



P-FLAG FLYER

P.O. Box 692444

Houston, Texas 77269-2444

Telephone (713) 867-9020

January 1993

MEETING JANUARY 10

We welcome the new year with an informal presentation by the 1993 P-FLAG board, focusing on our chapter's goals and plans.

The new board met in November to begin setting our course for 1993. Meet the board, and get a behind-the-scenes look at what P-FLAG does, nationally and locally.

Small group discussions--the heart of our monthly meetings--follow the program.

**CALL FOR 1993 MEMBERSHIP
JOIN! RENEW MEMBERSHIP!**

P-FLAG is a non-profit volunteer organization, committed to family support, community education, and advocacy to end discrimination.

Help us help others by paying dues. Benefits include a subscription to the quarterly P-FLAGpole (published by our national office), voting at meetings, and being a part of P-FLAG's work.

A membership form is on page 6. Bring it to the Jan. 10 meeting or mail it to our PO Box.

CALENDAR

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Jan. 10 | P-FLAG Meeting
2 PM, IntraCare
7601 Fannin |
| Jan. 21 | Board Meeting
7:15 PM
Alida's home |
| Feb. 7 | P-FLAG Meeting
2 PM, IntraCare |
| Feb. 18 | Board Meeting |
| Mar. 7 | P-FLAG Meeting |

P-FLAG HOLIDAY PARTY DRAWS RECORD ATTENDANCE

More than 100 P-FLAGers and their families and friends celebrated our friendship at JAGS restaurant in early December.

Our host was famed caterer Jackson Hicks. Mary Anne Pendino made us laugh with her comedy routine, and John Evans from HIPY House touched our hearts with his love-filled musical presentation.

Very special thanks to several P-FLAG members--Mary for organizing the party, John and Mike for their piano entertainment, Kathy for creating festive name tags, Barbara for handling reservations, and an extraordinary "angel" who enabled us to have the party.

We're happy to report that P-FLAGers and their friends donated a total of \$269 to HIPY House as a holiday gift.

Our raffle of an oil painting raised \$283 for the ongoing work of P-FLAG. Sincere thanks to Stuart for his generous donation of the painting. And CONGRATULATIONS to Walt and Lu Porter, the lucky winners!

TEXAS SUPREME COURT HEARS ARGUMENTS IN CASE CHALLENGING "SODOMY LAW"

It's the final round in the fight against the so-called "sodomy law," Section 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code.

In the case sponsored by the Texas Human Rights Foundation (THRF), oral arguments were heard by the Texas Supreme Court on Jan. 5.

Two lower courts have struck down the statute as unconsti-

homosexuality that has led to stigma and legal sanctions against our children. As families we seek the same legal status for our gay children that our heterosexual children enjoy."

P-FLAG is extremely grateful to two Austin attorneys--Jordan Steiker and Chris Wilson--for the time and effort they expended in enabling our group to file a brief.

P-FLAG'S ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TO BE HELD IN NEW ORLEANS LABOR DAY WEEKEND

The theme: "Celebrating Family--New Orleans Style." Workshop topics are to include Gay and Lesbian Youth, Religious and Spiritual Matters, Homophobia, Facilitating Support Group Meetings, AIDS, and Legal and Legislative Concerns

The place: Sheraton Hotel

The reasons to go: To learn more about keeping families in loving relationships AND about how to work toward eradicating homophobia; to network with P-FLAGers from across the country; to be inspired by a host of heroes who work every day to make the world a better place for our sons, daughters, and friends; to have FUN with fellow P-FLAGers from Houston.

CELEBRATING FAMILY



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Apr. 4	P-FLAG Meeting
Apr. 25	National March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, & Bisexual Civil Rights
Sept. 3-6	P-FLAG Convention New Orleans

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Two lower courts have stuck down the statute as unconstitutional. Attorney General Dan Morales appealed the rulings.

P-FLAG joined with seven other organizations in filing an amicus brief in support of the plaintiffs. Our statement included the following: "We deplore the irrational fear and outmoded understanding of

homosexuality that has led to stigma and legal sanctions against our children. As families we seek the same legal status for our gay children that our heterosexual children enjoy."

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** THANKS **

to Paul Van Order for representing P-FLAG at a recent fundraising auction for the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard.

Colorado Boycott Begins

Colorado voters voted November 3rd to amend the state constitution to ban laws that would protect homosexuals from discrimination. Local laws against anti-gay firings, evictions, and other acts of bias were instantly nullified in Aspen, Boulder, and Denver.

At a Los Angeles AIDS benefit, Barbra Streisand told fellow stars, "We must now say clearly that the moral climate there is no longer acceptable, and if we are asked to, we must refuse to play where they discriminate."

Lesbian tennis great Martina Navratilova (a Colorado resident) and several other prominent gays & lesbians joined the city governments of Aspen, Boulder, and Denver in filing suit in Colorado Superior Court, charging that the gay-rights ban violates the U.S. Constitution—most notably the 14th Amendment, which guarantees Americans equal protection under the law.

"The people fighting against [the anti-gay amendment] were fighting too nicely," says Navratilova. "They didn't fight as dirty as the family values group did."

A Denver-based group Boycott Colorado is calling on all citizens of the United States to boycott the state & not buy products made in the state.

from P-FLAG Ann Arbor's newsletter

P-FLAG's national president, Mitzi Henderson, campaigned in Colorado against Amendment 2, making public appearances in several cities. (See related article, page 3.)

Denver P-FLAG's December newsletter reflects the pain felt by our friends in Colorado: "Our November 4 meeting was held, as always, although many regular participants were compelled to attend the candlelight vigil on the West Capitol Steps. We were all still stunned into disbelief over the passing, by only 7%, of Amendment 2, taking all protection against evil discrimination away from

During the fight against Amendment 2, Denver P-FLAGers Tom and Vicki Clark appeared in two TV spots, becoming the state-wide symbol of parents of gays and lesbians.

After the election, Tom wrote a Letter to the Editor which he concluded with these words: "There are those who say 'the fat lady has sung' for the gay and lesbian community, but I believe she was only in the practice hall. The real concert is just beginning."



MASK OF ME

by Dawn Lacallade

A student at Texas A&M shared this poem--written as a prelude to "coming out" to her parents--with her campus gay and lesbian group. We asked permission to share it with our readers.

Since an age so young
I have always felt among
The love that embraces me so
But now I fear what I don't know
You have known my mask for so long
Now I know that hiding is so wrong
And I want so badly to share me
And the love I now see
But I live in silence, afraid
of how you will feel when my cards are played
Because I have a straight flush minus the king
And the perfect life minus the ring
The very parents that comforted me so
Are now the source of the fear I know
What will you do when you find
That your perfect daughter is nothing of the kind
Maybe you will find that I haven't changed
My life is just a little rearranged
Maybe you will still love me

MARCH ON WASHINGTON April 25

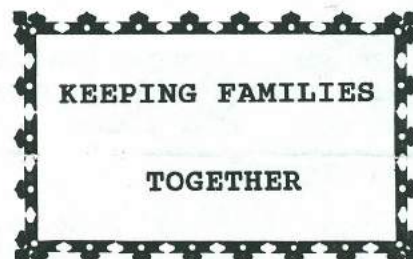
P-FLAG chapters from across the country will join in the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Equal Rights and Liberation.

"We were there in 1987, and it was unbelievably moving, exhilarating and liberating," writes a New Orleans P-FLAG in the chapter's newsletter. "P-FLAG chapters from many cities and states marched then, and--as always--the gay/lesbian crowd roared their approval, and some wept with joy to see parents join their fight."

Hotel rooms have been reserved for P-FLAG members at four hotels, with rates ranging from \$75 to \$150. (Call 440-0353 for details.)

On the eve of the march, P-FLAG will host a function at Hotel Washington's Skylight Room, overlooking the White House and Washington Monument.

If you want to join the march in the name of P-FLAG, please let us know. It would be GREAT for P-FLAG Houston to be represented in this historic event.



NEW BOOK OFFERS EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO PWAS, THEIR FAMILIES, and FRIENDS

Just Hold Me While I Cry shares one family's emotional journey through AIDS. Says author Bobbie Stasey, "I explore my feelings about Jim's (her son's) homosexuality, symptoms, his friends, the medical system, his fears, my fears, his courage, our letting go."

Readers comment...
"The book was exactly what I needed. It shows how to transform anger and frustration into a deeper love and acceptance"--lover of a PWA

"A milestone in healing literature."---an editor
"It gave me a focus, a perspective in searching

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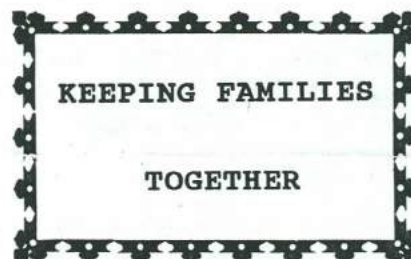
Since an age so young
I have always felt among
The love that embraces me so
But now I fear what I don't know
You have known my mask for so long
Now I know that hiding is so wrong
And I want so badly to share me
And the love I now see
But I live in silence, afraid
of how you will feel when my cards are played
Because I have a straight flush minus the king
And the perfect life minus the ring
The very parents that comforted me so
Are now the source of the fear I know
What will you do when you find
That your perfect daughter is nothing of the kind
Maybe you will find that I haven't changed
My life is just a little rearranged
Maybe you will still love me no matter what
The word I fear most is "But"
Because I hope for the best
And pray for the rest
But no matter how good or bad
I will always treasure the mask I had
For you loved it so
That girl you didn't even know.

writes a New Orleans P-FLAG in the chapter's newsletter. "P-FLAG chapters from many cities and states marched then, and--as always--the gay/lesbian crowd roared their approval, and some wept with joy to see parents join their fight."

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Readers comment...

"The book was exactly what I needed. It shows how to transform anger and frustration into a deeper love and acceptance"--lover of a PWA

"A milestone in healing literature."---an editor
"It gave me a focus, a perspective in searching for answers. I got support for what I'm going through."---person with AIDS

To be released in February, the book can be ordered from Stasey at PO Box 40693, Albuquerque, NM 87196. The cost is \$12.95 plus \$2 postage/handling.

**P-FLAG'S NATIONAL PRESIDENT URGES FAMILIES OF GAY PEOPLE TO SPEAK UP
"ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE WE LOVE"**

Mother, gay son angry at amendment's passage

By Maureen Harrington
Denver Post Staff Writer

Though Mitzi Henderson lives in Palo Alto, Calif., she spent most of Tuesday night on the phone to Denver.

This 59-year-old woman is the mother of a gay son, Denver attorney James "Jamie" Henderson.

Colorado voters approved an amendment that, in effect, allows discrimination against gays.

"I was dismayed by the results," she said in a telephone conversation from California early Wednesday morning. "I was glad and relieved about Oregon, of course. (A similar issue was defeated in Oregon.)"

"But, in Colorado, I think that the friends and families of gay people must be much more visible and vocal, speaking up on behalf of the people we love at church, work and social clubs."

A lawyer in solo practice, Jamie Henderson, 36, is angry and afraid with the passage of Amendment 2.

"Look at the figures. One out of three people in my community have voted to take my rights away from me. Clearly, it sets up Colorado as the only state in the nation that is going backward. We are the only state with discrimination in our constitution."

"And I think that this endorses hatred of gays. This can't help but lead to violence against us."

This year, Mitzi Henderson was elected president of the national organization of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, which has 20,000 member households and more than 300 chapters.

Typical American

But she is not so different from other upper-middle-class women of her generation: Four children, six grandchildren. Sunday school teacher, volunteer teacher's aide, PTA president, chair of campus ministry, American Cancer Society; lots of work for the Presbyterian church in the small Minnesota community she lived in until 1983. Thirty-plus years of marriage to the same man, Tom Henderson.

In 1978, Mitzi Henderson's 21-year-old son, home on Christmas vacation from Harvard, came out. "I was shocked."

The first thing she asked was, "Are you sure?" She laughs a little ruefully. "I just didn't know anything about homosexuality, then. I thought it had nothing to do with me. That homosexuality was in New York or San Francisco."

She asked her son not to tell his father.

But he did. "And Dad was just fine about it," says Mitzi. "He said, 'How can I learn about this? What can I read?'" From that time, the Henderson family has been involved in gay rights.

When she and her family moved to California in 1983, her interests became even more focused: Homosexuality task force, Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns. She also joined the Palo Alto chapter of PFLAG, founded the San Jose chapter, was newsletter editor, treasurer, chapter chair, regional director, and is now president.

"Since we have been in California, we have been out as a family. Walking into that first PFLAG meeting was like going home."

Mitzi Henderson is frank about her family's relative insulation from insult in terms of Jamie's homosexuality: "We no longer live in a small town in the Midwest, but in a liberal community in California. My husband is the CEO of his company. All of that protects us from a lot of discrimination that others face. And we have all spoken out, in public — Jamie's dad, brothers and sister."

Real heartache

Mitzi's heart aches for Jamie and his community. "When Jamie first told me about being gay, I thought, how will he fit in? Will he be hurt by this?"

Now, her fears have increased. "This is a social civil war, pitting one citizen against another. Whether it escalates remains to be seen."

Both mother and son see the disparity between the polls, predictions and the results as closeted bigotry. "Clearly, the people were not telling the pollsters the truth. The voters were willing to discriminate, but not in the light," said Jamie.

His mother adds, "There's a lot of speculation about why the polls were so different from the voting. I think people were ashamed of their own bigotry. They were ashamed to say out loud what they intended to do in the privacy of the booth."

Sponsors of the amendment, Colorado for Family Values, said that gay rights laws gave "special rights" to homosexuals. Will Perkins, who spearheaded the effort, said sexual orientation was not an "appropriate criterion for civil rights."

Jamie Henderson says there is going to be a legal challenge to the amendment. His mother says, "We are going to redouble our efforts to step forward and let our presence be known."

"This isn't over. It's a wake-up call."

DENVER POST - 11/5/92

Advocates of Colorado's Amendment 2 argued that gays and lesbians should not be granted "special rights." In an article written prior to the election, Swanee Hunt points out what can happen when there are no laws that protect homosexuals from discrimination.

SPEAKOUT

Fri., Oct. 16, 1992 Rocky Mountain News

When subject is love, hate and Amendment 2

By Swanee Hunt

Growing up fundamentalist in Dallas was a womb for me during the '50s and '60s — turbulent years in my family and the South. I retreated to our large Baptist church 10-20 hours a week for Bible studies, revivals, choir, prayer meetings, and twice on Sundays for worship.

There, I found answers, rules, "spiritual laws," that gave me comfort. For in an age that questioned the very foundations of nationalism, gender roles and racial stratification, I was "saved." And saved from what? Not just from hell, but from the uncomfortable stretching that comes when borders become fuzzy and we find that "we" includes "them."

There were no African-Americans, Hispanics or Asians among the 200 teen-agers in our church choir. The church had precious little diversity — acknowledged diversity, that is.

Now, at fortysomething, I recall the friends I had there. I'm in touch, directly or indirectly, with 30 or so. Of those, I know four gay men. One was my first boyfriend, who plays the piano as wonderfully as ever. John and Steve,

gay meeting places on Sunday nights — after the roll was called "back yonder" at church. Such revelations of double lives always leave me with a deep sadness; I wonder if I contributed to the distressing dishonesty of my friends' lives.

My fundamentalism peaked about 30 years ago. But the contempt of many fundamentalists for gay people has not waned. Today the political right, nationally and locally, is significantly fueled by the so-called "religious right," many of whom teach that the one way to the God of love is down a path strewn with intolerance, discrimination, and — yes — hate.

They are calling for a statewide constitutional amendment to ban local governments or any part of state government from specifically protecting the civil rights of gay people. They say there is no justification for such laws — that gays are not a "true minority."

So what constitutes such a minority? In my mind, the term applies to people who experience discrimination simply because they're different. "But does such discrimination really exist?" we're asked, provocatively.

Which reminds me of meeting with a current Colorado congress-

of their work record. This from a respected corporate and civic leader in a large metropolitan area. In recent weeks, Marilyn Van Derbur Adler has spoken out vehemently against Willie Horton-style scare tactics designed to frighten voters into legalizing discrimination against homosexuals by associating gays with child molestation. In research on thousands of people, the overwhelming majority report the perpetrators come from within their families, she says.

Child sexual abuse is not about men who love men or women who love women. This courageous leader in treating child abuse deeply resents misguided attempts to channel legitimate outrage against incest into discrimination against homosexuals.

And I resent attempts to channel religious faith into hatred against people whose sexual orientation differs from the majority. It is, after all, the ultimate irony that Jesus, who uplifted the degraded Samaritans, associated with outcast women, reached out to scorned tax collectors, and laid his hands on lepers, is now invoked in a campaign against people whose only great "sin" is defined in terms of whom they love.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The governor of Colorado and the mayor of Denver took strong stands AGAINST Amendment 2. With the passage of the amendment, the two leaders are being barraged with criticism. Write them letters of support.

Governor Roy Roymer
136 State Capitol Bldg.
Denver, CO 80203

Mayor Wellington Webb
City and County Bldg.
1437 Bannock St., Rm. 35
Denver, CO 80204

Write to the following about vacationing in or doing business with Colorado.

Larry Kallenberger
Colorado Tourism Board
1625 Broadway, Ste. 1700
Denver, CO 80202

John Mullin
Colorado Office of
Business Development
1625 Broadway, Ste. 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Chamber of Commerce
1445 Market Street
Denver, CO 80202

Help fund the legal cost of

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DENVER POST - 11/5/92

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Vince says I'd be shocked to know which of our revered choir directors, Sunday School teachers and ministers he has run into at

gay meeting places on Sunday nights — after the roll was called "back yonder" at church. Such revelations of double lives always leave me with a deep sadness; I wonder if I contributed to the distressing dishonesty of my friends' lives.

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So what constitutes such a minority? In my mind, the term applies to people who experience discrimination simply because they're different. "But does such discrimination really exist?" we're asked, provocatively.

Which reminds me of meeting with a current Colorado congressman who said that, as a landlord, he would evict any tenant he found living with a gay partner. "The other people in the apartment building have a right not to have to live around them." This was from an elected lawmaker.

It also reminds me of hearing a prominent CEO promise he'd fire any of his 1,200 employees if he learned they were gay, regardless

of their work record. This from a respected corporate and civic leader in a large metropolitan area.

In recent weeks, Marilyn Van Derbur Atter has spoken out vehemently against Willie Horton-style scare tactics designed to frighten voters into legalizing discrimination against homosexuals by associating gays with child molestation. In research on thousands of people, the overwhelming majority report the perpetrators come from within their families, she says.

Child sexual abuse is not about men who love men or women who love women. This courageous leader in treating child abuse deeply resents misguided attempts to channel legitimate outrage against incest into discrimination against homosexuals.

And I resent attempts to channel religious faith into hatred against people whose sexual orientation differs from the majority. It is, after all, the ultimate irony that Jesus, who uplifted the degraded Samaritans, associated with outcast women, reached out to scorned tax collectors, and laid his hands on lepers, is now invoked in a campaign against people whose only great "sin" is defined in terms of whom they love.

When I was 12, I walked down the aisle and "gave my life for Christian service." Little did I know that would lead to joining the campaign against Amendment 2.

Swanee Hunt is a Denver philanthropist, businesswoman, composer, photographer and community activist. She holds a doctorate of theology from the Iliff School of Theology.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The governor of Colorado and the mayor of Denver took strong stands AGAINST Amendment 2. With the passage of the amendment, the two leaders are being barraged with criticism. Write them letters of support.

Governor Roy Roymer
136 State Capitol Bldg.
Denver, CO 80203

Mayor Wellington Webb
City and County Bldg.
1437 Bannock St., Rm. 35
Denver, CO 80204

Write to the following about vacationing in or doing business with Colorado.

Larry Kallenberger
Colorado Tourism Board
1625 Broadway, Ste. 1700
Denver, CO 80202

John Mullin
Colorado Office of
Business Development
1625 Broadway, Ste. 1700
Denver, CO 80202

Chamber of Commerce
1445 Market Street
Denver, CO 80202

Help fund the legal cost of challenging the constitutionality of Amendment 2. Send checks, payable to Lambda Legal Defense Fund/Colorado Initiative, to

CLIP
PO Box 300476
Denver, CO 80203



**Linda
Gillan
Griffin**

Homosexuals are people, too

YOU ought to be ashamed of yourselves.

That's what my mama would tell us kids when we did something we knew was, if not morally wrong, at least against the Golden Rule.

Religious principles were pretty well drummed into us, complete with the traditional singing of *Onward, Christian Soldiers* at Vacation Bible School and the traditional singing of *Bringing in the Sheaves* while hanging out the wash. But it was always the singing of *Jesus Loves the Little Children* I remembered best.

Disparities surface

As a child, I believed that song pretty well summed up the spirit of religion. If it didn't matter what color people were, it also followed that it didn't matter what nationality or religion or gender they happened to be. Humans deserved love, tolerance and understanding.

Of course, back then, as I was to learn, the roof of our church would have fallen in if anyone black had entered.

It was a tough lesson to learn, but I finally mastered it:

Churches are not made up so much of high-minded principles as they are of people — people with their own interpretations of religious books and their own agendas. Many of those agendas are kind, loving and nurturing, but some are harsh, hateful and mean — intolerant of anything that stretches their interpretations.

I believe members of those groups who are banning together to form the Coalition to Maintain Military Readiness, a group whose purpose is to fight plans to lift the ban on homosexuals in the military, ought to be ashamed. Especially the 15 million members of the Southern Baptist Convention and however many members the Christian Coalition represents.

For God's sake — and I mean that literally — homosexuals are human beings. They deserve compassion, understanding and equality.

Root of fears?

So maybe I can understand the Eagle Forum joining this movement. Leader Phyllis Schlafly, a woman who had her hair and her ideas freeze-dried somewhere back in the '50s, is a career woman who tours the country demeaning other career women. And maybe I can understand all those military groups joining. While there's no doubt their members did and do good work, they're sounding very much like a bunch of macho guys whose previous preoccupations of spotting commies behind every bush and grabbing the behinds of women has evolved into picking on homosexuals.

But just what is it about homosexuals you people fear? Do you believe they'll be copulating on the battlefield instead of taking orders? Are you worried they'll ogle same-sex private parts in the showers?

How can you believe that finally acknowledging that homosexuals exist in the military will destroy morale and endanger our military preparedness? What do you think, that the whole of our armed services will turn gay or that all Marines will develop limp wrists?

Well, get real.

Having black and red and yellow and white skin types together hasn't destroyed the military. Having women and men together hasn't destroyed the military. And

The Houston Press ran a feature story about HIPY on Dec. 17, 1992. Titled "Tricks Aren't For Kids," the article was written by Alexandra Hardy. Here is an excerpt. It includes the story of John who many P-FLAGers met at our holiday party.

ON A SATURDAY night in October, a distinguished-looking man in his 60s frantically rushed into Charlie's, a Montrose coffee shop popular with the gay community, looking for his son. The man's son, 17-year-old "Allen," wasn't at home, and his father feared he was on the streets again. Lujack had called Allen's father earlier in the evening to warn him that his son had started hustling to pay for a friend's drug habit.

The father, who spoke only on the condition that he and his son remain anonymous, described Allen as a "brilliant, remarkable young man." A former clergyman, Allen's father left the church and married his wife when they were both in their forties. They adopted Allen and, his father says, "he has been the center of our lives." They gave Allen everything, sending him to an exclusive private school where he excelled, even receiving a letter of commendation from the National Honor Society.

In the past year Allen has left home for days at a time without telling his parents where he was going. His parents have accepted his being gay and are now trying to deal with Allen's psychological problems, which include severe depression and difficulty concentrating. Allen's father says he told his son, "My love for you has not diminished. In fact it has probably increased."

Allen's father sees the issue of his son being gay as something that is "genetic. I would love it if he were straight and he would someday have a family. We could have grandchildren. I don't think [being gay] is a choice. This is a given."

Allen is one of the lucky ones, although apparently he is not aware of it. A young teenager watched as Allen's parents left to search for their son and commented, "I would love to have parents that cared for me that much."

JOHNN TRIED to be a good son. "I never used drugs," he says. "I never had trouble with the law. I tried to be honest with my mother. I never made F's." Despite his attempts, he says that relentless abuse from his parents, both verbal and physical, left him with little choice but to run away.

John left his home in Waco five months ago in search of more stability in Houston. He auditioned at the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, was accepted and now attends the school. He has a part-time job as well. The vivacious young man describes himself as a "gay Christian." He is one of six who live at the HIPY house, a home for gay teens who are 17 or older.

"It was hell," John says of his home in Waco. "I was abused and cursed at. I didn't know if I was going to have a home one night or something to eat." John says he tried to use his hardships to his advantage. "Ever since I was little, I was told that I wasn't going to be anything, that I was the scum of the earth. Instead of taking that negatively, I tried to take it positively and use that toward something."

That something for John means finishing high school and trying to get into New York University or Berkeley so he can pursue a career in acting and dance.

As hard as the streets are, many teens view it as a better option than the homes they leave behind. Being rejected by their parents, not surprisingly, leaves many teens confused and with little self-esteem.

Even for those like John who have a

their toll. When John lived in Waco he stored away so much internal anger that he would go to the banks of a nearby creek and beat crawfish to death with a bat.

A Houston police sergeant who regularly works the Montrose area has his own theories about the psychological forces at work on gay teens: "If you put a monkey in the closet long enough, it will grow into a gorilla." The sergeant, like others who have had to deal with kids firsthand, doesn't understand how their parents can abandon them. "To dump a 13-, 14- or 15-year old on the streets is inexcusable," he says. What these kids need, says the officer, is "a stronger family unit. With all the hoopla in the election about it, it almost seems sacrilegious to talk about it."

The needs of gay teens aren't any different from the needs of anyone else, according to the officer. "We all need the same things, whether it's the bare necessities or someone to lean on. You need that, I need that, we all need that. If you can't get it at home, you're going to find some place to get it."

Like the father of Allen, the sergeant does not see the fact that teens are gay as a moral issue: "If they got both arms cut off, would they abandon them then?" An irony of our society, says the officer, is that "it's a little more accepted for a daughter to come home pregnant than this."

Brandy, a wholesome-looking, brown-haired 16-year-old, didn't get pregnant. To hear her describe her parents, though, they would have preferred a child born out of wedlock to a gay daughter. Last year, when she was 16, Brandy's father went through her journal. "He read that I was having thoughts," says Brandy, "and that me and my friend were experimenting. My mother freaked out. She's a holy roller."

Brandy, who is from the Channelview area, says her parents had her institutionalized. "One of the reasons," she says, was that "from the time I was about five until I was about 11, I was molested by my grandfather. I was dealing with that and they found out I was bisexual." Brandy stayed in the hospital for 30 days. "I came out and it didn't change me," she says, "My mother just insists I'm not lesbian."

Brandy, like a lot of other gay teens, has tried to deny what she is in order to make her parents happy. "I keep telling [my mother] that I tried to change it, but I can't. I tried to see myself only with men, but I just can't trust men like I can women," she says.

Brandy couldn't "change" so her mother gave the teen an ultimatum. "My mother insists that if I live there at her house, then I'm not gay — that I cannot be gay."

Brandy is finishing her last year of high school. Since her parents kicked her out, she has been living with a friend. She hopes to go on to college to study psychology so that she can help runaways like herself.

Being a parent means saying to your child, "I'm going to love you no matter who you are," says Mark Gartner. "The parents see this as a sign that my children are rejecting me, but it's not that."

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Perhaps you millions of members of this new Coalition to Maintain Military Readiness need to have a few million homosexuals to lunch. Get to know one. Get to know two. Learn what being homosexual means and doesn't mean.

If you haven't, you should be ashamed of yourselves.

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As hard as the streets are, many teens view it as a better option than the homes they leave behind. Being rejected by their parents, not surprisingly, leaves many teens confused and with little self-esteem.

Even for those like John who have a strong will to persevere, the constant assaults on their self-esteem begin to take

theories about the psychological forces at work on gay teens: "If you put a monkey in the closet long enough, it will grow into a gorilla." The sergeant, like others who have had to deal with kids firsthand, doesn't understand how their parents can abandon them. "To dump a 13-, 14- or 15-year old on the streets is inexcusable," he says. What these kids need, says the officer, is "a stronger family unit. With all the hoopla in the election about it, it almost seems sacrilegious to talk about it."

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Houston Chronicle

Dec. 6, 1992

A P-FLAGer suggests that we thank Linda Griffin for her column. Write the Chronicle at 801 Texas Ave., 77002, or call 220-7171.



P-FLAG FLYER

P.O. Box 692444

Houston, Texas 77269-2444

Telephone (713) 867-9020

February 1993

MEETING FEB. 7

David Ogren, PhD, will speak about interpersonal relationships. Dr. Ogren, a clinical psychologist in private practice for 19 years, has been living in a committed relationship for almost that long. We look forward to an interesting and informative talk.

Upcoming programs include stress management and relaxation techniques; getting in touch with your inner child; and a panel of college students talking about their lives on campus.

Carole Miller
vice president/programs

Please let Carole know what other program topics you would like to hear addressed.



CALENDAR

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Feb. 7 | P-FLAG Meeting
2 PM, IntraCare
7601 Fannin |
| Feb. 18 | Board Meeting
7:15 PM
B. Winston's home |
| Mar. 7 | P-FLAG Meeting
2 PM, IntraCare |
| Mar. 17
(Wed.) | Board Meeting |
| Apr. 4 | P-FLAG Meeting |
| Apr. 15 | Board meeting |

MEMBERSHIP DUES NOW DUE

As a dues-paying member of P-FLAG, you can vote, hold office, and receive a copy of the excellent quarterly newspaper published by our national organization.

Most importantly, you are helping P-FLAG help others, AND you are saying--even if only to yourself--that you support P-FLAG's mission of healing families, offering support to gay men and lesbians, and supporting the full human and civil rights of gay people.

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN OF GAY PARENTS

P-FLAG is getting numerous requests to address the needs of children of gay parents. Several of us will meet soon to discuss how to proceed. If you have any interest or input, call Gail at 440-0353.

P-FLAG UPDATE

* Woman's Day published an excellent feature, "Mom, I'm Gay," in its Nov. 1992 issue. Numerous P-FLAGers were interviewed and quoted.

The article includes tips for parents who are learning about their children's homosexuality. "Look for support," concludes the article, directing readers to P-FLAG.

Reprints are available at our meetings.

P-FLAG HOUSTON TO BE REPRESENTED IN NATIONAL MARCH IN WASHINGTON

Barbara Winston is leading the way to Washington, DC, for the National March for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Civil Rights on April 25.

If you'd like to join Barbara, call her at 464-3163.

P-FLAG has some hotel rooms blocked--and at a discounted rate-- but they're going fast.

Many P-FLAGers from other parts of the country are staying at Holiday Inn Thomas Circle. The hotel is completely booked (non-discounted rooms may open up in March), but you can contact them there to arrange marching together. Ask for Sandy Moore or Harriet Dart.



CALL FOR LIBRARY BOOKS

Joy and John Ganther, our cheerful librarians, urge you to search your book shelves to see if you have any P-FLAG books that you haven't returned.

If you've misplaced a book that you borrowed from our library--or can't bear to part with it-- PLEASE send us a check for the approximate amount so that we can replace it. If you have a book to return but can't come to a meeting, please mail the book to our post office box.

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And as long as you're searching your book shelves... if you come across any gay-related books that you no longer need, P-FLAG would WELCOME your donations.

Very special thanks to Arden, Charlotte, Tracy, and Anji for recent book donations.

FROM P-FLAG'S MAIL BOX

TEEN REQUESTS HELP

(Rev.) John Cunningham
Pastor
St. Bridget Church
Mesa

From CRUISE MAGAZINE

QUOTABLE QUOTE

Newsletter, P-FLAG of
Phoenix

"What we need is a war on prejudice--and if it is ever won, concerns about whether it's because of nature or nurture will become as pressing as concerns about the origin of left-handedness."

James Krajewski, MD
Corte Madera, CA

Rich Bailey, Austin,
dismissed from the military
in 1982 for being gay

**MINDS ARE LIKE
PARACHUTES:
THEY FUNCTION ONLY
WHEN OPEN !**



TEXAS P-FLAG GROWING

Our Southern Regional Director is Sandra Moore from Watauga, Texas, just north of Fort Worth. Sandra helped found the Dallas chapter in

TEEN REQUESTS HELP

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Please call our helpline (867-9020) if you can help, and we'll pass the information along to her.

GAY MEN'S CHORUS
SEEKS SINGERS

Contact David-----630-0333
or Lawrence--984-9633

HELP WANTED!

* Help in mailing out P-FLAG
Flyer. If you can fold,
stuff, or stamp, you qualify!
We'd like to form a team that
can rotate the job. (440-0353)



**** WATCH FOR THE AIRING OF
UPCOMING "DONAHUE" SHOW ON
GAYS IN THE MILITARY ****

Phil Donahue taped a show on Jan. 30 in which he interviewed Sen. Alfonse D-Amato, R-NY, who favors lifting the ban, Rep. Joe Barton, R-TX, who favors the ban; Keith Meinhold, who was discharged from the military after announcing he is gay, and Meinhold's attorney.

"I'm pleased this (gays in the military) is being discussed right now. The more open discussion we have about gays and lesbians, the more it forces people to confront their stereotypes and bigotry."

Rich Bailey, Austin, dismissed from the military in 1982 for being gay

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TEXAS P-FLAG GROWING

P-FLAG has chapters in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston. Five other cities--Athens, El Paso, Lubbock, San Angelo, and San Antonio--have P-FLAG "contacts," with the potential of becoming full-fledged chapters.

New chapters are now pending in Corpus Christi and Waco.

Our Southern Regional Director is Sandra Moore from Watauga, Texas, just north of Fort Worth. Sandra helped found the Dallas chapter in Jan. 1992, and has moved on to direct our entire region.

By dialing P-FLAG's national tollfree number--800-4-FAMILY--callers can learn how to contact P-FLAG locally.

QUOTABLE QUOTE

"There are neurotic family patterns and there are loving family patterns. Both types of families produce heterosexual and homosexual children. Loving, emotionally healthy families are very likely to produce emotionally healthy adults. That is the challenge to parents, regardless of the sexual orientation of their children."

Newsletter, P-FLAG of
Phoenix

"Prejudice is a tragedy for everyone. Parents of gay children needlessly agonize and families are disrupted. Gay people suffer emotional and physical trauma. The talents of so many people are consumed in either perpetuating or fighting injustice.

"What we need is a war on prejudice--and if it is ever won, concerns about whether it's because of nature or nurture will become as pressing as concerns about the origin of left-handedness."

James Krajewski, MD
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(867-9020) if you can help, and we'll pass the information along to her.

**GAY MEN'S CHORUS
SEEKS SINGERS**

The Gay Men's Chorus of Houston is seeking singers of all voices and various degrees of ability in order to expand our membership. Open rehearsals are being held through February. Rehearsals are every Thursday, 7 PM, at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, Room 101.

Contact David-----630-0333
or Lawrence--984-9633

HELP WANTED!

* Volunteer needed to fill in P-FLAG's tax return. As an incorporated organization, we have to send in a return. Since we are non-profit [501(c) status pending], the task should be simple, but we need someone who is willing to do it. Please call Gail (440-0353) or tell Arden, our treasurer, at the next meeting.

* Help in mailing out P-FLAG Flyer. If you can fold, stuff, or stamp, you qualify! We'd like to form a team that can rotate the job. (440-0353)



Fifteen Dallas P-FLAGers marched in the Dallas Gay Pride Parade last September.



David
Kaplan

Gays in military deserve respect

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, the following incidents happened to American men, because they were thought to be gay, according to a recent issue of The New Republic: 1) A Marine was sent into a Desert Storm war zone without any ammunition. 2) A Navy officer was reassigned to a menial job and had his pay cut 90 percent.

MEN

3) A sailor on the ship Blue Ridge was given three days on bread and water for allegedly having off-ship sex. 4) An Army colonel was fined \$27,000 and, in front of his fellow officers, had to undergo an anal cavity search.

Yes, the ban on homosexuals in the military, and prejudice in general, can lead to ugly consequences, as these recent cases attest. Actually, I think little would change in the armed forces with a lifting of the ban. Probably, there'd still be prejudice in the military against gays, but there would be no more investigations to uncover homosexuality and subsequent punishment or expulsion.

Other reasons for lifting the ban: Gays have been part of the U.S. military since there's been a military, and most have made good soldiers. Some estimates show that homosexuals make up 10 percent of the military.

The ban has also been costly: During the '80s, hundreds of millions of dollars were spent on investigations to uncover homosexuality, according to General Accounting Office figures.

Six European nations allow homosexuals to serve in their militaries.

Another true story, according to The New Republic: While in the Army, Larry Meholick won a Bronze Star fighting in Vietnam. Meholick later joined the Navy and became a highly regarded petty officer. Three Navy men who didn't like Meholick (one owed him money) charged that Meholick, who says he's bisexual, forced them to have sex. Knowing he might receive a sentence as long as 54 years, Meholick attempted suicide, but didn't die. After his lawyer plea-bargained, Meholick received a "mere" six-year sentence. The three accusers later confessed that their testimony was false. Meholick is still serving his six-year term.

One last story: In October, two soldiers brutally murdered a fellow

GAY ISSUES IN THE HEADLINES

After a week of gays in the military being THE national story, President Clinton has announced a plan viewed as a temporary compromise. "Not everything I would have hope for, or everything that I have stood for, but it is plainly a substantial step in the right direction," said Clinton.

The President has instructed Defense Secretary Les Aspin to draft an order by July 15 to formally end the ban.

Meanwhile, Sen. Sam Nunn, heading the Senate Armed Services Committee, is to hold hearings in March to consider the long-term impact of gays in the military. And Republicans are expected to try to attach an amendment banning homosexuals in the military to legislation that Clinton wants passed.

What does all of that mean for those of us who support full human and civil rights for gays and lesbians?

NOW is the time to educate, to speak out, to make our voices heard. Whether you have ever called or written a lawmaker or not, NOW is the time to do so.

Quoting P-FLAG's regional director, Sandra Moore, in encouraging P-FLAGers to speak out on another human rights issue: "Make sure that they know that people both inside and outside the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual community have strong feelings (about discrimination against gays)."

We've all heard that phone calls to lawmakers and to talk shows were 20 to 1, 100 to 1, even 400 to 1 against the ban being lifted. We can help stem the tide by making our own calls and writing letters. Incidentally, there's no necessity to identify yourself as having a personal reason

*** CLIP AND SAVE ***

President Clinton 202-456-1111
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20301

Sen. Phil Gramm 713-229-2766
202-224-2934

Sen. Bob Krueger 713-653-3546
202-224-5922

Sen. Sam Nunn 202-224-3871
Chr. of Senate Armed
Services Committee

Gen. Colin Powell 703-697-9121
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Sec. of Defense 703-697-5737
Les Aspin

Western Union 800-325-6000
to send Public Opinion
Message; \$9.95/20 words;
delivered within 1 hr.

for believing that the ban should be lifted. The fact that you are a person of conscience is reason enough.

** If you have any suggestions about how P-FLAG can effectively address legislators, educating them about why we are strongly in favor of lifting the ban, please talk to our advocacy chairperson, Paul Van Order. ** If you know of any groups that would be open to speakers from P-FLAG presenting a program, call Carole Miller at 580-6607.

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO RESPONDED SO QUICKLY AND SO WELL TO OUR "ACTION ALERT" LAST WEEK. Within a few hours, most P-FLAGers were called and urged to call the White House and Senators Krueger and Gramm. We plan to set up a telephone tree to handle such future needs.



'Reparative' Therapy for Gays Decried

"THERAPIES" THAT purport to change lesbians and gay men into heterosexuals constitute unsound and dangerous practice and should be avoided, NASW's National Committee on Lesbian and Gay Issues warned in a recent statement.

The statement came in response to upbeat publicity about the "reparative" or "conversion" therapies of psychologist Joseph Nicolosi and others, said Gary Lloyd, who chairs the committee. A rising tide of anti-gay violence and suicides of lesbian and gay adolescents also figured in the committee's concern.

"A major concern is that social workers working with young lesbians and gays might be beguiled" into thinking that the therapies have merit, Lloyd said. "It could lead practitioners

to take some very ill-advised steps that could harm clients."

Although the therapies—which employ behavior modification and counseling—may change behavior, they cannot change sexual orientation, he pointed out. "What usually happens is that people feel worse about themselves. This leads to emotional upheavals, a rush into ill-advised marriages, and the need for secrecy."

Lesbians and gay men who seek psychotherapy "need support," Lloyd said. "They don't need to be lectured about how they need to change. The focus [of therapy] should be on the struggle they are going through with respect to society's response to their being gay, its meaning for them, their fears for the future."

According to the statement, re-

parative therapies rest upon discredited theories about homosexuality's causes and consequences, are not backed by scientific data as proponents claim, and are motivated by thinly disguised prejudice and fear.

The therapies espouse goals of celibacy or heterosexual marriage and refuse to acknowledge that same-sex relationships are natural for lesbians and gay men and can be fulfilling, the statement said. It denounced "efforts to 'convert' people through irresponsible therapies which can more accurately be called brainwashing, shaming or coercion."

The committee also stated its belief that use of reparative or conversion therapies by social workers violates the NASW Code of Ethics' provisions barring discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

NASW News, Jan. 1993

Sexual behavior different from sexual orientation

BOSTON — If you want a hint of what the military is going to face when it lifts the ban on gays in the military, follow me. Come on over here and reach into my mailbag.

First, may I suggest that you put on a glove. Or grab a set of tongs. Some of the letters I've gotten about gays are too slimy for the naked touch.

But there's still some pretty interesting reading. "Interesting" is putting it mildly, and neutrally.

For openers, nine out of every 10 letters I received on this subject when I last wrote about it came from men. Virtually all of the letters from men were about men. Relatively few people who wrote about gay women worried that they would get too high, but the legions who opposed gay men wanted to keep them from getting too close.

The specter of showers and barracks came up so often in the letters that I suspect the Army spends more time in the sack than in the trenches, more time under the water than under the gun.

A military man from Cape Coral, Fla., wrote, "This tells me as a straight man



Ellen Goodman

showing in the barracks, that I have no choice but to expose myself to any gay men present."

A man from Apache Junction, Ariz., who spent three years overseas in World War II remembers sleeping 40 men to a barracks. "Now suppose that neighbor was a man with the sexual inclinations of a woman, i.e., a homosexual."

Yet another man, this one from Tobyhanna, Pa., asked us to "imagine putting a homosexual in a community shower with 60 or so naked men." Someone from Melbourne, Fla., used his imagination to suggest that "it would be like putting a mouse in a cheese factory or a mosquito in a nudist colony."

The fascinating thing to this — female — reader was that nearly all the letter

writers shared the same perspective: that of straight men worrying about being victims of sexual assault, harassment, lusting, or just plain ogling. This garden variety homophobia — fear of homosexuals — was fear of becoming the object of unwanted sexual attention. Being the oglee instead of, say, the ogler.

It's the closest that most men may come, even in fantasy, to imagining the everyday real-life experiences of women. The closest they may come to imagining a trip past a construction site, unease in a fraternity house, fear that a date could become date rape. In short, the closest men come to worrying about male sexual aggression.

A writer from Idaho put it in this rather charming vernacular, "Some of the gays are not little pansy guys but big hulking guys and if a small man said no, what is to stop him?"

Sure, there are instances of assault and harassment by homosexuals. There are also daily assaults of homosexuals.

But — back to the barracks — if showers are such a charged venue, such a threatening situation, how come the

problem hasn't already wrecked morale and created dissension in the military? How come it's come up so rarely?

After all, between 5 percent and 10 percent of the military is estimated to be gay right now. The lifting of the 10-year-old ban on homosexuality would allow these men and women to acknowledge that they are homosexual without being dismissed.

It wouldn't mean that a straight man would be showering with a gay for the first time. It might mean that he would know for the first time.

Finally, the military has every right to make rules about sexual behavior. They can enforce any sort of sexual prohibition or aggression, from a shipmate's "incest taboo" to harassment to ogling in the shower. There is and should be a clear distinction between sexual behavior and sexual orientation. A difference between what we do and what we are.

And by the way, dear writers, wouldn't it be something if the military cracked down on sexual misbehavior because men were worrying about men?

• Boston Globe

Houston Post, Jan. 26, 1993

JOIN IN THE WORK OF P-FLAG

Houston P-FLAG belongs to the Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Inc. Our chapter is made up of parents, families and friends of 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 would like to join P-FLAG HOUSTON.

Individual:	\$25	_____
Couple/Family:	\$40	_____
Student/Limited Income	\$10	_____



P-FLAG FLYER

P.O. Box 692444

Houston, Texas 77269-2444

Telephone (713) 867-9020

March 1993

MEETING APRIL 4

A panel of gay and lesbian students from Rice University will tell us their stories. We've asked them to talk about their personal journeys, telling us what they would like for their own parents to know about their feelings, their concerns, their struggles, and their joys.

Parents--here's a great chance to ask those questions you've always wanted to ask, but couldn't ask your own son or daughter.

Small group discussions will follow the panel discussion.

P-FLAG MEMBERSHIP

"Have I paid my dues for this year?" The answer is in this newsletter envelope!

If you have a green card with your name on it, you're paid up. If there is no card enclosed and you want to help support the work of P-FLAG--expanding our outreach to the community--we welcome you. A membership form is on page 6.

CALENDAR

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Apr. 4 | P-FLAG Meeting
2 PM-4:30 PM
IntraCare
7601 Fannin |
| Apr. 15 | Board Meeting |
| Apr. 24 | P-FLAG Social
<u>Norman, Is That You?</u> (see related article) |
| Apr. 25 | National March
on Washington for
Lesbian, Gay, &
Bisexual Civil Rights |

JOIN YOUR P-FLAG FRIENDS FOR AN EVENING OF ENTERTAINMENT

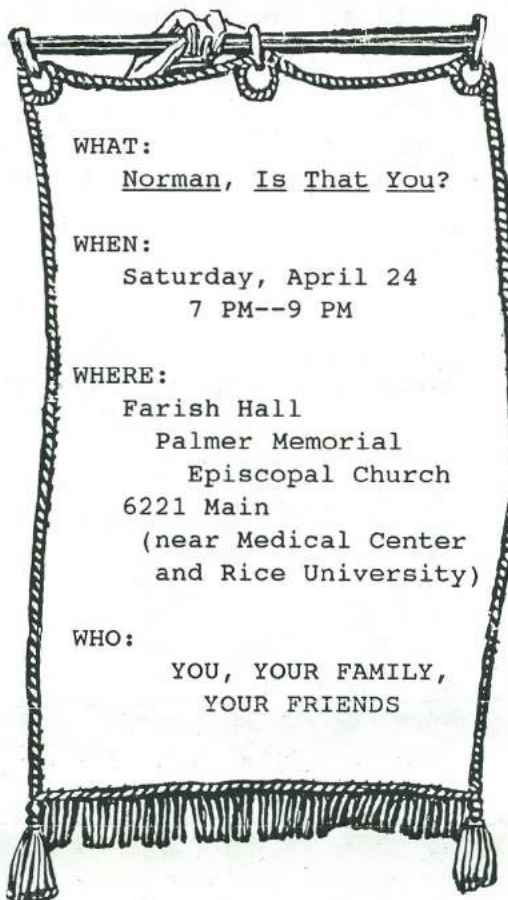
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This is a funny but poignant look at a family's discovery of who Norman really is. (Sound familiar, families and friends!)

This promises to be an evening of fun-filled entertainment for the whole family.

* The Resurrection Players is a theatrical group from the Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection (MCCR).



VERY SPECIAL THANKS

P-FLAG HOUSTON NOW TAX-EXEMPT, NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION!

Bushels of thanks to Joy Ganther who worked diligently to accomplish this task.

** Donations to P-FLAG are now tax deductible.

** We will begin mailing our newsletter via bulk mail. Our mailing costs will drop significantly, BUT, mailings sent to incorrect addresses will be returned to us (not forwarded)--and we'll have to pay the return postage.

SO--if this newsletter was forwarded to you, please call our helpline NOW and tell us your correct address. And any time that your address changes, please let us know.

MARCHERS IN WASHINGTON INVITED TO P-FLAG CELEBRATION

A Celebration of Family, hosted by the Federation of P-FLAG chapters across the nation, is on Sat., April 24, 7 PM to 9 PM, at the Hotel Washington (Pennsylvania Ave. at 15th St.).

If you're going to the march, you're invited to put this event on your schedule. Tickets cost \$35. Buy them at the door, or call 202-638-4200.

P-FLAG WELCOMES NATIONAL OFFICERS

Sandy Moore, regional director for P-FLAG's Southern Region; Harriet Dart, vice

March 1993

MEETING APRIL 4

A panel of gay and lesbian students from Rice University will tell us their stories. We've asked them to talk about their personal journeys, telling us what they would like for their own parents to know about their feelings, their concerns, their struggles, and their joys.

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Apr. 25	National March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, & Bisexual Civil Rights
May 2	P-FLAG Meeting
May 8	Joseph Steffan Crossroads Market & Bookstore (see related article)
Sept. 3-6	P-FLAG National Convention

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WHAT:
Norman, Is That You?

WHEN:
Saturday, April 24
7 PM--9 PM

WHERE:
Farish Hall
Palmer Memorial
Episcopal Church
6221 Main
(near Medical Center
and Rice University)

WHO:
YOU, YOUR FAMILY,
YOUR FRIENDS

VERY SPECIAL THANKS

- * to Irv, who volunteered to file P-FLAG's tax return
- * to Nancy, who volunteered to take charge of bulk mailing
- * to Mary, who is devoting an enormous amount of energy and time to get the ball rolling on a bevy of P-FLAG projects

P-FLAG HOUSTON NOW
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OFFICERS

Sandy Moore, regional director for P-FLAG's Southern Region; Harriet Dart, vice president of chapter development for the Federation of P-FLAG; and Bill Dart, who serves on national P-FLAG committees, are visiting chapters in Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio, and Houston.

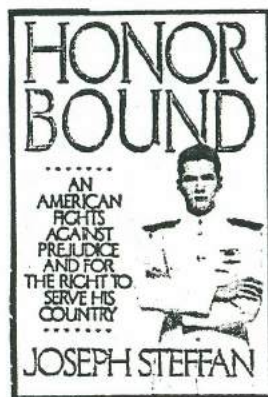
In Houston, they meet with the P-FLAG board on March 17.

**JOSEPH STEFFAN, AUTHOR OF
HONOR BOUND, COMES TO HOUSTON**

A few weeks before his graduation from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1987, Joseph Steffan was kicked out for being gay. The commander of his battalion, Steffan was one of the top 10 midshipmen in his class.

Steffan's book describing his fight to serve his country, Honor Bound, is in its second printing.

On May 8 he comes to Houston's Crossroads Market & Bookstore (610 W. Alabama). Watch next month's newsletter for details, or call Crossroads at 942-0147.



**VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT
BY NATIONAL COMMITTEE
WORKING TO LIFT BAN**

The Campaign for Military Service, working to lift the ban on lesbians and gay men in the U.S. Armed Services, requests our assistance in locating pro bono project researchers.

The IMMEDIATE NEED is for attorneys, law and graduate students, media relations professionals, and social science research professionals to conduct background searches on opposition witnesses who may appear before the House and/or Senate Armed Services Committees.

Researchers should have access to media and legal databases.

Contact Jeff Nelson by phone at 202-462-7299 or 202-332-5436, or by FAX at 202-483-2964.

P-FLAG AT WORK

* Barbara Winston, P-FLAG's community education chairperson, participated on a panel addressing high school counselors in southeast Texas. The session, Lesbian and Gay Youth, was directed by Dr. Bob McLaughlin.

* Carole Miller will participate in gay-sensitivity training for the Houston Police Dept., representing the point of view of parents of lesbians and gays.

* Paul Van Order, our Advocacy Chairperson, has compiled an excellent packet of information for contacting elected officials on issues pertinent to our group. Copies are available at regular meetings.

* Maureen, Sky, and Gail attended a town meeting held by Congressman Jack Fields. Though Fields stated during the meeting that he is against lifting the ban on gays in the military, he agreed to meet with a group of P-FLAGers and listen to our side of the issue.

* P-FLAG wants to have a table at the Westheimer Arts Festival (April 17-18), distributing information and selling T-shirts with a positive message. We'll be asking P-FLAGers to take turns staffing the table.

**P-FLAG NATIONAL OFFICE
SEEKS WITNESSES FOR HEARINGS
ON GAYS IN THE MILITARY**

Our national office is seeking P-FLAGers who have military experience and who have gay children or gay friends.

"It is important that the witnesses have a first-hand understanding of the military experience and that they have first-hand knowledge of gay and lesbian people," says the coordinator of the project.

"The ideal person is a P-FLAG member who served as enlisted personnel or as an officer and who knew gay people serving with them so they can speak to the day-to-



**NEW BOOKS IN P-FLAG'S
LENDING LIBRARY**

Doris Harper, P-FLAG board member, donated a copy of And The Band Played On by Randy Shilt, a landmark book about AIDS.

Doris donated the book in memory of her son, Jeff.

Bobbie Stasey, the author of Just Hold Me While I Cry, has donated a copy of her book to P-FLAG's library.

Stasey's son Jimmy died of AIDS. Her book "explores a mother's feelings about her son's homosexuality, his friends, his fears, and his courage. The emotional connection between mother and son, family and friends, provides a bridge for every reader who fears the unknown of death by AIDS."

One editor called the book "a milestone in healing literature." A reader says, "It's a celebration of the triumph of love over anguish. It reads almost like poetry."

For information about ordering the book, call 800-368-3208.

COLORADO UPDATE

Telluride voters passed a law prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation.

"In an effort to reaffirm their support of equal protection under the law for homosexuals, the Telluride electorate, in a special election Feb. 2, voted for An Ordinance Prohibiting Discriminatory Practices Relating to Employment, Housing, Public Services and Accommodations," said a local spokesperson.

The strongest statement made against the discriminatory amendment passed by the state in November, Telluride's ordinance carries a \$300 fine and a 90-day jail sentence.

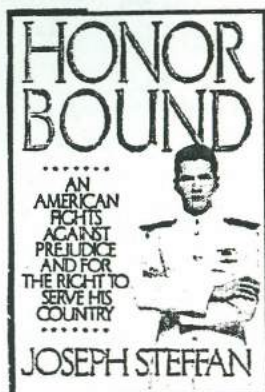
Voters approved the anti-discrimination ordinance by a ratio of 4-to-1, which was a greater margin than the city's original rejection of Amendment 2 by a 3-to-1 ratio.

On Jan. 15, Amendment 2 was prevented from becoming law by Denver District Judge Bayl.

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SPEED IS OF THE ESSENCE. If you are willing to serve as a potential witness, please call Gail (440-0353) to receive a required form.

AIDS.

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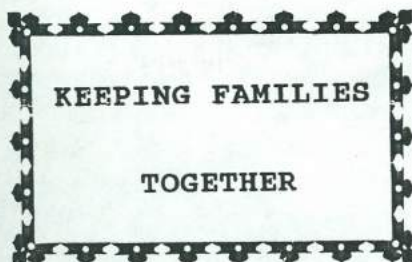
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On Jan. 15, Amendment 2 was prevented from becoming law by Denver District Judge Bayl. It is being appealed to the Colorado Supreme Court with a judgment expected in May.

As of late February, meeting planners across the state estimated that a boycott of Colorado has cost the state nearly 30,000 visitors due to cancellations of meetings and





P-FLAG FLYER

P.O. Box 692444

Houston, Texas 77269-2444

Telephone (713) 867-9020

April 1993

MEETING MAY 2

We'll hear from a panel of lesbians and gay men in the business world talking about the realities and challenges that they encounter.

Small group discussions will follow the panel discussion.

AUTHOR OF HONOR BOUND TO APPEAR IN HOUSTON

Joseph Steffan, an honor cadet who was kicked out of the U.S. Naval Academy in 1987 for being gay, comes to Houston on May 8.

Steffan's book, Honor Bound, describes his fight to serve his country.

Meet Steffan from 7:30 PM to 10 PM at Crossroads Market & Bookstore, 610 W. Alabama.

CALENDAR

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<u>Norman, Is That You?</u> (see article) |
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2 PM-4:30 PM
IntraCare
7601 Fannin |
| May 8 | Joseph Steffan
at Crossroads Market
7:30 PM-10 PM |
| May 20 | P-FLAG Board
Meeting, 7:15 PM |
| June 6 | P-FLAG Meeting |
| June 12 | Concert by |

P-FLAG JOINS MARCH ON WASHINGTON

P-FLAGers from across the nation will join together at the Hotel Washington for "A Celebration of Family" on Sat., April 24, 7 PM-9 PM. Everybody is invited to the party. Tickets cost \$35 and can be purchased at the door.

On parade day--Sun., April 25, noon-6 PM, P-FLAG will be the 11th contingent in the march.

Monday, April 26 is P-FLAG Lobby Day, which begins with a briefing for P-FLAG members at 9 AM.

Numerous members of P-FLAG will participate in the historic event--some marching under P-FLAG's banner and others representing a variety of other groups. The list of Houston P-FLAGers going to Washington includes Barbara Winston, Jane Lobingier, Arden and Charlotte, Anji and Tracy, and Doug Ensminger.

** We're interested in hearing from any Washington marcher reading this newsletter. Please write us about your feelings and impressions. We'll print excerpts from all of the responses we receive in the next P-FLAG FLYER.

FLIRTATIONS CONCERT

The Flirtations are a nationally-recognized five-man gay a cappella group that comes to Houston for the first time on Saturday, June 12.

They're entertaining, upbeat, and REALLY GOOD!

AN EVENING OF ENTERTAINMENT and FUN FOR P-FLAGers, FAMILIES, and FRIENDS

The Resurrection Players, a theatrical group from MCCR (Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection) will present selections from their recent production of Norman, Is That You?

The play is a humorous but thought-provoking look at a family's discovery of Norman's gayness.

Sat., April 24,
7:30 PM--9:30 PM

(note change of time
as announced in March
newsletter)

Palmer Memorial Episcopal
6221 Main (see enclosed map)
EVERYBODY IS INVITED.
Bring your family and friends.

COMIC STRIP TELLS IT LIKE IT IS

In For Better or Worse, a strip that runs in the Houston Chronicle, 17-year-old Lawrence tells his best friend and then his parents that he is gay. The portrayal is sensitive, true-to-life, and EDUCATIONAL to mainstream America.

Applaud the Chronicle (they've been deluged with irate letters) and the strip's author, Lynn Johnston (Universal Press Syndicate, 4900 Main St., 9th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64112).

P-FLAG RAISES FUNDS and VISIBILITY at WESTHEIMER ARTS FESTIVAL

As this newsletter goes to press, P-FLAG is preparing for its first-ever presence at a large community-wide festival.

Selling T-Shirts with an AIDS awareness message of HOPE, we will also distribute information about our group as a community resource.

Many many thanks to the

April 1993

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Small group discussions will follow the panel discussion.

AUTHOR OF HONOR BOUND TO APPEAR IN HOUSTON

Joseph Steffan, an honor cadet who was kicked out of the U.S. Naval Academy in 1987 for being gay, comes to Houston on May 8.

Steffan's book, Honor Bound, describes his fight to serve his country.

Meet Steffan from 7:30 PM to 10 PM at Crossroads Market & Bookstore, 610 W. Alabama.

CALENDAR

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Apr. 24 | P-FLAG Social
<u>Norman, Is That You?</u> (see article) |
| Apr. 25 | NATIONAL MARCH ON
WASHINGTON for
LESBIAN, GAY, &
BI CIVIL RIGHTS |
| May 2 | P-FLAG Meeting
2 PM-4:30 PM
IntraCare
7601 Fannin |
| May 8 | Joseph Steffan
at Crossroads Market
7:30 PM-10 PM |
| May 20 | P-FLAG Board
Meeting, 7:15 PM |
| June 6 | P-FLAG Meeting |
| June 12 | Concert by
Flirtations
8 PM & 11 PM
Fitzgerald's |
| June 27 | Houston Pride
Parade |
| Sept. 3-6 | P-FLAG National
Convention
New Orleans |

P-FLAG JOINS MARCH ON WASHINGTON

P-FLAGers from across the nation will join together at the Hotel Washington for "A Celebration of Family" on Sat., April 24, 7 PM-9 PM. Everybody is invited to the party. Tickets cost \$35 and can be purchased at the door.

On parade day--Sun., April 25, noon-6 PM, P-FLAG will be the 11th contingent in the march.

Monday, April 26 is P-FLAG Lobby Day, which begins with a briefing for P-FLAG members at 9 AM.

Numerous members of P-FLAG will participate in the historic event--some marching under P-FLAG's banner and others representing a variety of other groups. The list of Houston P-FLAGers going to Washington includes Barbara Winston, Jane Lobingier, Arden and Charlotte, Anji and Tracy, and Doug Ensminger.

** We're interested in hearing from any Washington marcher reading this newsletter. Please write us about your feelings and impressions. We'll print excerpts from all of the responses we receive in the next P-FLAG FLYER.

FLIRTATIONS CONCERT

The Flirtations are a nationally-recognized five-man gay a cappella group that comes to Houston for the first time on Saturday, June 12.

They're entertaining, upbeat, and REALLY GOOD!

The event is sponsored by the Gay Men's Chorus of Houston.

Performances are at 8 PM and 11 PM at Fitzgerald's, in the Heights at 2706 White Oak. Tickets are \$14-\$16. For more information, call Fitzgerald's at 862-3838, Mon-Fri., 8:30 AM-5 PM.

AN EVENING OF ENTERTAINMENT and FUN FOR P-FLAGers, FAMILIES, and FRIENDS

The Resurrection Players, a theatrical group from MCCR (Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection) will present selections from their recent production of Norman, Is That You?

The play is a humorous but thought-provoking look at a family's discovery of Norman's gayness.

Sat., April 24,
7:30 PM--9:30 PM

(note change of time
as announced in March
newsletter)

Palmer Memorial Episcopal
6221 Main (see enclosed map)
EVERYBODY IS INVITED.
Bring your family and friends.

COMIC STRIP TELLS IT LIKE IT IS

In For Better or Worse, a strip that runs in the Houston Chronicle, 17-year-old Lawrence tells his best friend and then his parents that he is gay. The portrayal is sensitive, true-to-life, and EDUCATIONAL to mainstream America.

Applaud the Chronicle (they've been deluged with irate letters) and the strip's author, Lynn Johnston (Universal Press Syndicate, 4900 Main St., 9th Floor, Kansas City, MO 64112).

P-FLAG RAISES FUNDS and VISIBILITY at WESTHEIMER ARTS FESTIVAL

As this newsletter goes to press, P-FLAG is preparing for its first-ever presence at a large community-wide festival.

Selling T-Shirts with an AIDS awareness message of HOPE, we will also distribute information about our group as a community resource.

Many many thanks to the numerous parents who have agreed to work at our table. For some of you, it's your first time to be visible in the community as a parent supportive of gays and lesbians. Your courage and commitment speak loudly, starting ripples that know no boundaries

THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON-- WHAT IT MEANS

As Anji Boswell, a member of Houston P-FLAG, prepares for her trip to Washington for the March, she shares some of her thoughts and insights.

The most powerful march of Washington for the black movement, commonly known as the "I Have A Dream" March, came after the election of Kennedy, a president who was willing (albeit grudgingly, according to most) to support the rights of African-Americans. Likewise, I foresee the most powerful Gay and Lesbian and Bi Rights March on Washington will be this April 25.

For the first time in the history of the U.S., we have a President who is willing to say the words "gay" and "lesbian" in anything but a derogatory sentence. We may at times doubt how hard President Clinton will fight for our rights, but he is at least verbally giving recognition to the fact that we deserve them. And this march is going to take advantage of that fact.

Our wants, our needs, are really very simple. We need the formal end to discrimination against gays, lesbians and bisexuals. We need federal protection against all forms of discrimination, from the military to the classroom. Especially, we need federal protection against state and local laws that criminalize our private expression of affection between consenting adults or that criminalize merely our statement of who we are. And we hope that one million gays, lesbians, and their supporters will convince the President, the Congress, and the nation that America is ready to put formal bigotry behind it.

But, there is more to the March than the impact we will have on Washington. There is the impact that we will have on ourselves. I have never been to a march on Washington, but I have been to two marches on Austin. It is difficult to explain the uncommon feeling of solidarity that a lesbian or gay gets from seeing so many other gays and lesbians. For those of us who work in the mainstream heterosexual culture, you must realize that

we probably see one to three known gays or lesbians a day. In a good week, where we go to a gay/lesbian function, we might see as many as 50 different homosexuals.

Imagine being at a march with 800,000 gays and lesbians. (I say 800,000 because hopefully, of the one million expected, 20 percent will be supportive friends, family, and relatives.)

So imagine being at a place with 800,000 other people like yourself, who are normal, functioning human lesbians and human gays. It makes a woman feel normal-- a feeling that our society does not let me have often.

When we get home, we will undoubtedly be embarrassed by some media photage of some gay or lesbian who got out of control. And we will have to spend a good deal of our time defending, explaining this one episode out of one million people. Still, we will know that we were part of what may be the most powerful March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian and Bi Equal Rights ever. And, we will know more than ever, that we deserve those equal rights.

P-FLAG activist rallies courageous support

By Jim Surles,
Co-president PFLAG/Fort Worth

Webster's dictionary defines advocacy as a noun, meaning "speaking in favor; public recommendation; support." Prior to my association with Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, I would have said, unequivocally, that I could never be an advocate for gay rights.

It is not that I don't believe in gay rights. I just could never quite see myself offering "support" or "speaking in favor" of or, most definitely not, affording "public recommendation" to those gay persons I know, including my own son, Tony.

We live in a society that "silences" us from supporting those who are different from the majority, whether that difference is in skin color, religion or sexual orientation. We are taught to suppress our desire to defend and support such groups. To do otherwise is to

challenge society -- a society that has denied access to traditional and honorable roles to those who are different, regardless of their abilities.

But we can make a difference to our children and friends who are gay or lesbian simply by learning to speak out. This is not an easy thing to do but it is amazing what a difference a small amount of new information can make. If we choose, we can be the suppliers of that new information.

I recently read in a book written by Gloria Steinem that poet and writer Judy Grahn was denied access in the 1960s to books about homosexuals and lesbians at the Library of Congress. She was told that such books were locked away and available only to psychiatrists, lawyers and other experts. But, her persistence resulted in her learning that all societies have not treated gays and lesbians as this society

now does. She learned that the ancient cultures of more than 80 North American Indian nations held lesbians and gay men in high esteem.

She wrote, "A huge burden, the burden of isolation and of being defined only by one's enemies, left me on that enlightening day. I understood then that being Gay is a universal quality, like cooking, like decorating the body, like singing, like predicting the weather. Moreover, after learning about the social positions and special offices fulfilled by Indians whose tribes once picked them for the tasks of naming, healing, prediction, leadership and teaching precisely because they displayed characteristics we call gay, I knew that Gayness not only has distinct cultural characteristics, its participants have long held positions of social power in history and ritual among people all over the globe."

We cannot continue to dissimu-

late information we have been forced by our society about gay and lesbian people. It comes from a society of uninformed people. We, the parents and friends of lesbians and gays, must begin to speak out for them. We must inform society of the characteristics that make our children and friends capable and proficient in the same roles now relegated to those society deems "acceptable." But, where do we start?

That was the question I found myself asking silently and secretly. And then, by listening to others, by interacting with people who are informed and knowledgeable, I have learned of ways I can begin to be an advocate.

The key word here is "begin" to be an advocate. It does not come easily to me. You see, I too still have those "fears" society thrusts upon us: "Will I expose myself to ridicule?"; "will my co-workers shun me?"; "will I put my job and my career in jeopardy?" These are natural fears and I know I am not alone in them.

Gradually, I find myself overcoming one small obstacle at a time. When I was asked to do this article

*We love our kids
They are OKAY
And WE are okay too!*

A father, on the subject of a son's or daughter's coming out...

"This is one time in our lives as parents that we have to change because our kids can't. If we don't change, we'll lose them."

Bill Dart,
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Gradually, I find myself overcoming one small obstacle at a time. When I was asked to do this article I had the strongest urge to say, "No, let someone else." After all, who might see it? Would I be called upon to explain my stand? But, I thought this just might be a starting place for me. If I get past this, the next task might be easier.

And perhaps, with each new challenge assumed, I might soon be an "advocate" for my son and his friends and the friends I have made in the last few months who are lesbians and gay men.

A father, on the subject of a son's or daughter's coming out...

"This is one time in our lives as parents that we have to change because our kids can't. If we don't change, we'll lose them."

Bill Dart,
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CELEBRATING FAMILY



Plan NOW To ATTEND !!

12th Annual International Convention
Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays
September 3 - 6, 1993
Sheraton Hotel, Canal Street, New Orleans • Hosted by PFLAG/NO
Box 15515, New Orleans, LA 70115 • (504) 525-3922 (504) 268-2552





P-FLAG FLYER

P.O. Box 692444

Houston, Texas 77269-2444

Telephone (713) 867-9020

May 1993

MEETING JUNE 6

Why Gay Pride? What's the purpose of Pride Week, and what does it mean to our gay sons and daughters and friends?

The inception of the gay rights movement, beginning with the Stonewall Riots in New York, will be discussed by Jack Valinski, Out & Proud '93 Board Chairman, and Brian Keever, Board Member and 1992 Grand Marshall of the Pride Parade.

Small group discussions will follow the program.

**** After** the regular meeting, we'll have a letter-writing session for all who want to participate. Paul Van Order, our Advocacy Chairperson, will have materials & addresses.**

CALENDAR

- | | |
|---------|--|
| June 5 | MCCR Festival
11 AM-6 PM
Funds raised
benefit P-FLAG
(see article) |
| June 6 | P-FLAG Meeting
2 PM-4:30 PM
IntraCare
7601 Fannin |
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4 PM
followed by
rally (see |

P-FLAG HOUSTON CHOSEN HONORARY GRAND MARSHALL for '93 PRIDE PARADE

P-FLAG Houston is honored and PROUD to have been selected as Honorary Grand Marshall for the Gay/Lesbian Pride Parade, titled Out & Proud.

We've invited members of other Texas chapters and the Lafayette, LA., chapter to join us in marching down Montrose, proclaiming "We Love Our Gay and Lesbian Children."

Sandy Moore, our regional director who lives in the Fort Worth area, has already responded, saying that she and her husband Glenn will not only join us but will come in their convertible, which we'll use in the parade!

Frances Pierson, president of the Austin chapter, also answered YES! We hope to welcome more P-FLAGers from other chapters.

The Pride Committee will provide us with a convertible, which will head our contingent. We'll have two big banners, including one that Barbara Winston used in the March on Washington.

Let's FILL THE STREETS as we march for the honor of our gay and lesbian children and friends.

Everyone reading this newsletter, whether you've ever been to a P-FLAG meeting or not, is invited to join us AND to invite your families and friends. ALL are part of P-FLAG's inclusive family.

One of the marchers will be a woman who called P-FLAG's helpline this week. "I want to help," she said. Though no members of her own family

WILL YOU MARCH or RIDE?

If yes, call Carole

580-6607 home

623-2838 work

RALLY TO FOLLOW PRIDE PARADE Spotts Park

Music

Entertainment

Fireworks

Grand Marshals' Awards Ceremony

(Carole Miller will
accept the award for
P-FLAG.)

Addresses by Debra Danburg,
George Grenias, other friends
in office

P-FLAG will have a booth for
distributing information and
selling T-shirts and visors.

If you cannot march but want
to participate, the rally is
the answer! Call Carole (see
phone numbers above) to
volunteer.

MCCR RAISES FUNDS FOR P-FLAG, Other Community Organizations

Metropolitan Community
Church of the Resurrection, or
MCCR, has named P-FLAG as one
of six organizations that it
will raise funds for this
year. A variety of fund-
raising projects have been
planned over the next months.

The first in the series is
an outdoor festival, titled
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June 6	P-FLAG Meeting 2 PM-4:30 PM IntraCare 7601 Fannin
June 12	Concert by Flirtations (see article)
June 26	Concert at Wortham by 6 gay choral groups from 4 cities (see article)
June 27	Pride Parade 4 PM followed by rally (see article)
July 11	P-FLAG Meeting
Aug. 1	P-FLAG Meeting
Sept. 3-6	P-FLAG National Convention New Orleans (see article)

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One of the marchers will be a woman who called P-FLAG's helpline this week. "I want to help," she said. Though no members of her own family are gay, her consciousness about gay issues has been raised in recent months. "I've been watching the Congressional hearings, and I don't like what I hear. I want to get involved."

KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

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Sat., June 5, 11 AM-6 PM.

P-FLAG will have an
information booth, staffed by
parents. If you can help out
for an hour or two, please
call Gail at 440-0353.

Please help spread the word
about the festival,
encouraging friends to attend.
Tickets cost \$5, which
includes barbecue.
1919 Decatur (off Washington
Ave., turn south on White St.)

FLIRTATIONS CONCERT

Sat., June 12

8 PM and 11 PM shows

Fitzgerald's

2706 White Oak at Studewood

The Flirtations are a nationally-known gay a cappella quintet. This appearance is their first in Houston.

Last year when our P-FLAG board listened to their CD, we were so struck by their medium and message that P-FLAG looked into bringing them to Houston. The financial commitment turned out to be way over our heads, but we yearned to hear these talented musicians perform.

Now we have the chance to do so--without having to work to make it happen!

A group of P-FLAGers have already made reservations for the 8 PM show, and YOU're invited to join the group. Ask for seating in the P-FLAG section, or near the Rickeys. It's a PARTY!

Call Fitzgerald's at 862-7625 or 862-4210 (10:30 AM-6 PM, Mon.-Fri., noon-6 PM Sat.)

P-FLAG FEDERATION PART OF NATIONAL EFFORT TO LIFT BAN ON GAYS IN MILITARY

P-FLAG is one of approximately 50 organizations that have banded together to seek congressional and public support for lifting the ban.

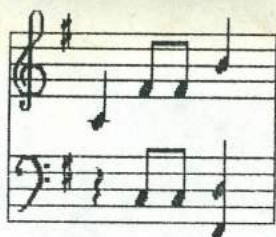
The coordinated strategy includes focusing on specific Messages of the Week. For example, religious leaders were in the forefront in early May, followed by straight vets, and then Democratic and Republican big donors.

From June 15-17, Fathers Day will be celebrated with fathers and sons paying joint visits to members of Congress.

P-FLAG's staff representative in this concerted effort, titled Campaign for Military Service, is Sandra Gillis.

"Thanks so much for your lobbying efforts, on the Hill and at home, on the telephone and in the mail," Sandra recently wrote to all chapters.

Only a few weeks remain in the countdown to July 15, the date that President Clinton is to lift the ban. Now is the time to write, call, write, and call again your



JOYFUL SOUNDS FILL WORTHAM

Join P-FLAG friends for an evening at Wortham Center on Sat., June 26, 7 PM. Six gay choral groups will perform.

Guaranteed to be one of the stellar events of Pride Week, the concert will feature The Gay Men's Chorus of Houston; Heartsong, Houston's women's chorus; Alamo City Men's Chorale from San Antonio; Tapestry, Austin's women's chorus; Capital City Men's Chorus, also from Austin; and Encore, the song and dance ensemble from Dallas' men's chorus, The Turtle Creek Chorale.

If you'd like to sit with P-FLAG, Arden will order your ticket for you. Mail her a check OR pay her in person at our meeting on June 6.

Arden's address:

4123 Swarthmore
Houston, 77005

Arden's phone: 661-1482

Cost of ticket:

\$10 (Lower Mezzanine)
+ 2.25 (Ticket Center
processing fee)

Deadline for ordering
through Arden: June 6

NATIONAL CONVOCATION FOR RECONCILING CONGREGATIONS in Washington, D.C.

The third National Convocation of Reconciling Congregations will be held at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., July 8-11.

The Reconciling Congregation Program is a network of United Methodist churches that publicly welcome the full participation of all persons, including lesbians and gay men.

Launched in 1984, the movement now includes 63 Reconciling Congregations, including two in Texas--Bering Memorial in Houston and Trinity in Austin.

The purpose of the convo-

CELEBRATING OUR FAMILIES IN NEW ORLEANS

P-FLAG Houston is an active, vibrant group. There's always something going on--meetings and phone calls, letter writing and fund raising, events to support, jobs to be done.

Out of all of the choices of ways to participate, I urge you to give priority to attending P-FLAG's annual convention. Truly, a P-FLAG convention is a world turned upside down, where everybody is supportive of gays and lesbians. It's energizing, educational, affirming, and FUN.

This year's convention is within easy driving distance, making it more affordable than in the past few years. The special convention rate at the Sheraton Hotel is \$80 double, \$100 triple or quad.

We can arrange car pools, or even a group van if enough people are interested in splitting the cost.

Convention highlights will include Congressman Gerry Studds as a keynote speaker, a concert by Lyn Lavner, and a "Mini Mardi Gras Extravaganza," plus LOTS of workshops such as Colorado and Oregon's Experience with the Religious Right, Identifying Allies and Alliance Building, Homophobia in High Schools, Achieving Diversity in P-FLAG, Obtaining Disability Benefits for PWAs, Fathers Only, Spouses of Gays and Lesbians, Children with Gay and Lesbian Parents, Training for Facilitators and Helplineers, and Fund-Raising for Chapters.

Our own Don Sinclair will be a workshop presenter in a session on religion.

Registration forms will arrive soon. Be sure to look for them at upcoming meetings. If you want us to mail one to you, request it through helpline.

CELEBRATING FAMILY



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Feb. 4, 1993

Of those who approve ending the ban:

Know someone openly gay ☐ 63%

Don't know someone openly gay ☐ 36%

choral groups will perform.

Guaranteed to be one of the stellar events of Pride Week, the concert will feature The Gay Men's Chorus of Houston; HeartSong, Houston's women's chorus; Alamo City Men's Chorale from San Antonio; Tapestry, Austin's women's chorus; Capital City Men's Chorus, also from Austin; and Encore, the song and dance ensemble from Dallas' men's chorus, The Turtle Creek Chorale.

If you'd like to sit with P-FLAG, Arden will order your ticket for you. Mail her a check OR pay her in person at our meeting on June 6.

Arden's address:

4123 Swarthmore
Houston, 77005

Arden's phone: 661-1482

Cost of ticket:

\$10 (Lower Mezzanine)
+ 2.25 (Ticket Center processing fee)

Deadline for ordering through Arden: June 6

NATIONAL CONVOCATION FOR RECONCILING CONGREGATIONS in Washington, D.C.

The third National Convocation of Reconciling Congregations will be held at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., July 8-11.

The Reconciling Congregation Program is a network of United Methodist churches that publicly welcome the full participation of all persons, including lesbians and gay men.

Launched in 1984, the movement now includes 63 Reconciling Congregations, including two in Texas--Bering Memorial in Houston and Trinity in Austin.

The purpose of the convocation is to celebrate the growing movement, empower participants with tools for reconciling ministries, and nurture our spiritual journeys. For more information, call Susan Spruce at 669-1601. Pre-registration deadline is May 28.

convention is a world turned upside down, where everybody is supportive of gays and lesbians. It's energizing, educational, affirming, and FUN.

This year's convention is within easy driving distance, making it more affordable than in the past few years. The special convention rate at the Sheraton Hotel is \$80 double, \$100 triple or quad.

We can arrange car pools, or even a group van if enough people are interested in splitting the cost.

Convention highlights will include Congressman Gerry Studds as a keynote speaker, a concert by Lyn Lavner, and a "Mini Mardi Gras Extravaganza," plus LOTS of workshops such as Colorado and Oregon's Experience with the Religious Right, Identifying Allies and Alliance Building, Homophobia in High Schools, Achieving Diversity in P-FLAG, Obtaining Disability Benefits for PWAs, Fathers Only, Spouses of Gays and Lesbians, Children with Gay and Lesbian Parents, Training for Facilitators and Helplineers, and Fund-Raising for Chapters.

Our own Don Sinclair will be a workshop presenter in a session on religion.

Registration forms will arrive soon. Be sure to look for them at upcoming meetings. If you want us to mail one to you, request it through helpline.

CELEBRATING FAMILY



P-FLAG SCRAPBOOK

Charlotte is creating a scrapbook for our chapter. Dig out any photos that you'd like to add--JAGS Holiday Party, Pride Parades, etc. And snap away at our upcoming events, sending copies of your photos to the scrapbook.

P-FLAG FLYER

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

P.O. Box 692444

Houston, Texas 77269-2444

Telephone (713) 867-9020

June 1993

MEETING JULY 11

(not 1st Sun/holiday)

BIBLICAL SELF DEFENSE?!

W. Douglas Ensminger, formerly the minister of a large Houston Presbyterian church and now minister of an inclusive church which he founded, will talk about how to defend yourself against people who use the Bible to attack gays, lesbians, and their families.

"Are you tired of fending people who use the Bible as a weapon to attack you and your children? Would you like to know--exactly--what the Bible does, and does not say about homosexuality? Learn defense against those who abuse the scriptures to attack others. It really is possible to affirm both the Bible and your lesbian friends and family." Douglas Ensminger

(Doug, a member of P-FLAG, is pastor of The Community of the Reconciling Servant--An Inclusive Christian Church Committed to Spiritual Growth, Justice and Compassion. Worship services are at Ovations, 2536 Times Blvd. at Kirby, every Sunday at 10 AM.)

This is a great meeting to bring your family and friends Small group discussions follow the program.

CALENDAR

- | | |
|---------|--|
| June 26 | Gay Choruses
Concert at Wortham
call 227-ARTS |
| June 27 | Pride Parade
4 PM
followed by rally |
| July 11 | P-FLAG Meeting
2 PM-4:30 PM
IntraCare
7601 Fannin |

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

NO NEWSLETTER IN JULY
NEXT ISSUE: MID AUGUST
NOTE DATE FOR AUG. MEETING
AUGUST 1

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

P-FLAG CONVENTION

Sept. 3-6

Registration Forms
Have Arrived!

Call our helpline to request
one be mailed to you.
Registration before July 10
SAVES YOU MONEY!

Join the party in New Orleans when P-FLAG families and friends from across the country gather to learn, network, get energized, and have fun.

The heart of the convention is from Fri., 8:30 PM, through the 8 PM banquet on Sun. The convention fee includes 4 workshops, 3 keynote addresses, Lynn Lavner concert, 2 lunches, and the grand banquet. Register before July 10 for early fee of \$175; goes up to \$190 until Aug. 20; \$225 at door.

Optional tours (plantations, French Quarter stroll, swamp adventure, etc.) are planned for Thursday, Sept. 2, and Mon., Sept. 6.

The convention hotel is the Sheraton on Canal Street (\$80 double, \$100 triple/quadruple).

If you want to carpool or share the cost of a van, call Gail (440-0353).

CAN'T ATTEND P-FLAG MEETINGS BUT WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN THE WORK OF P-FLAG?

The more person-power that we have to draw on, the more P-FLAG can accomplish. Our tasks are support, education, and advocacy.

We NEED help in numerous

PRIDE PARADE

P-FLAG HOUSTON--GRAND MARSHALS
Sun., June 27, 4 PM

At press time, more than 30 P-FLAGgers and friends have signed up to march or ride in the OUT & PROUD Pride Parade. At least four P-FLAG leaders from other cities--Fort Worth and Austin--plan to march in the Houston parade.

Everybody in the P-FLAG family is invited to join in, which means everyone reading this newsletter and your friends! (We're very inclusive...)

We promise to make sure that you know all of the details--where to meet, how to get there, how to dress, etc.

We'll meet on the grounds of Lanier Middle School, at Woodhead and Westheimer. Look for our banner.

The parade route is one mile along Westheimer, from Woodhead to near Whitney.

The parade is followed by a rally in Spotts Park, at Memorial Drive and Waugh. Shuttle buses will run between the parade route and the park.

You can march/ride in the parade AND/OR participate in the rally. The rally is not required if you prefer to march and then leave.

We do need volunteers at the rally to sell our AIDS awareness T-shirts, tank tops, visors, and caps. This is a major fundraiser for P-FLAG.

Call to volunteer to MARCH, RIDE, and/or WORK AT RALLY BOOTH
Carole: 623-2838 (work)
580-6607 (home)
Gail: 440-0353 (work & home)

If you don't call, but want to join in at the last minute, meet us at the school--or join

people who use the Bible as a weapon to attack you and your children? Would you like to know--exactly--what the Bible does, and does not say about homosexuality? Learn defense against those who abuse the scriptures to attack others. It really is possible to affirm both the Bible and your lesbian friends and family." Douglas Ensminger

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July 15 Board Meeting
Aug. 1 P-FLAG Meeting
Aug. 19 Board Meeting

Sept. 3-6 P-FLAG National
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We NEED help in numerous ways, from selling wares at various events to making phone calls. Say "YES, I WANT TO HELP WHEN POSSIBLE" by calling Gail (440-0353).

BUSHEL BASKETS OF THANKS TO SO MANY OF YOU WHO DO SAY YES WHEN I CALL. TOGETHER, WE CAN CHANGE MINDS--AND HEARTS.

Gail Rickey

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If you don't call, but want to join in at the last minute, meet us at the school--or join in from the sidelines of the parade. Our contingent is #16.

P-FLAG T-SHIRTS ARE HERE!

GET YOURS AT THE BARGAIN RATE OF TEN BUCKS!!

(Not a fund-raiser for us, just a way to show our unity and P-FLAG Pride.)

Especially during 1993 the second page of the newsletters consisted entirely of national news stories reprinted. As the reason for digitizing these was to capture the local news, those pages were not scanned.

NATIONAL P-FLAG UNDERTAKES MAJOR FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

The Federation of P-FLAG, headquartered in Washington, has developed a multi-faceted fundraising campaign in order to meet the demands of rapid growth (300-plus chapters) and the increased need for advocacy in today's social and political environment.

A telemarketing team is now making calls to many P-FLAG members, asking for much-needed contributions.

"These are exciting and demanding times for P-FLAG," writes Mitzi Henderson, national president.

"... supporting a common commitment, and maintaining an effective national presence is more important than ever."

Only a small portion of the dues paid to P-FLAG Houston goes to the national office; in fact, not even enough to cover the costs of the quarterly P-FLAGpole.



P-FLAG MEMBERS PARTICIPATE IN FOUNDING OF THE AGORA

dedicated to providing education and accurate information about gays, lesbians and their families

The Agora, which takes its name from "the marketplace" in ancient Greece, is a newly formed coalition committed to community education. "We want to show positive images of our families to the community," says Barbara Winston, a P-FLAG mom, board member, and small group leader.

To get involved, contribute related news, or assist with education and public relations, call Barbara at 464-3163.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN'S "SPEAK OUT" SEEKS PAID VOLUNTEERS AT PRIDE EVENTS

Speak Out sends targeted mailgrams to elected officials. It's a very effective way to make your voice heard.

To help sign up new members at Houston Pride events, call Chris at 800-777-HRCF.

GAY-OWNED LONG-DISTANCE SERVICE WILL DONATE TO P-FLAG

CommunitySpirit, operated by gay-owned Overlooked Opinions, is a long distance company that saves consumer money plus donates 2% of the consumer's bill to a gay/lesbian organization designated by the customer.

Naturally, we hope that if you choose to use CommunitySpirit, you name

P-FLAG Houston

as the recipient.

FYI, Overlooked Opinions was a major sponsor of the March on Washington.

The enclosed card tells you more. Request details by calling 800-IT'S OURS.

BULLETIN BOARD

(paid announcements, serving the P-FLAG family and friends)

GAY MOTHER SEEKS HELP

Room & Board plus Salary of \$200 per month

Need older companion for my very capable elderly mom. Light housework, then come & go as you please during the day. Four year old girl at school all day. Babysitting sometimes in evenings.

Call Bev for details: 660-7004

The Beleaguered Minority

By Robert Bernstein

All right students, it's final exam time in Anthro 501, Minority Cultures.

Below is a list of statements taken from an article in a publication of general circulation. The article dealt with a particular minority orientation that has evoked severe hostility from the majority populations of many cultures throughout history. Your task is to fill in the blanks.

▼ "[A certain famous person] is _____. As such, he is a member of a minority comprising approximately 10 percent of the population, depending upon how _____ is defined."

▼ "The principal source of the anti_____ bias can be traced to the Bible."

▼ "I would like to...draw up...a damage estimate of the cost of trying to convert a _____ into _____."

▼ "Some experts consider the customary categories of _____ and _____ oversimplification. They regard [the incidence of the orientation] as a continuum, ranging from complete and total _____ on one end to absolute _____ on the other."

▼ "Theories about the origin of _____ range from the influence of testosterone on the developing fetus to genetics (_____ often runs in families) to what might be called the 'brain damage theory.'"

▼ "There are indications... that artists have a significantly higher incidence of _____ than the general population."

▼ "Some have even suggested that _____ may actually produce superior abilities. They cite Leonardo da Vinci... and Michelangelo."

My premise is that most readers will flunk my test. For — I kid you not — the article was not about homosexuality and heterosexuality. It appeared in the Outlook

The bias even affects the way we speak. "Language retains the ancient disdain for things left," says the author of the Post article, Dr. Richard M. Restak. He points out that we describe those we distrust as "sinister" (from the Latin for left) and those we deem clumsy as "gauche" (French for left). On the other hand, such admirable qualities as "dexterity" and "adroitness" stem respectively from Latin and French roots for "right."

Nonetheless, except for a few such remnant traces, the prejudice against southpaws has by now essentially yielded to common sense. Does that pretend hope for a similar ultimate triumph of reason and decency over homophobia?

Maybe.

It is, of course, difficult to imagine that the historical persecution and scorn against lefties ever attained the same level of viciousness as that against gays. Nor does it now seem possible that the handedness bias could have been as deeply rooted in human emotion as is homophobia.

For example, I know many heterosexuals who are socially and politically accepting of gay persons, but who nevertheless are uncomfortable in the presence of an openly affectionate same-sex couple. One good friend, whom I know to be personally close to numerous gays, told me he passed up "Torch Song Trilogy" because he can't bear to watch two men kiss.

Is it really likely that, even at the height of the handedness prejudice, righties experienced the same sort of queasiness at the sight of a left-handed writer or diner? Is history replete with dosedet southpaws? Was lefty-bashing ever in vogue? If so, there is obvious hope for the downfall of homophobia. The inspiration for the Post article from which the statements were taken (and

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The analogies between handedness and sexual orientation, it turns out, are downright uncanny. And however unlikely it might now seem, the impact of the handedness prejudice has been profound.

Matthew in the New Testament envisions the blessed at the right hand of the Son of man, while those on His left are "ye cursed" who "shall go away into everlasting punishment." During the Middle Ages, left-handedness was associated with witchcraft. And down through the ages, parents have sown psychological havoc by forcing lefty children to write, eat and throw right-handed.

The bias even affects the way we speak. "Language retains the ancient disdain for things left," says the author of the *Post* article, Dr. Richard M. Restak. He points out that we describe those we distrust as "sinister" (from the Latin for left) and those we deem dumsy as "gauche" (French for left). On the other hand, such admirable qualities as "dexterity" and "adroitness" stem respectively from Latin and French roots for "right."

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Is it really likely that, even at the height of the handedness prejudice, righties experienced the same sort of queasiness at the sight of a left-handed writer or diner? Is history replete with closeted southpaws? Was lefty-bashing ever in vogue? If so, there is obvious hope for the downfall of homophobia. The inspiration for the *Post* article from which the above quotations were taken (and the key to the identity of the "famous person" mentioned in the first quote) was the inauguration of George Bush, a lefty, as our nation's 41st president.

Fortunately for him, no one ever tried to "change" him.

Robert Bernstein is vice president of *The Federation of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays*. This essay was printed in a number of publications after the 1988 inauguration of president George Bush. President-Elect Bill Clinton, is also left handed.



PFLAG FLYER

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

P.O. Box 692444

Houston, Texas 77269-2444

Telephone (713) 867-9020

August 1993

MEETING SEPT. 12
(not 1st Sunday of month)

"THE P-FLAG CONVENTION--
NEW EXPERIENCES,
NEW KNOWLEDGE,
NEW STRENGTH"

The impact of hundreds of P-FLAG families from across the country gathering together is empowering, energizing, educational, and FUN. It's a world turned upside down, with families celebrating the gayness of their children, siblings, and friends.

P-FLAGers who attend the convention (at press time, that's about 20 of us) will share their experiences, impressions, and new knowledge with the rest of the chapter.

Small group discussions, led by group facilitators, follow the program. As one of the most important facets of regular P-FLAG meetings, these discussions provide an opportunity for people with a wide range of experiences to learn from each other, strengthening us all.

CALENDAR

- | | |
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| Sept. 9 | P-FLAG Board 7:15 PM |
| Sept. 11 | HATCH Awards Reception
UU Church; 7-10 PM |
| Sept. 12 | P-FLAG Meeting 2 PM-4:30 PM
IntraCare
7601 Fannin |
| Sept. 22 | Chandler Burr Texas A&M
Student Services Building |

**P-FLAG HELPS HOST
CHANDLER BURR IN HOUSTON
Thursday, Sept. 23
BE THERE!!**

The cover article in the March '93 Atlantic Monthly, "Homosexuality and Biology," was written by Chandler Burr, a bright, well-spoken 29-year-old gay man who is attracting national attention.

Now writing a book on the neurobiological research being conducted about sexual orientation, Burr wrote the Atlantic Monthly piece as a preview of his upcoming book.

Crossroads Market & Bookstore, with stores in Houston and Dallas, is underwriting the expenses of Burr's visit to Texas. Our P-FLAG chapter was invited to get involved by Chandler, who is a member of P-FLAG's national organization, and by Crossroads Market owner Joe Rammuni, who supports the mission of P-FLAG.

Our goal is to invite the entire community to this event, publicizing it in the mainstream media.

P-FLAG's responsibility is to host Chandler's presentation on Thursday, Sept. 23. The audience will be invited to make donations to our chapter, which we will use to help fund our upcoming Homophobia Workshop. (see enclosed colored flyer)

Our friends at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, led by the Rev. Don Sinclair--who is a committed P-FLAG member--are providing the meeting space for Chandler's appearance.

After Chandler's presentation, we will host a reception in the church's fellowship hall.

And MAYBE this is the time to risk out and invite your co-worker who insists that "homosexuals choose THAT lifestyle," or your relatives who imply that gayness is "something we don't talk about in this family."

Significantly, Chandler's words can change minds and hearts. Turn to page 3 for the reprint of an editorial by a conservative columnist who altered his view of gays and lesbians after reading The Atlantic Monthly article.

**IF YOU WILL
DONATE COOKIES
and/or**

**GREET, USHER, SERVE
please call**

**Joy Ganther: 784-4544
Norma Graves: 467-4105**



VIDEO TO BE PRODUCED ABOUT P-FLAG HOUSTON

TriAngle Video Productions, a new Houston-based company dedicated to counteracting homophobic prejudice and ignorance, has chosen P-FLAG as the subject of its first video film.

Steve Baker, the gay man who founded the company, plans to make a documentary-style video about P-FLAG, at no cost to our chapter, to "help gay people and their families, friends, and co-workers understand what life is really like for gays, and what it is that gay people need from those they care about."

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TriAngle will use the P-FLAG video to showcase the new company's work AND will sell it in a variety of outlets, perhaps even to other P-FLAG chapters. Our chapter will receive free copies of the video and a portion of the proceeds from videos that are sold.

continued, p. 2

VIDEO TO BE PRODUCED

continued, from p. 1

Steve, who recently joined P-FLAG Houston along with his partner, has gotten permission from national P-FLAG to film portions of the New Orleans convention.

The heart of the P-FLAG video will be interviews with parents in our chapter.

If you are willing to CONSIDER being interviewed on film, please call Gail at 440-0353. We can provide you with more information, including a list of interview questions.

PROUD P-FLAG MOM AND DAD SEE DAUGHTER ORDAINED IN NEWARK

Martha Lynn Dyson, the lesbian daughter of P-FLAG members Shirley and Arnold Dyson, was ordained this past June as a deacon in the Episcopal church. Her ordination as a priest follows in December, 1993.

The Right Rev. John Shelby Spong and the Right Rev. Jack McKelvey conducted the ordination.

"I hope that more and more congregations will be open to lesbians and gays," says Shirley.

H.A.T.C.H. AWARDS RECEPTION

H.A.T.C.H. will hold its second annual Awards Reception on Saturday, Sept. 11, 7 PM to 10 PM at the first Unitarian Universalist Church at 5200 Fannin.

The event will include a guest speaker, entertainment, and refreshments. A donation of \$15 is requested.



BOUQUETS OF THANKS TO...

Robert Gray, John Hedgcock, Barbara Winston, and Charlie McCarthy who represented P-FLAG in an interview conducted by Kyle Huckins on KPFT radio. The interview went so well that the scheduled 30-minute broadcast was expanded to two half-hour segments, aired on different mornings.

** The seven P-FLAG members (three husband & wife couples and the daughter of one couple) who represented P-FLAG at a HATCH meeting.

** Judy Filippone for heading up the Chandler Burr event. Judy has spent countless hours coordinating Chandler's visit not only to Houston but to Dallas and Texas A&M.

** John Hedgcock for working on publicity for the Chandler Burr event, Paul Van Order and Myrtle Meaux for agreeing to help distribute information about it, and Mary Parker for working on the reception that follows Chandler's talk at Bering Methodist Church.

** Members of The Agora, for generously donating their time, talent, and energy to publicize the Chandler Burr event. (The Agora is a coalition dedicated to presenting positive images of gays and lesbians to the Houston community.)

AND A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR ALL OF US!

Last year, P-FLAG Houston had a total of 8 marchers and riders in the Pride Parade. And that was counting a youth from HIPY who volunteered at the last minute to give us support.

This year, we were 42 strong. We had mothers, fathers, sisters, and brothers of gays and lesbians; lesbians; gay men; and friends of us all. Some marchers and riders were P-FLAG members. Others had never attended a meeting but believe in our mission. Together, we were OUT and PROUD, which was the theme of this year's parade.

Last year, 2 members of our chapter went to the national convention in Seattle.

This year, approximately 20 members plan to attend the national convention in New Orleans over Labor weekend. (We'll report the final count in the next newsletter.)

Last year, a handful of us represented P-FLAG at speaking engagements.

This year, a mushrooming army of P-FLAGers say "YES" when asked to represent our chapter. CELEBRATING FAMILY



NOTABLE QUOTES

On the military policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"

"The President has abandoned us in our struggle. He has taken the low road, instead of the high moral ground. The executive order continues to deny our gay, lesbian and bisexual loved ones equal dignity, equal opportunity and equal respect."

Mitzi Henderson, national president of P-FLAG

"President Clinton's decision to require homosexuals serving in the U.S. military to hide is a shattering disappointment for millions of us who believed the President when he called for change last November. Instead of ending discrimination in the military, the President endorsed a detailed diagram of discrimination that keeps people in the darkest corners of the closet."

Tim McFeeley, executive director of Human Rights Campaign Fund

"We don't have the political power to stop a Sam Nunn yet. We have to prepare to settle in for the long-term drive so that we can deliver that political power. We must all come out of the closet. We have no power if we're in the closet. When we're in the closet we can't convince a homophobic Congress to help us."

being interviewed on film, please call Gail at 440-0353. We can provide you with more information, including a list of interview questions.

PROUD P-FLAG MOM AND DAD SEE DAUGHTER ORDAINED IN NEWARK

Martha Lynn Dyson, the lesbian daughter of P-FLAG members Shirley and Arnold Dyson, was ordained this past June as a deacon in the Episcopal church. Her ordination as a priest follows in December, 1993.

The Right Rev. John Shelby Spong and the Right Rev. Jack McKelvey conducted the ordination.

"I hope that more and more congregations will be open to lesbians and gays," says Shirley.

H.A.T.C.H. AWARDS RECEPTION

H.A.T.C.H. will hold its second annual Awards Reception on Saturday, Sept. 11, 7 PM to 10 PM at the first Unitarian Universalist Church at 5200 Fannin.

The event will include a guest speaker, entertainment, and refreshments. A donation of \$15 is requested.

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Tori Osborne, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

On breakthrough study about homosexuality announced in July 16 issue of Science

The new research should "dispel the notion that being gay is something inflicted on you by bad parenting.. I hope that it will show that being gay is part of the natural diversity."

Richard Pillard, Boston University expert on homosexuality who studies gays and their siblings

RELAY FLYER

Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays

P.O. Box 692444

Houston, Texas 77269-2444

Telephone (713) 867-9020

September 1993

MEETING OCT. 3

"Understanding Personal Homophobia"

Why do families react so strongly when they learn that a family member is gay? Why do many lesbians and gay men struggle to accept their sexual orientation? Where does our personal homophobia come from?

Michael Winters, staff psychologist at Rice University's Counseling Center, leads us in understanding our own homophobia by examining our overall development.

** The better we understand ourselves, the more effective we can be in supporting each other, educating the public about homosexuality, and advocating for equal human rights for gays and lesbians. Don't miss this opportunity!

CALENDAR

- Sept. 22 Chandler Burr
Texas A&M
Student Services Bldg.
7 PM
- Sept. 23 Chandler Burr
Bering Methodist Church
7:30 PM
- Sept. 24 Reception for
Chandler Burr
Crossroads Market
7:30-10 PM
- Oct. 2 Lynn Lavner Concert
MCCR, 7 PM
- Oct. 3 P-FLAG Meeting
2 PM-4:30 PM
IntraCare
7601 Fannin

P-FLAG HELPS HOST ORIENTATION BIOLOGY EXPERT CHANDLER BURR

Thursday, Sept. 23
Bering Memorial United
Methodist Church, 7:30 PM

As this newsletter goes to press, P-FLAGers are hard at work publicizing Burr's visit to Houston.

WE NEED YOU--

to attend
to bring friends
to spread the word

Please use the enclosed flyer (make extra copies) to tell others about the event.

And BE THERE!!

Donations received at the event will help fund "Healing the Hurt--A Conference on Homophobia," to be presented by P-FLAG on March 11, 1994.

On Friday, following Burr's presentation at Bering, the author will be honored at a reception at Crossroads Market & Bookstore, 610 W. Alabama. Proceeds benefit The Agora, a new media relations organization dedicated to a positive portrayal of gays and lesbians.

Burr's visit to Texas, which includes stops in Dallas at SMU and at Texas A&M, is hosted by Joe Ramunni of Crossroads Market.

In related news--

One of two challenge gifts of \$25,000 each, given to national P-FLAG and announced at the New Orleans convention, was designated by the donor to be used in disseminating information about orientation biology to the general public.

P-FLAG CHANGES ITS NAME

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To Fund Homophobia Conference

With a hopeful heart, I went to P-FLAG's mailbox shortly after last month's newsletter arrived in homes scattered across the city. Would anyone respond to our appeal for help in funding "Healing the Hurt--A Conference on Homophobia"?

Now, with a thankful heart, I report that within two weeks, we received 12 checks totalling \$3,325. Another \$1,500 has been pledged from two other P-FLAG members.

Our goal is \$15,000. If you believe in our mission of educating the public about homosexuality, with the goal of ending discrimination, and can make a financial donation, we encourage you to do so.

Gail Rickey

President, P-FLAG Houston

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF P-FLAG?

Stop! Don't toss out the envelope that your newsletter arrived in until you look at the label.

Does it have a month and year designation? If so, you have an ongoing reminder of when you last paid dues to P-FLAG. Memberships are valid for one year.

If not, you are receiving this newsletter as a free service, paid for by P-FLAG members. As a non-profit, volunteer organization, we depend on dues-paying members to pay our bills--maintaining a helpline, printing and mailing out the newsletter, publicizing P-FLAG, distributing information.

We invite and encourage you to join our team. A membership

September 1993

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- Oct. 7,8,9,10 Play by
MCCR's Resurrection Players
Heinen Theater, 3517 Austin
- Oct. 24 "Halloween Magic"
Fundraiser to benefit
FIRM & Body/Positive

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P-FLAG CHANGES ITS NAME

Reflecting P-FLAG's commitment to inclusiveness, our national organization has changed its name to **Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays**. The acronym of P-FLAG remains the same. The change was made at the recent national convention.

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We invite and encourage you to join our team. A membership form is on page 4.

** If you no longer want to receive the newsletter, please call our helpline (867-9020) and ask to be dropped from the mailing list.

And if your address changes, please notify us. ** Returns from bulk mail cost us money.**

If you attended P-FLAG's Sept. 12 meeting, you heard all about it. If you didn't, here's the scoop:

A total of 21 P-FLAGers from Houston participated in New Orleans' "Celebrating Family" P-FLAG convention.

We laughed, cried, learned, listened, discussed, toured, partied, ate, danced, sang, worshipped, and rejoiced in being with nearly 600

P-FLAGers from across the nation.

Keynote speaker Gerry Studds, Congressman from Massachusetts and the first openly gay member of Congress, was a star speaker, inspiring us all.

Don Sinclair, minister of Bering Memorial Methodist Church in Houston, led a workshop on religion. Glenda Redworth and Suzanne Upshaw of Houston traveled to the convention with their children to present a panel on gay and lesbian parenting.

Barbara Winston, Doug Ensminger, and Don Sinclair participated in P-FLAG's first National Leadership Training program.

Next year--SAN FRANCISCO! Put it on your calendar for Labor Day Weekend, 1994.

**Last Summer at Bluefish Cove
Oct. 7, 8, 9, 10**

Last spring, many P-FLAGers got to see the Resurrection Player's thoroughly-entertaining production of Norman, Is That You?

The troupe's upcoming production, Last Summer at Bluefish Cove, is a dramatic comedy that examines lesbian relationships. A group of friends gather for one last summer at Bluefish Cove, where they share laughter, tragedy, friendship, and love.

The play will be performed at Heinen Theater adjacent to the Houston Community College Central Campus, at 3517 Austin.

Tickets for Oct. 8, 9, and 10 cost \$10 in advance, or \$12.50 at the door.

The Oct. 7 performance, which benefits Montrose Counseling Center, costs \$15.

Show time on Thurs., Fri., and Sat. is 8 PM. On Sun, Oct. 10, there are shows at 2 PM and 6:30 PM. Tickets are on sale at Crossroads Market and at Inklings Bookstore.

**** P-FLAG has been invited to set up an information table at all shows and to usher at the Sunday 6:30 PM performance. If you would like to help, call Carole Miller at 623-2838 (work), 580-6607 (home).**

Lynn Lavner, singer and comic, was a headliner at P-FLAG's recent convention in New Orleans. Now Lavner comes to Houston, performing at MCCR on Sat., Oct. 2, at 7 PM.

Described by others as "a pint-sized Tom Lehrer," Lavner says of herself, "My songs and humor are drawn from my own experiences as a short, left-handed, Jewish, lesbian from New York."

Benefitting MCCR's Choir and the Resurrection Players, the concert costs \$10. Tickets are available at MCCR, Inklings, and Crossroads Market.

"HALLOWEEN MAGIC" PLAY

A fundraiser to benefit Body Positive/Houston and FIRM (Foundation for Interfaith Research and Ministry) is on Saturday, Oct. 24.

The festivities begin with a party at 6 PM, followed by "The Sound of Montrose," a tongue-and-cheek adaptation of "The Sound of Music," at 7:30 PM. The site is the Shamrock Ballroom in the Texas Medical Center Conference Center, near Holcombe and Main.

Tickets, priced at \$50, are on sale at Inklings, Crossroads Market, Appearances, and Tim Hamrock Interiors. Call 524-2374 for more information.

**Excerpts from Chandler Burr's "Search for Sexual Identity"
New York Times, August 2, 1993**

Conservatives dislike the search for gay genes and the origins of sexual orientation because they fear that such studies may prove that homosexuality is not chosen and therefore should be tolerated.

Liberals fear that such studies make possible eugenics and other medical misuses, and they distrust attempts to establish civil rights based on biology rather than on principle.

Conservatives misunderstand what this research does. Liberals' fears are misplaced.

... before we can arrive at principled policies -- gay civil rights laws and a military policy that makes sense -- we must understand something more basic, the true nature of homosexuality.

Either it is a sick life style promoted by its practitioners, as supporters of Colorado's anti-gay Amendment 2 claim, or it is a natural sexual orientation. Gay soldiers are either physically impaired, like flat-footed soldiers, or they are not.

As long as the political debate is governed by misunderstanding, only conservatives will benefit. This was made clear when Oregon's anti-gay amendment, which said homosexuality was comparable to "bestiality" and "incest," got 44 percent of the vote in November. These studies say to society: "As far as we

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America must decide whether the sun goes around the earth or the earth goes around the sun. The biological research of sexual orientation, like Copernicus's work, helps us understand the nature of our universe. It helps us find the solutions to our questions.

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October 1993

MEETING NOV. 7

"Stages of Development and Conflict Within a Gay Person"

Rev. Troy Plummer, LPC, director of the Bering Counseling Center, will discuss the stages that young gays and lesbians go through as they develop awareness of their sexual orientation. "This will be a glimpse into the struggles of young gay adults," says Rev. Plummer.

The program promises to be invaluable, offering insights from a very knowledgeable, articulate, caring speaker.

Small group discussions follow the program.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 1994 AT NOVEMBER MEETING



CALENDAR

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Nov. 6 | Black Tie Dinner
(see article) |
| Nov. 7 | P-FLAG Meeting
2 PM-4:30 AM
IntraCare
7601 Fannin |
| Dec. 5 | P-FLAG Holiday
Party
Fitzgerald's
2706 White Oak
2 PM-5 PM
(see article) |
| Jan. 9 | P-FLAG Meeting |

FUND-RAISING FOR HOMOPHOBIA CONFERENCE CONTINUES

Our total of paid and pledged contributions is \$6552!

If you can help with this effort, we encourage you to send in your contributions.

FYI--one major contributor found that his company will match his gift, since the conference fits under the category of "education."

If you think that you can make a donation that qualifies for "matching funds," please look into it. Call our treasurer, Arden Eversmeyer, at 661-1482, or Mary, at 748-4448, if you need further information.



P-FLAG NATIONAL PRESIDENT WRITES ARTICLE IN PARENT'S MAGAZINE

Mitzi Henderson, P-FLAG's national president, wrote an excellent article for the November, 1993, issue of Parent's Magazine. We

HOLIDAY GAY-LA-LA

It's a party!! Each year, P-FLAG celebrates our friendships and support for each other at a holiday gathering. Each year's event is unique!

This year, Fitzgerald's, located in the Heights, has invited us to use their facilities. Mary is organizing the party food, inviting restaurants who are supportive of our goals to participate.

Taking advantage of Fitzgerald's stage, we will have a performance format. The entertainment roster will include the Houston Gay Men's Chorus and MCCR's Resurrection Players.

P-FLAG: KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

ROSTER OF SPEAKERS FOR HOMOPHOBIA CONFERENCE STUDDER WITH STARS

The format for "Healing the Hurt--A Conference on Homophobia" is two keynote addresses and a choice of eight workshops.

Presenters include the following:

- Dr. Diane (Dee) Mosbacher
M.D., PhD in Social
Psychology & Mental Health
Bruce Hilton
author, minister, director
of National Center for
Bioethics
Dr. Cheryl Weill
prof. of neurology,
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Dr. Lou Ann Todd Mock
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Rep. Glen Maxey

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The nationally-syndicated column by Deb Price on page 4 quotes Houston P-FLAGer Jane Smith. The column is distributed to more than 80 papers across the country.

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- Rep. Debra Danburg
- Rep. Garrett Coleman
- Sheila Jackson Lee
- Dr. Robert McLaughlin
- Dr. Don Sinclair
- The Rev. Doug Ensminger
- The Rev. Carolyn Mobley
- The Rev. Sid Hall--Austin
- Dr. Shevly Healey

BURR EVENT DRAWS LARGE CROWD, RAISES FUNDS FOR HOMOPHOBIA CONFERENCE

Due to MANY of you who are reading this newsletter, the Chandler Burr presentation on Sept. 23 was a big success.

You did help spread the word, and we had an audience of approximately 225 people.

Contributions, designated for the Homophobia Conference, totalled \$860, which is a BIG help toward our goal of \$15,000.

Many people stayed after the presentation for the reception. Armloads of thanks to all of you who brought refreshments. Four fantastic women put the party together. A big round of applause for

MARY PARKER

KATHY SINCLAIR

NORMA GRAVES

JOY GANTHER

P-FLAGger JUDY FILIPPONE organized and coordinated the event. JOHN HEDGCOCK worked with Judy, putting lots of energy into publicizing the event and representing P-FLAG from the podium.

Our heartfelt thanks to THE AGORA for its support of this event. Their media committee put an enormous amount of effort in preparing and mailing media kits.

Many people have thanked P-FLAG for helping present an educational program to the community.

The evening did have a "downside," however, when Chandler handled a question from the audience very insensitively, evoking a negative response from numerous people in the audience.

Over the next few hours, and even days, several P-FLAGgers had long talks with Chandler, discussing sensitivity to women. My letter to Chandler is printed to the right.

We truly appreciate Chandler's appearance in Houston, and we wish him well in his ongoing work.

Gail Rickey

BLACK TIE DINNER
Benefits 8 local non-profit organizations and
The Human Rights Campaign Fund

Keynote Speaker:

Roberta Achtenberg

Beneficiaries include
AIDS Foundation Houston

Dear Chandler,

Thank you for taking time to come to Houston to talk about homosexuality and biology. As you know, P-FLAG's mission is to help educate the general public about issues concerning homosexuality. Your appearance here gave our chapter the opportunity to begin a dialogue with portions of the community that we have never addressed directly, such as school counselors and directors of guidance and counseling. I truly appreciate all that you are doing to open windows of understanding about homosexuality.

Admittedly, all of us who are working to end discrimination against gays and lesbians face a formidable task. But as we work, we personally benefit, growing in our sensitivity to each other and to the many voices within our society that feel the pain of discrimination.

Chandler, I must tell you that the woman who addressed you from the audience spoke for many of us, pointing out your put-downs to women, which I assume to be inadvertent. She was asking you to be sensitive to discrimination against women--both heterosexual and homosexual.

For me personally, I want you to know that I take you and other gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals very seriously. I listen to you. I walk beside you. I reach out and join hands with you.

I ask you to offer me the same respect. As a woman, I expect you to take my concerns seriously, to listen to what causes offense, and to grow in your understanding of subtle and overt discrimination of women, just as I have grown--and continue to grow--in my understanding of the concerns of gay men and lesbians.

We all need each other today, more than ever, Chandler. I know that you view your role to be that of a journalist reporting about science. But you are more than that, just as all of us are more than our jobs or professions.

I believe that only by working together and listening to each other's hearts can we effect positive change. Together, we have good work to do, helping to build a society that respects and values the diversity of creation.

With love and respect

Gail Rickey
President, P-FLAG Houston

Facts On Gay, Lesbian, & Bisexual Youth

Most gay youth sense that they are different as early as age 4 or 5. Most acknowledge their homosexuality between the age of 14-16 for men and between 16-19 for women.

Half of all gay/lesbian youth report their parents rejected them due to their sexual orientation.

Eighty percent of gay/lesbian/bisexual report feeling emotionally and socially isolated and starved for information about homosexuality.

Among gay male adolescents in one study, 68% reported alcohol use and 44% reported drug use. Among young lesbians, 83% had used alcohol and 56% had used drugs in the proceeding three months.

Gay youths are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than straight youths.

In a New York study, 41% of gay/lesbians report suffering violence from their families, peers, and strangers.

Twenty-eight percent of gays and lesbians drop out of high school due to harassment.

Twenty-six percent of gay youth leave home because of conflicts over their sexuality.

The information on gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth was supplied by the Hetrick-Martin Institute in New York. It is excerpted from an article that ran in The Detroit Free Press.

What about other sins?

The letter to the right was printed in the Oct. 1993 issue of The News of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Other letters printed in the same issue were negative about homosexuality. We applaud those who call for reason on an issue that is indeed, "divisive."

As an elder of the church and an anthropologist, I want to plead for broad-mindedness on the extremely sensitive and dangerously divisive issue of homosexuality ...

Homosexuality is a human universal, occurring in roughly the same percentage in all societies. That fact alone indicates that it is not cultural, and it is not individual choice. ...

To label homosexuality as sin, and actively homosexual people as "unrepentant sinners," demonstrates unreasonably selective use of the Bible. Why don't we observe all of the other commandments and sanctions in Leviticus, Numbers, and elsewhere? ...

There is no convincing reason to assume that homosexual people, on the basis of their sexuality alone, are unfit for the pastorate.

for the Homophobia Conference, totalled \$860, which is a BIG help toward our goal of \$15,000.

Many people stayed after the presentation for the reception. Armloads of thanks to all of you who brought refreshments. Four fantastic women put the party together.

A big round of applause for

MARY PARKER

KATHY SINCLAIR

NORMA GRAVES

JOY GANTHER

P-FLAGer JUDY FILIPPONE organized and coordinated the event. JOHN HEDGCOCK worked with Judy, putting lots of energy into publicizing the event and representing P-FLAG from the podium.

Our heartfelt thanks to THE AGORA for its support of this event. Their media committee put an enormous amount of effort in preparing and mailing media kits.

Many people have thanked P-FLAG for helping present an educational program to the community.

The evening did have a "downside," however, when Chandler handled a question from the audience very insensitively, evoking a negative response from numerous people in the audience.

Over the next few hours, and even days, several P-FLAGers had long talks with Chandler, discussing sensitivity to women. My letter to Chandler is printed to the right.

We truly appreciate Chandler's appearance in Houston, and we wish him well in his ongoing work.

Gail Rickey

BLACK TIE DINNER

Benefits 8 local non-profit organizations and
The Human Rights Campaign Fund

Keynote Speaker:

Roberta Achtenberg

Sat., Nov. 6

Westin Oaks Hotel

Cocktails, Dinner, Auction

\$150

(The Black Tie Dinner,
PO Box 130936, Houston, TX
77219-0936)

Beneficiaries include

AIDS Foundation Houston

Assistance Fund

Bering Community Service Foundation

Houston Gay Men's Chorus

Heartsong

Lesbian Health Initiative

Montrose Clinic/Research Network

Texas Human Rights Foundation

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There is no convincing reason to assume that homosexual people, on the basis of their sexuality alone, are unfit for the pastorate.

Homosexuality is not something one may or may not "agree with" or "believe in." It should be recognized as a fact of the human condition. Discrimination against homosexual people ... runs precisely counter to the inclusive stance our church has traditionally maintained as a reflection of Jesus' life and ministry.

PHILLIPS STEVENS JR.
Buffalo, N.Y.

P-FLAG FLYER

Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians and Gays

P.O. Box 692444

Houston, Texas 77269-2444

Telephone (713) 867-9020

November 1993

DECEMBER MEETING=HOLIDAY PARTY

Sunday, Dec. 5

P-FLAG's December meeting has traditionally been a festive gathering. This year's event is at Fitzgerald's, in the Heights. A map and all of the details are on the red sheet that is enclosed.

Please make reservations by filling the reservation form on the back of the invitation to P-FLAG's post office box NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 24

OR

CALL P-FLAG'S VOICE MAIL BOX 867-9020

to make reservations, then pay at the door.

CALENDAR

- Dec. 5 P-FLAG
HOLIDAY PARTY
Fitzgerald's
2 PM-5 PM
(invitation enclosed!)
- Dec. 11 Gay & Lesbian
Switchboard
Auction
5 PM-9 PM
Brazos River Bottom
(see related article)
- Dec. 16 P-FLAG 1994
Board
Dinner/Orientation
7 PM
- Jan. 8 P-FLAG 1994
Board
Planning Retreat
(times to be announced)
- Jan. 9 P-FLAG Meeting
St. Francis Episcopal
345 Piney Point
2 PM-4:30 PM

P-FLAG HAS NEW HOME

P-FLAG begins 1994 with a new home--St. Francis Episcopal Church, located at 345 Piney Point, just south of I-10. A map is on page 2.

We are enthusiastic about the new setting, which is warm and welcoming. Come see for yourself, January 9. Our first speaker for 1994 is Dr. Bob McLaughlin who will continue the theme introduced by Rev. Troy Plummer last month--Stages of Development and Conflict Within a Person Who is Gay.

BLUEBONNET PAINTING TO BE RAFFLED AT HOLIDAY PARTY

Stuart Kane, a long-time member of P-FLAG, has donated a beautiful oil painting for us to raffle at our Holiday Party.

The painting, measuring 43 inches by 30 inches with wood frame, is a pastoral landscape carpeted with bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush.

Raffle tickets are \$3 for one ticket, \$10 for 4 tickets.

Stuart's donation is to help fund P-FLAG's "Healing the Hurt--A Conference on Homophobia," on March 11.

NEEDED: GRANDPARENTS whose grandchildren are the children of gay or lesbian parents!!

Remember the Sharon Bottoms case, where the mother of a lesbian fought a court battle and WON, taking her grandchild away from her daughter BECAUSE HER DAUGHTER IS GAY?

A national lesbian organ-

GAY & LESBIAN SWITCHBOARD/ HATE CRIMES HOTLINE TO HOLD FUNDRAISING AUCTION

Volunteers at Houston's Gay & Lesbian Switchboard answer more than 10,000 calls annually. They provide crisis intervention and telephone peer counseling. They make referrals to organizations such as P-FLAG, as well as to doctors, attorneys, and clinics. They provide information about AIDS.

Additionally, they act as a Hate Crimes Hotline, gathering statistics which they report to law enforcement agencies. This data can then be used to lobby for greater protection from law enforcement agencies.

To raise **DESPERATELY NEEDED** funds, the Switchboard is holding an auction on Dec. 11, from 5 PM to 9 PM, at Brazos River Bottom.

How you can help?

- * **Contribute something to be auctioned**
 - * **Attend auction and buy!!**
- If you have something you'd like to contribute, you can bring it to P-FLAG's Holiday Party.

Notably, the Switchboard is launching a charitable project--**SANTA'S FAERIES**. The purpose is to collect Christmas gifts for impoverished children who live in and near the Montrose area, including the Sixth Ward. You are invited to participate. Bring gifts to P-FLAG's Holiday Party, OR, call Jewel Gray at 871-9726.

The Switchboard asks that you wrap the gift, designate whether it is for a boy or

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A national lesbian organization is writing an amicus brief in relation to the case, and has asked P-FLAG's help in finding grandparents who are supportive of their gay/lesbian children as parents. If you qualify, or if you know someone who does, call Gail at 440-0353.

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The Switchboard asks that you wrap the gift, designate whether it is for a boy or girl, and label it according to appropriate age of child (0-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12, 13-15).

WE COMMEND THE GAY & LESBIAN SWITCHBOARD FOR LOOKING BEYOND THE GAY AND LESBIAN COMMUNITY AND CHOOSING TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE WITH ITS CHARITABLE PROJECT.

P-FLAG PARENTS STAND UP FOR GAYS AND LESBIANS

This is an excerpt from a newsletter sent by an acquaintance who is a semi-retired lawyer now working for a Campus Christian organization. He has just returned from an overseas missionary assignment.

We have not seen him for many years, and he probably is not aware that we are parents of a gay son. A copy of our response is included.

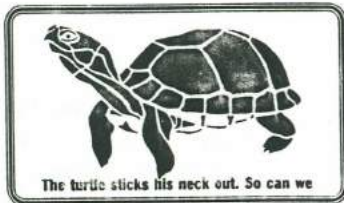
He characterizes homosexual peoples' quest for equal treatment as an "attack" on Christian groups. We think, to the contrary, that this is an attack led by so-called "Christian" people.

Jane & Irv Smith

HOMOSEXUAL LEADERS?

Much time has been devoted to trying to set aside a decision by the administration of _____ University which would prohibit discrimination by campus groups on the basis of sexual orientation. This policy would, in effect, require the local _____ chapter to admit practicing homosexuals into leadership positions. _____ (_____ senior counsel) and _____ have submitted a legal brief to the administration and people from _____ chapter have joined other Christian campus groups in an effort to get this policy repealed. A decision is pending.

This issue has been successfully dealt with on other campuses (including the University of Washington), and we're praying for a good result at _____. This seems to be the most popular type of attack on Christian campus groups at this time. Please pray for a favorable decision at _____, as well as on other campuses where this issue arises.



CLIMBING A MOUNTAIN

One parent who recently visited us described the journey he and his wife were experiencing. "When I look at those of you who are comfortable with the knowledge of your children's sexual orientation," he said, "I see you near the top of a mountain, beckoning to me as I stand half-way up. Then I look below and see those parents just beginning their journey, and I know that as I climb, I will be able to help them on their way." What a beautiful way to describe our journey! What a goal for Parents FLAG to raise up those who are struggling to understand and accept, and to stand beside them on the mountain top of celebration of our children.

Bev's Corner, Washington, D.C. newsletter

P-FLAG'S NEW MEETING SITE
STARTING JAN. 9, 1994
ST. FRANCIS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
345 PINEY POINT



The minister who sent his newsletter to Jane and Irv Smith got much more than he bargained for! Calling on a readership that he assumed would be supportive of discriminating against gays and lesbians, he got instead an education from the Smiths, proud parents of a son who is gay.

Jane and Irv's explanation of the situation is to the left. Beneath it is an excerpt from the offensive newsletter. Directly below is the letter that the Smiths wrote in response. They included a packet of information from P-FLAG.

In this season of thanksgiving, I am thankful for Jane and Irv--their strength, their love, their commitment to standing up for what is right and honorable.

Dear _____:

We have followed with interest the direction your lives have taken since you left _____. Thanks for sending us the occasional newsletters. Although our charitable contributions went elsewhere, we shared your work with _____, who may have donated to the cause.

The recent news item entitled "Homosexual Leaders" really attracted our attention, as you will see. Enclosed are several articles that we hope you will read with an open mind.

God works in mysterious ways, as we're sure you will agree. We also had closed minds re the homosexual situation, until we were given a real personal challenge! Joining a group named P-FLAG (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) helped open our eyes.

We support our homosexual child with the same love that we give our straight child. Both of our children are quite active in their respective Christian churches in Austin. Our daughter through her Presbyterian church works in an AIDS outreach program. Our son donates many hours with Red Cross and like activities. We are proud of them.

Coincidentally, about the time our homosexual child "came out" to us several years ago, a gay man was killed in Houston by a gang of young thugs. They were looking for someone to beat up and selected that person only because they inferred he was gay. We think the homophobia prevalent in some parts of our society only encourages such "gay-bashing" activities.

Did you know that a disproportionate percentage of teen-age suicides are by homosexual youngsters? There is tremendous prejudice taught by some in our country. Obviously, one's sexual orientation is not a preference; why would a person choose such a life?

As Protestants in (another country), you must have been considered members of a minority, and perhaps felt uncomfortable as a result. We personally wonder how you then can return to the US and work actively to suppress the rights of another minority.

The language used in your summary of the _____ situation seems overly succinct in stating the policy would "... require the local _____ chapter to admit practicing homosexuals into leadership positions." Such policies normally require merely that campus groups enjoying the benefits of being such (e.g., free meeting space in campus buildings) not discriminate against any person deemed to be a "minority" who might want to join and perhaps submit their name for consideration to be appointed or elected to office. Whether or not a homosexual would actually reach a leadership position depends upon your methods for filling such.

We hope as you are reading this you are not wearing, say, a broadcloth shirt and tweed pants. The same chapter in Leviticus that some interpret to call homosexuality a sin also prohibits the practice of wearing two different types of cloth.

Your members are being asked to pray for suppression of homosexuals. We think it would be much more Christian-like to pray for equal rights for all peoples!

Sincerely,

JANE & IRV SMITH

**The Fight Against
Homophobia
Begins
With
You
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**Talk
Read
Educate
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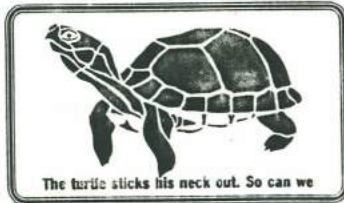
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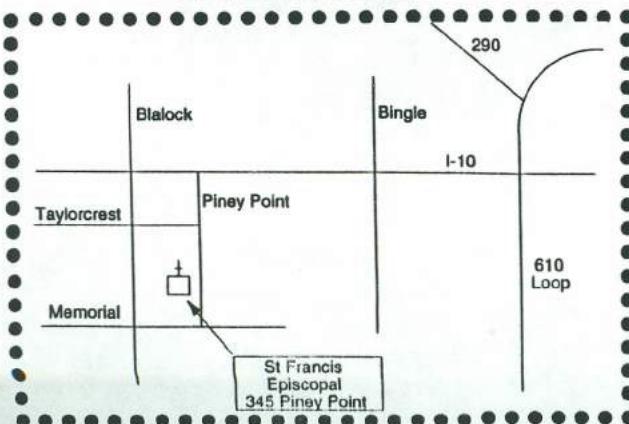


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PFLAG IS FAMILY