said, "Let's start a chant," but then we were afraid we might get thrown off the plane! I suggested that THEY speak to the Senator, but they all refused. WHY??

Because they didn't want to invade someone's privacy on a flight? Were they being too polite? Hey, Phil Gramm is running for re-election in November; he's fair game, I feel. Some said they wouldn't lower themselves to speak to someone whom they detested; others said it wouldn't do any good anyway. But my point is, if NOBODY (other than me) expresses his/her opinion, Sen. Gramm and other public figures continue to think that most people agree with them and that the Religious Right expresses the dominant thinking for the nation. Sure, it's highly unlikely that the likes of Phil Gramm are going to change their minds because ONE person, or even SEVERAL people express contrary opinions, but what does that mean? We just give up and let them take over? They MUST know that their medieval ideas are not shared by all responsible citizens. We must put a face on the opposition. Here was a golden opportunity, I thought. I felt disappointed that almost no one took advantage of it.

## **Homosexuality Linked to Teen Suicide**

EDMONTON (AP) -- Young gay men are more likely to try to kill themselves than heterosexual men, suggests a survey believed to be the first to conclusively link homosexuality and youth suicide.

A random survey of 750 men between 18 and 27, conducted in Calgary between 1991-92, found gay and bisexual males were 13.9 times more at risk of making a serious suicide attempt.

Celibate gay men were the most likely to try to harm or kill themselves. And homosexual and bisexual males were nearly three times more likely to have tried to harm themselves.

The study, conducted through the University of Calgary, an internationally renowned center in the study of suicide, was recently tabled in the Alberta legislature.

Pierre Tremblay, co-author of the report, said it's not surprising young gays attempt suicide.

"They're in a world where the message is just hatred -- and kids are really sensitive to that -- of knowing that if anyone knew what they are they're toast."

**Editor's Note:** It is depressing information and studies like this that only remind us of what we already know. It is a matter of life and death when it comes to helping to create a safe community where everyone, including gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendereds, knows that their life is important and that someone out there does really care for them. This is what PFLAG must be about.



PFLAG Houston is once again honored to receive this grant and recognition from the John Steven Kellett Foundation. We were especially honored this year to receive our grant in person from John Kellett at our October Monthly Meeting. Thanks to the foundation for this great honor and gift.

There is so much going on this month, yet I only have one thing to say! Thanks! Thanks! Thanks! Thanks!

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Thanks! Thanks! Thanks! Thanks! Thanks! Thanks!

Thanks! Thanks! Thanks! Thanks! Thanks! Thanks to all of you that contributed to the PFLAG Billboard Campaign. We could not do it without each of you!

Send your ideas and articles to me at either 528-3684 by phone, 1903 Portsmouth #21, Houston TX 77098 by mail, or [dougup@flash.net](mailto:dougup@flash.net) by e-mail! The deadline for the November newsletter is November 20. ☺



- 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!***

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Here if you would prefer that any PFLAG mail come in a sealed envelope.

Check here if you do not wish to receive the PFLAG Flyer Newsletter.

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

December 1996

<http://www.pflaghtx.org>

HelpLine: 713-867-9020



PFLAG Houston  
PO Box 53796  
Houston, TX 77052-3796

## Next Meeting December 8

*Join Us for a Holiday Housewarming*

Ok, so maybe it won't snow, but it certainly won't be a housewarming if you're not there! As a celebration of the holidays and our new home, PFLAG Houston is celebrating with a "Holiday Housewarming Party" on Sunday December 8th from 3:00pm - 5:00pm. Although the party will replace our monthly meeting, small groups will be meeting from 2:00-3:00pm at Christ Church before the party.

Plan on joining us for this incredibly exciting time of friends, family, food, & fun! The party will be catered and reservations are required by December 1. Reservations are \$11 per person and can be made by calling Susan Upchurch at 995-9777 or via email at [susanup44@aol.com](mailto:susanup44@aol.com).

Longtime PFLAG member Stuart Kane has generously donated an oil painting (30" x 42" including frame) to be raffled off at the Housewarming. The market value of the painting is \$200. Raffle tickets will be on sale at the party. 1 ticket for \$5; 3 tickets for \$10.

Before the Holiday Housewarming, join us in one of our small groups from 2:00pm - 3:00pm. The small groups are the heart of our monthly meetings. These groups provide everyone with an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns and celebrations with others in a safe, confidential environment.

So whether you come for the small groups, the party, or both, we look forward to having with us as we celebrate our new home at Christ Church Cathedral in the heart of Downtown Houston.

## New Officers for PFLAG Houston Elected

At the November Monthly Meeting, PFLAG Houston elected the following slate of officers for the 1997 term:

**Co-Presidents:** Don and Susan Upchurch  
**Vice Presidents:** Dick and Norma Graves  
**Recording Secretary:** Sarah Beauchamp  
**Corresponding Secretary:** Amy Rowland  
**Co-Treasurers:** Lee Baker and John Bush

Congratulations to everyone that was elected! If you are interested in helping out these officers in 1997, contact Don and Susan Upchurch at 713-995-9777 and let them know!



**HOLIDAY  
HOUSEWARMING**



## PFLAG Houston is moving on December 8!

As we announced in October, PFLAG Houston has a new home for PFLAG Houston's monthly meetings. Beginning December 8th, our home will be at Christ Church Cathedral at 1117 Texas in Downtown Houston. This wonderful facility will provide us with more space as well as a more central location that is easily accessible and served by public transportation.

Located on Texas between Fannin & San Jacinto, Christ

Church Cathedral is just a few blocks from the heart of the Theater District downtown. Free parking is available on Sundays right across the street from the church. If you have any questions, or need further directions, please contact the PFLAG Helpline at 713-867-9020. Join us for small groups and the Holiday Housewarming on Sunday, December 8th! See you then!

## New PFLAG Chapters in Galveston, Corpus Christi, and The Woodlands

We are very excited to announce the establishment of 3 new PFLAG chapters or satellite groups in Southeast Texas. In September, PFLAG Galveston held their first meeting at the Health Merchant on 27th & Broadway. They have recently elected officers and will be filling out the paperwork to become a full-

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Here's what's inside...

Schedule of Events	2
Attn: Randall's Shoppers	3
PFLAG on TV	4
Landmark Lawsuit	6



## Schedule of Events

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Dec. 8  | Holiday Housewarming Party for<br>PFLAG Houston's New Home<br>Christ Church Cathedral<br>1117 Texas Ave.<br>Downtown Houston |
| Dec. 15 | PFLAG Galveston Meeting<br>2:00pm at Health Merchant,<br>27th & Broadway   |
| Dec. 18 | GLSTN Houston Meeting<br>(See Article below)   |
| Jan. 5  | PFLAG Monthly Meeting at<br>our NEW HOME!!<br>2:00-4:30pm<br>Christ Church Cathedral<br>1117 Texas Ave.<br>Downtown Houston  |
| Jan. 12 | PFLAG Woodlands Meeting, 2 PM at<br>Northwoods Unitarian Universalist<br>Church, 1370 N. Milbend Dr.                         |
| Jan. 19 | PFLAG Galveston Monthly Meeting  |
| Feb. 2  | PFLAG Houston Monthly Meeting  |
| Feb. 16 | PFLAG Galveston Monthly Meeting  |
| Mar. 2  | PFLAG Houston Monthly Meeting  |

## Billboard Project: A Special Thanks

*This is what it's all about!*

**Editor's Note:** We received the following email regarding the billboards just a few weeks ago. This is really why we do what we do.

"I just wanted to let you know how great I think your billboards are. I was in Houston this weekend visiting my parents and we passed one of the billboards. My parents had a very animated discussion about them and thought they were very well done and had important messages. I am not out to my parents, so this "openness" in discussing the whole matter was truly shocking to me. I know those billboards have had a tremendous impact on my parents. I applaud and support your publicity efforts. Keep up the good work!"

### **PFLAG Chapters in Southeast Texas** *(Continued from page 1)*

elected officers and will be filling out the paperwork to become a full-fledged chapter during December. The Galveston Island Helpline # is 409-744-7558 and the North Galveston County Helpline number is either 713-338-1228 or 481-1692. Both of these helplines are Galveston PFLAG Members' homes, so please consider that when calling for more information.

Membership dues were determined to be \$25 per individual and \$40 per family. If you are already a member of another PFLAG chapter, please also consider joining Galveston's chapter. There will be oodles of incentives for becoming one of Galveston's charter members. Just wait till Mardi Gras, for example! Are your taste buds wet yet? Checks payable to Galveston PFLAG may be sent to Galveston PFLAG, 3102 Cove View #B101, Galveston, TX 77554.

There is another new P-FLAG chapter in Texas, this one in Corpus Christi. The meetings will be held on the second Thursday night of each month at the First United Methodist Church, located at 900 South Shoreline Drive. The contact for the new chapter is Christopher Lawrence. He can be reached at (512) 888-6646 (Home) or (512) 884-8004 (Work). Congratulations to Christopher and Corpus Christi! Be sure to give them your support when you're in the area.

As PFLAG Houston grows, so does our need to have a presence in outlying areas. The site of our first satellite chapter is in The Woodlands. Please help spread the word about the satellite chapter's first meeting--Sunday, Jan. 12 (2nd Sunday of the month), 2 PM, at Northwoods Unitarian Universalist Church, 1370 N. Milbend Dr. Jeanne Edmonds, a member of PFLAG Houston's 1997 Board of Directors, is launching this satellite chapter. For more information, call the PFLAG Helpline (713-867-9020) or Gail Rickey (281-440-0353).

Be sure to let others know about these exciting new chapters. PFLAG Houston is very excited about this tremendous growth in Southeast Texas. Be sure to support these chapters with your presence, resources, and encouragement.

You don't have to be a teacher...

### **...to attend the Houston GLSTN Meetings**

The Houston Chapter of the Gay, Lesbian, Straight, Teacher's Network of Houston will be meeting Wednesday, December 18, 1996, at the First Unitarian Universalist Church, 5200 Fannin at Southmore. The program will be **"How Teachers Can Counteract the Holiday Blues."**

GLSTN is a national organization focused on making all schools a safe place for all students including those that are gay and lesbian. The Houston Chapter of GLSTN provides: (1) support for educators; (2) education on ending homophobia; and (3) advocacy in schools. Whether you are a teacher, counselor, parent, or a supportive individual, you are encouraged to attend!

The 1997 meetings are currently scheduled for Jan 15, Feb 19, March 19, April 16, May 21, and June 18. For more information, contact GLSTN - Houston Chapter at 713-529-4571 or by mail at P.O. Box 541871, Houston, TX 77254.



## What's Your Story? Maybe your School District wants to know!

### Help Make our Schools Safer for our Youth



In our continuing efforts to reach the public and private school system with our message that there is a need to make schools safer for g/l students, your story is needed. Bob McLaughlin, a psychologist who works closely with schools, has made some promising contacts with several school districts, plus some parochial and private schools, regarding ways to assure safer schools for all children.

Even open administrators need to hear from parents and students as to whether this is really an issue in their districts. One school district's interest in addressing this issue was in direct response to an alert from a PFLAG mom of a graduate regarding the harassment and other difficulties her son faced while a student there.

Whether you are a g/l person or the parent of a g/l person, take a few minutes to look back on your or your child's school experience. Then write a letter or make a call to a key administrator in your local school district. Once more it is the personal story that can best be heard. H.A.T.C.H. and PFLAG can consult but constituent calls and letters are the

most effective. Bob says, "Letters are evidentiary documents and leave a useful paper trail, but phone calls are great, too, and make an impression."

If you or your child attended an HISD school, we urge you to contact Harriet Avery, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services and tell her your story. She is extremely supportive and specifically requested any and all input from parents of HISD students or former students, former or current students themselves, and teachers and former teachers. You may reach her at 892-6670 (specify if you are parent, teacher, student, etc.) or fax her at 892-7494. Whatever school district you live in, a memo concerning your call or a copy of your letter for Bob McLaughlin's files would be very helpful. Dr. McLaughlin's address is 3355 West Alabama, #585, Houston, TX, 77098-1718.

PLEASE take time to consider carefully if you have a contribution to make. There must be many stories that none of us has heard that could help us begin to make a positive difference for our g/l youth still in school. We have all seen the problem either first hand or as interested persons. This is an opportunity to be a part of the solution. If you have any questions please call Blake Weisser, PFLAG member, at 713-776-1227.

### Taiwan Has First Gay Wedding

TAIPEI, Taiwan -- More than 500 guests, including officials of the Taipei city government, attended Taiwan's first public gay wedding, between a Taiwanese author and his longtime American companion.

Wearing a traditional Chinese scholar's robe, Hsu You-sheng exchanged vows and rings with Gray Harriman at a downtown hotel. The ceremony was praised by social reformers, but will not be legally binding because Taiwan does not recognize same-sex marriages.

Hsu, a well-known author of 11 books on gay topics, met Harriman, a college administrator, while studying in New York. Hsu's open homosexuality is a rarity in Taiwan, where many gays face social stigma and intense pressure from parents to marry and continue the family line.

But the wedding has gained mostly positive response in Taiwan, and one of the state-owned television networks plans to run a special on the couple. Another leading cable television station carried the ceremony live.

Taipei Mayor Chen Shui-bian sent a letter of congratulation read at the ceremony by his spokesman. Other guests included officials of the municipal government and Taiwan's main opposition Democratic Progressive Party. "I wouldn't make a big deal out of this. I'm just here to wish them well," said Shih Ming-teh, a former DPP chairman.

### Attention Randall's Shoppers...

#### *Fundraising while you grocery shop!*

In conjunction with its new "Remarkable Card" Program, Randall's Grocery Stores recently announced its "Good Neighbor Program." Randall's Good Neighbor Program is designed to give non-profit organizations a way to raise funds while their members shop for groceries. PFLAG Houston has applied and received approval to be a beneficiary of this program. Here's what you have to do if you shop at Randall's.

On your next shopping visit, present your Remarkable Card and let them know you would like to have the Good Neighbor Program activated on your card for group # 1990, PFLAG Houston. **This must be done before the checker begins scanning your groceries.** Once your card has been activated for PFLAG Houston, simply present your Remarkable Card before the checker begins to scan your items. It's that simple. PFLAG Houston will be paid every quarter based on 1% of quarterly sales. If we exceed \$20,000 in quarterly sales, we will receive 2% of that amount. So activate your Remarkable Card for PFLAG Houston (Code #1990).

If you prefer to go Krogering, don't forget to use your PFLAG Houston Kroger Share Card. PFLAG Houston just received a check for \$147.88 as a result of those that presented their Kroger Share Card when shopping at Kroger.



## PFLAG Houston Members on TV Show *"The Bradshaw Difference," Dec. 10, 1996*

PFLAG Houston recently had the opportunity to participate in the filming of a nationally syndicated talk show hosted by author John Bradshaw. The episode of "The Bradshaw Difference" with host John Bradshaw, "Coming Out In America," is scheduled for broadcast on Tuesday, December 10, 1996. Featured are several PFLAG Houston members in the audience and on the panel.

In the Houston area it will air at 9:00 am and again at 5:00 pm on KNWS, broadcast channel 51 (Warner cable channel 2). This is the "All News" channel for those of you outside the Houston area. In your local program listings it will be listed as "The Bradshaw Difference."

## 1996 Black Tie Dinner Huge Success

We're happy to report that PFLAG Houston had a total of 8 tables (that's 80 people!) at the 1996 Houston Black Tie Dinner this year. Approximately 1,000 people attended the festive event, which benefits 12 local gay and lesbian local organizations including PFLAG Houston. Thanks to Tim Curfman & Bill Gilmer for heading up PFLAG sales. Great Job, Guys!

Politicians who attended the Black Tie Dinner -- visibly demonstrating their support of equality for gays and lesbians, included the following: US Representatives Ken Bentsen and Sheila Jackson Lee, State Senator John Whitmire, State Representatives Scott Hochberg, Debra Danburg, and Glen Maxey, Constable Jack Abercia, and former Houston Police Chief Lee Brown.

## Calling all Presbyterians...

A chapter of Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns (PLGC) has recently been formed in Houston. Please encourage your Presbyterian friends to get involved. The next meeting is Mon., Dec. 9, 7:30 PM, at the Presbyterian Center, 1110 Lovett Blvd. For more information, call Gail Rickey (281-440-0353).

## Kick-Off Party for LGRL, Dec. 5, 1996

The Lesbian & Gay Rights Lobby of Texas (LGRL) will be holding a Kick-Off Party for this year's Texas Legislative Session. Hosted by Mitchell Katine, the reception will be held at 1519 Maryland on December 5, 1996 from 6-8pm. For information on attending and sponsorship, please contact Michael Crawford at 713-523-4431.

If you are unable to attend, but would like to contribute to the work of LGRL for this upcoming legislative session, please send your donations to LGRL, P.O. Box 53283, Houston, Texas, 77052.

## And now for the Credits... *PFLAG Houston's Billboard Project*

The next page is a list of the contributors to the PFLAG Houston Billboard Project. With 11 billboards across the city during the months of October & November, PFLAG Houston was able to reach millions of drivers with the message of diversity, tolerance and equal rights. Thank you to all that gave of your resources to make this project the most successful public relations campaigns ever in the history of PFLAG Houston. Our sincerest thanks to each and everyone of you.

PFLAG Houston

## *You Made it Happen!*

### Chrysler refuses to change discrimination & harassment policy

Chrysler has refused to give equal rights to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons. Chrysler has refused to accept the demand of the United Auto Workers to add the two words "sexual orientation" to the contract for equal protection.

The October 28, 1996 Wall Street Journal reported Chrysler's excuses for rejecting the UAW's demand by quoting Tony Cervone, a Chrysler labor spokesman: "Chrysler prohibits discrimination and will not tolerate harassment or retaliation against any person in the workplace...by singling out any one group, we would be implicitly excluding others. That's the fundamental reason why we didn't see a need to make the change."

On November 14th, many groups chose to protest in front of local Chrysler dealerships. PFLAG Houston chose to instead contact our local Chrysler dealerships via phone. PFLAGer Sue Null contacted several dealers and managers only to find out that they had no idea of what was happening at the national level. So in an effort to promote education and advocacy, the Board has decided to write letters to the general managers and dealers of local Chrysler dealerships. We encourage you to use the following text as a sample to go from as you compose your letter.

"I was disappointed to read of Chrysler Corporation's decision to not include sexual orientation in their non-discrimination policy. I recognize that Chrysler's decision does not necessarily reflect the policy of your dealership, however the publicity has prompted me to express my thoughts on this issue to you, a Chrysler affiliate."

"Sexual orientation is NOT a choice! Every person is born with an individual sexual orientation and I believe it is fundamentally wrong to discriminate against someone based on that orientation. I hope that you agree and will help make our Houston area a better place to live and work by insisting that your dealership be a place of respect and dignity for everyone in our community including my gay son/lesbian daughter."



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▼ Pat &amp; Gail Rickey -- In Memory Of David Turner

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▼ Annette Beall &amp; Carolyn Gay--In Memory Of Their Parents &amp; Grandparent

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▼ Kenneth Bohan

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▼ Larry Broughton

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▼ Russell Byrd &amp; Steve Baker

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▼ Tony Carroll

▼ Lauri Cragg

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▼ Daniel T. Brown &amp; Co.

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▼ Beth &amp; Dennis Drake

▼ Arden Eversmeyer

▼ Audrey Eversmeyer

▼ Exxon Gay/Lesbian Employees (EGLE)

▼ Randall Finley

▼ Paul Foster, MD.

▼ Marion Friedman

▼ Elliot Gite

▼ Stephen Goldberg

▼ James Goodchild

▼ Timothy L. Granger

▼ William M. Harris, Jr.

▼ Charles Haynes

▼ Clarence &amp; Cora Lou Hennesey

▼ Jackson Hicks

▼ J. J. Hollenburger

▼ Karen Holmes

▼ Shirley Holmes

▼ Houston Mission Church

▼ David Kelley

▼ Mrs. Hart A. King

▼ Stephen Kubenka

▼ Mary Lou Kurtz

▼ Lez A Faire

▼ LiB Members

▼ Jane R. Lobingier

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▼ Uniglobe First Choice Travel

▼ The Staff Of Uniglobe First Choice Travel

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▼ Marty Yaklin



## Texas Bar Denies Gay Issues Section, *by Janet Elliott*

In the Texas State Bar Association, the Board of Directors can vote to create "sections" within the membership. These sections must meet the need of fostering interaction between lawyers who practice in this specialized field of law or whom have common professional interests associated with these issues. There are currently sections for issues ranging from Family law to Individual Rights and Responsibilities. Now just five months after creating an Animal Law section, the State Bar Board of Directors has voted down a proposed gay and lesbian issues section, marking the first time the board has ever rejected creation of a new section. The proposal was defeated 19-17 during the Bar board's Oct. 4 meeting in Fort Worth.

Bar President Colleen McHugh, whose column in October's *Texas Bar Journal* was ironically titled "Celebrating Our Differences," joined those voting against the section. U.S. District Judge Norman Black of Houston stunned the board with his observation of the vote. "I've always learned a lot about my fellow members from these meetings," said Black. "Today's the first time I wasn't real proud." Those board members opposed to the section were concerned about its "divisiveness" and how it would disenfranchise lawyers that were opposed to it.

Houston's Mitchell Katine, who proposed the new section, says he was amazed that the proposal created so much controversy. Currently supporters of the section are debating whether to bring the proposal before the current board or wait until next June, when W. Frank Newton, who favors the section, becomes Bar president. In the meantime, PFLAG Houston wants to encourage you to write letters of appreciation to those that supported the section and letters of concern to those that voted against it. Here are 4 key players that you should write, 2 from each side.

### Voted Against the Section

M. Colleen McHugh, President  
Wells, Pinckney & McHugh, A Professional Corporation  
2000 One Shoreline Plaza – South Tower  
800 N. Shoreline Blvd.  
Corpus Christi, TX 78401

Guy N. Harrison  
Attorney at Law  
P.O. Box 2845  
Longview, TX 75606

### Voted For the Section

Charles R. (Rebby) Gregg  
Hutcheson & Grundy, L.L.P.  
1200 Smith St., Ste. 3300  
Houston, TX 77002-4579

Carroll G. Robinson  
Thurgood Marshall School of Law  
3100 Cleburne  
Houston, TX 77004

## GLSTN Salutes Jamie Nabozny And Lambda Legal Defense On Victory In First-Ever Federal Case On Anti-Gay Abuse In Schools

### *Hailed as "Most Important Decision Since Brown V. Board Of Education"*

(New York, NY) The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Teachers Network (GLSTN) today congratulated Jamie Nabozny and Lambda Legal Defense, plaintiff and counsel, on their victory in Nabozny v. Podelsny et al, the first-ever federal case on anti-gay violence in schools. A Wisconsin jury found Nabozny's Ashland, Wisconsin school system and its administrators guilty of failing to protect Nabozny from harassment on Tuesday, establishing a first-ever precedent on the rights of lesbian and gay students in K-12 schools. GLSTN is the only national organization specifically focused on winning equal educational rights for such students.

"Jamie's victory is an incredible moment in our history," said Kevin Jennings, GLSTN's Executive Director and a former high school history teacher. "Basically, this is the most important court ruling on education since Brown v. the Board of Education in 1954, when racial segregation was outlawed," said Jennings. "The courts have sent a similar message with this verdict. They've said that students who are lesbian or gay are entitled to equal protection and equal opportunity from their schools." Jennings added, "Now, students and teachers fighting for equity will have the courts on their side. Things will quite literally never be the same."

Jennings lauded Nabozny and Lambda for their leadership. "Jamie's courage, coupled with the legal brilliance of the Lambda team, have made history," said Jennings. "These are folks who will be remembered forever for their contribution to bettering the lives of lesbian and gay young people." Jennings added that GLSTN's network of over forty chapters will be hard at work in coming months to make sure the Nabozny ruling has teeth. "In the end, these kinds of rulings will only have an impact if there is someone on the local level who is holding their schools accountable for their behavior, just as Jamie and Lambda held Ashland accountable," said Jennings. "That's our plan for the next phase: to let school officials know that we're watching, and we'll be making sure they live up to their legal responsibilities to protect all students."

Distributed by GLSTN, November 20, 1996



## A Holiday Gift Idea for Family & Friends

Are you sure what to get that family member for the holidays? Why not a subscription to the **PFLAG Flyer**? For only \$15.00 a year, you can give a gift subscription to a family member, friend or other loved one that may not live in the Houston area. Simply mail the recipient of the subscription along with your check for \$15.00 to PFLAG Houston, P.O. Box 53796 Houston, TX 77052-3796. What a great way to inform, educate and support your family members and friends outside of Houston!

## Notes from the Editor, by Doug Upchurch

Each year, PFLAG Houston elects a slate of officers that then nominates a board of directors. This past year was a little different. Instead of 2 co-presidents, we had 5. Not just any 5, but the best 5 co-presidents an organization could ever have. I want to take the time to thank Pat & Gail Rickey, Dick & Norma Graves, and Barbara Winston for an incredible job very well done! With Moms & Dads Go to Washington and the Billboard Project, we have proved once again that PFLAG Houston is a chapter marked by initiative, creativity, and passion. All 5 of you embody that idea. Thank you for everything.

Now, as a new year approaches, I think back to my first PFLAG meeting almost 3 years ago. I wondered if my parents would ever come to a meeting? Not only did they come, but now they have been elected to the co-presidency for 1997. I'm not sure what it will be like being a President's kid, but I think I have an idea...Oh, sorry I have to go, Mom's got a computer question. :) Send your ideas and articles to me at either 528-3684 by phone, 1903 Portsmouth #21, Houston TX 77098 by mail, or dougup@flash.net by e-mail! The deadline for the January newsletter is December 18.

☺



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!

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ St: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Information: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Check Here if you would prefer that any PFLAG mail come in a sealed envelope.

☐ Check here if you do not wish to receive the PFLAG Flyer Newsletter.

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<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 ]