

*Family and Friends of Gays
Houston, Texas*

President: Freda 464-6663
Vice President: Betty

Secretary: Open
Treasurer: Ann 524-5982

Issue #2

NEWSLETTER

January 1983

Meeting every third Sunday at 2:30 P.M. at the Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale.
Call 464-6663 if you need directions.

On January 16 at 2:30 P.M. we had our first meeting of the new year and it was a very good meeting after such poor attendance before Thanksgiving and no meeting in December. It seems that we now have new people who feel comfortable and committed to the organization. We warmly welcome these wonderful new men and women - all parents, and look forward to seeing you each month. Together we can build mountains.

Hopefully all of you saw in U.S.A. Today the nationwide interview of Parents Flag. Interesting!! Houston Family and Friends of Gay made it also. We have a copy for our scrap book as well as a Xerox copy to pass around at the meeting.

Center Pavilion Hospital requested brochures and Harris County Psychiatric Hospital called for a listing with their counselors. These are just two latest ones. We are listed with many. We must be doing something right.

We have a goal for 1983 and that is to work toward more peace in the world and especially in Houston, Texas by doing our part in eliminating ignorance about homosexuality as compared to heterosexuality. It is "ignorance of the fact" that causes discrimination. This causes misunderstanding about gays as well as women, different nationalities, different religions, political preferences, etc. Some people through ignorance, search for reasons to discriminate against anything they don't understand. Ignorance is a terrible thing. The happier and more comfortable we are with our own lives, the more we give other people the permission to their own (and sometimes different) lifestyle. We don't need to put a price on our love for another person, be he/she a straight or gay friend, neighbor or our own children. Love really means more than that.

Because, like everyone else, we are short of money, we will no longer mail newsletters to members. They will be available at the meetings only.

Definition of a good Family and Friends of Gays member: One who comes to learn - stays to help someone else - gets involved - cares- doesn't leave all the work to someone else - contributes time - contributes money, it takes money to reach people and some of us have been taking money out of our pockets for our organization - accepts responsibility, you have a gay child too. There are many things to do. Anyone can be comfortable with something. We don't all do the same things.

SEE YOU AT THE MEETINGS. Come early - the church now requires us to lock the door during meetings.

MAR 05 1983

Family and Friends of Gays Houston, Texas

MAR 14 1983

Issue #3

Newsletter

February 1983

Meeting every third Sunday at 2:30 p.m. at the Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale. Call 464-6663 if you need directions.

Our last meeting was on February 20, 1983 at the Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale with Frank and Freda, George and Betty, Ann, John and Barbara and Charles. This was the first meeting for Charles and we thank Barbara for bringing him. Georgia also came for the first time. We were very pleased to have the regulars and we all warmly welcome the newcomers and hope that you return and become a part of us.

We also had guests from Texas Bay area Gays and the University of Houston Gay group. Thanks for coming. You really added a lot to our meeting. Please come again.

We have had contact with the new El Paso and New Orleans Parents' groups. They are small (as we are) but dedicated people doing great work. We wish them much success and give them moral support.

Freida went to the City Hall and registered us with the City so now we are legally able to do something about fund raising and not too soon as our funds are almost depleted and we continue to have our regular expenses each month. We are the only organized non-gay group that supports parents, etc., and their gay sons and daughters. We are all volunteers. Members were asked to contact anyone who might be willing to donate some money to us until we can get on our feet financially again. That soliciting law almost put us out of business.

There was a vote on whether or not we should affiliate with Parents Flag which is the Mother Organization of our group with International office in L. A. California. The vote was unanimously in favor of doing so. Now we need to pay our membership dues.

Attorney Robert Schwab has approved our by-laws with a few changes so they will be in effect now. We now need three (3) board members and they will come from our membership so please consider accepting when you are asked. You are, like us all, a spoke in a wheel.

L. A. has asked large city groups to help form satellite groups (at least hot-lines) in outlying areas. There should be such groups in the bay area, Conroe, I-45/1960, Richmond/Rosenberg, Pearland and perhaps more. We are very pleased that Doris in Spring has volunteered for a hot-line. Thank you so much Doris. You are certainly appreciated. Her phone number is 353-4792. She asks that she be called on weekends any time, but on week days be limited please to 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Please respect her limits. Houston is the fourth largest city in the United States which means that we have a large gay population, therefore a large number of parents of Gays. We need parents' hotlines in those other areas where searching parents and gays can feel comfortable in talking to someone. If anyone else is interested, please call Freda at 464-6663. Again, Doris, we are proud of you and will help you in any way.

You are really missed when we don't see you at a meeting. Each and every one of us who have gay loved ones should feel committed to this organization and should make the meetings a priority. It is only once a month and most other plans can usually be worked around that day. If no one had showed up at the first meeting you came to, do you think that you would have gotten the help that you were searching for? Now you should come and help someone else who is hurting. You may just be "the" one who would make a big difference in how that person feels for the rest of their life. Do you see how important you are?

Our sympathy goes out to Pat, who had to go to South Africa to her husband who is working there. He has had a very serious heart attack and we do hope that he recovers quickly. She may be able to bring him back to Houston if he can travel. Our prayers are with Pat and all her family.

Freda and Frank attended the Gay Pride week meeting at Kindred Spirits on Sunday, March 6. On Saturday, June 18, Family and Friends are hosting a reception/open house type of thing. Details will be worked out later. Family and Friends of Gays will also be in the Gay Day Parade, so if anyone wants to ride with Freda and Frank let us know soon. It is important for our organization to be represented.

We continue to take local and long distant calls and mail from parents as well as gay men and women from across the country, and now we have received several calls recently from wives of gay men. We appreciate these contacts and know that we have helped them.

The gay man or lesbian woman is not some peculiar fellow in a mental institution or some bedraggled bum on skid row. He or she is your neighbor, banker, the check-out boy or girl at the super-market, your senator, pastor, doctor, school teacher, etc. Those who fit this category are everywhere. They are all around us. Furthermore, we like and respect them.

Family and Friends of Gays

President: Freda 464-6663
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Houston, Texas

Secretary: Georgia
Treasurer: John

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Call 464-6663 for directions or information.

#Issue #4

NEWSLETTER

March, 1983

Our last meeting was on March 20, 1983 at the Presbyterian Center with sixteen in attendance. We are slowly growing and educating ourselves as well as new members. We have an excellent group and are becoming more effective in the gay as well as the straight world. Houston gays know us well now, and we have many gay friends and supporters. The March 20th meeting was mainly a business meeting. We elected all of our offices that were vacant as well as three board members. Georgia R. is our secretary and John B. is treasurer, replacing Ann Moser who resigned that position. We thank and appreciate these new officers along with Mary Gene, Barbara and Linda who were elected to the board of directors. You are the backbone of a very vital group of people who are doing a tremendous job of supporting gay men and women, their parents, other family members and straight friends, as well as education of our country. We thank Ann for the good work she did while a member, and support her in her desire to become more involved with her gay daughter's life. We will miss Ann.

On May 2, The Copa, 2631 Richmond, Thelma Hansel (Disco Granny) is giving a benefit for Family and Friends of Gays at 10:00 p.m. We all appreciate their generosity and we must all do everything we can to publicize this affair and get people to attend. It will be a fun evening, very enjoyable...and will add money to our funds! Get out there and push it! Thelma, in the past, has headed up Family and Friends of Gays. We are indebted to Thelma and Gene Howe of the Copa for this fund raiser.

REMINDER!...that Family and Friends are hosting an Open House in Montrose on Saturday afternoon, June 18th during Gay Pride Week. As many as possible of us are needed to be there as representatives of our organization.

Parents Flag, L.A., Calif.: The National Director of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Speaks Out!! Pete Heiferman, National director of KKK recently wrote this in a letter to the new Detroit Parents Flag: "We of the Detroit National Socialist Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Inc. have made a pledge to protect and obey the laws of the Holy Bible. Lesbians and queers have no rights. Say "NO" to the queers. Join and support the DNSKKK, Inc. We will be watching the outcome of this event.

For God and Country

(Signed) Pete Heiferman, national director.

A copy of this, as well as commentary from Parents Flag, L.A., can be obtained by writing to the L.A. office. To the K.K.K. and the Moral Majority: Kahlil Gibran, Mystical writer, born 1883, died 1931 wrote once every 100 years Jesus of Nazareth meets Jesus of the Christian in a garden among the hills of Lebanon, and they talk long; and each time Jesus of Nazareth goes away saying to Jesus of the Christian, "My friend I fear we shall never, never agree." The laws of the church and the spirit of Christ are far, far removed". ...And what did Jesus have to say about homosexuality?....NOTHING!!! He did say "Judge not, lest you be judged".

Thanks to Dorothy A. of San Francisco for referring Zena S. of Dallas to us. She is eager to start a group there, and we will help her all we can. Thanks Zena for your willingness to do this. We need more in Texas.

See you all at the next meeting!

Family and Friends of Gays

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Houston, Texas

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#Issue #4

NEWSLETTER

April, 1983

With our secretary and treasurer both absent, we opened the meeting with Joe Grantham, a deacon from Metropolitan Community Church of the Resurrection, speaking about what it means for him to be a gay christian, and giving some background on growing up gay in a small town in Texas. Everyone was very interested and asked a lot of questions. He remained with us for the rest of the meeting. We all loved him being there and thank him for speaking to us.

Thelma Hansel (Disco Granny) is having a benefit for Family and Friends of Gays at the Copa on the Evening of May 2. We thank Thelma and Gene Howle, manager of the Copa for this benefit, and all of us plan to attend.

New Business was about Gay Pride Week and voting was 100% in favor of Family and Friends of Gays open house on June 18 for the gay community and our participation in the Gay Day parade on June 26. Also, later a garage sale to raise money to send delegates to Parents Flag convention in N.Y. City in October. Details on all of these will be worked out in time--plenty of time.

We continue to get a lot of requests for information, brochures, newsletters, help, counseling, etc., and we are happy to comply.

* Do you want your gay loved one to become a criminal? Then mail letters to your state legislators and senators to fight H.B.2138 introduced by Rep. Bill Ceverha, D.Richardson. This bill would criminalize homosexual behavior. Don't write just once--keep on writing and letting them know how you feel.

From a reprint from Judaism: A Quarterly Journal of Jewish Life and Thoughts, "Sin, Crime, Sickness of Alternative Lifestyle" by Hershel J. Matt: "True, we cannot force a change of heart upon others, nor control their actions; we can, however, make a genuine effort to dispel the popular myths and repeal the legal disabilities that have made the life of many homosexuals into a living hell. We now know, for example, that most male homosexuals are not "effeminate" in gait, voice, manner, or dress; that most female homosexuals are not "masculine"; that homosexuality does not mean promiscuity. We should therefore, avoid such stereotypes in conversation or in attempts at "humor"--- we should, therefore, work for the immediate repeal of laws, rules, and practices that exclude or discriminate against homosexuals-----". "Similarly, in acknowledgement of the relative victimlessness of homosexual relations between consenting adults and in opposition to unnecessary government intrusion upon individual privacy, we should, as Jews, vigorously oppose any legal penalties for such homosexual behavior".

* Keep up with what is going on in government about the rights or denial of rights where ever gay loved ones are concerned and please do write to your senators and legislators about these issues. Their addresses are available to you by calling your nearest library. If you ever have a question as to what you should do and how to do it please feel free to call Freda 464-6663 any time.

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41 [redacted] kdale. Call 464-6663 for directions or information.

Issue #6

NEWSLETTER

May, 1983

Our last meeting was May 15 at the Presbyterian Center with Freda, Frank and John present. Another Freda and Dick came for the first time and we welcomed them on that dreadfully rainy day. Would that all of our members were so dedicated!!

Thanks galore to Disco Granny, Mr. Howe of the Copa, and the great Copa entertainers and all of our friends in the gay community for the successful benefit for Family and Friends of Gays. We can do a lot of educating with that money, and we enjoyed the evening as well! We love you!

Family and Friends of Gays reception for the gay community is Saturday, JUNE 18th, from 12 noon to 3 PM. at LIBERTY BANK community room. BE THERE MEMBERS. I feel very strongly about this. They are our children (or someone's children), grandchildren, nieces, nephews, brothers, sisters, and dear friends. They are the ones who have literally been financially supporting us, and we are the takers. It is time for us to be the givers for a change, so let us ALL let them know that we love and appreciate them for being there, by having a nice reception for them. Almost everything has been donated to us by non-gay business people for a change (ask and you shall receive!). About all you need to do is be there-- all of you.

At our May meeting it was discussed as to just what we plan to do with money from our June 18th reception. We are committed to doing something about AIDS. REMEMBER THAT SOMEONE YOU LOVE COULD BE A VICTIM OF AIDS now or in the future--and it is not only a gay disease; it affects straights, children, as well as you, a parent. It is not only in Houston either. It is also in other cities, states, and countries! Until the general public becomes involved in this issue, nothing much may be done, so it was decided at our meeting that the way Family and Friends of Gays can be helpful in making the public aware of the need for every citizen of this great land of ours is to become instrumental in eliminating this dreadful thing called AIDS that is killing our loved ones, and do it now. We, at this moment, do not know how we are going to program this to all media sources, but we will immediately search out all avenues of help in this undertaking. United we stand! If anyone has "connections", let us hear from you. Let us all get busy on this now!

Do you want YOUR OWN SON OR DAUGHTER to be a CRIMINAL?? -- again. Then by all means get busy to stop House Bill (Texas) 21:38, and don't forget House Bill 21:06 either. WRITE to your law makers and ask them to vote against these bills-- and keep on writing-- to every politician that you can. If you need help with this, please call 464-6663, but do it and do it now. Don't wait until it is too late.

Our next meeting is June 19th at 2:15 p.m., the day after the reception. See you there!

P.S.

5-26-83

House Bill 2138 is no longer a worry. Remember though that there is always a chance of another bill being presented so keep a watch on our law makers by letting them know how you feel about these issues. Keep the names and addresses that you received in the mail.

Family and Friends of Gays Houston, Texas

President: Freda 464-6663

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Secretary: Georgia

Treasurer: Dick

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Call 464-6663 for directions or information.

Issue #7

NEWSLETTER

July, 1983

Family and Friends of Gays next meeting will be Sunday, July 17th at the Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale. For directions or information, please call 464-6663; or 353-4792 for Spring, TEX

Gay Pride Week is behind us now until next year. What celebrations! What fun and enjoyment! How exhausting! Yes, we are tired. We enjoyed all of the celebrations we were able to attend, and really appreciated the professionalism that went into planning these events. So many organizations were represented--many working together. The Interfaith Memorial at NCCR was beautiful and touching. I doubt if there was a dry eye there. The Montrose Symphonic Band with the Dallas Symphonic Band, along with other groups was splendid and ended with tears. We enjoyed the reception that Family and Friends of Gays hosted, as much as the gay community did. These people are our children, and our friends! It is nice to get together and celebrate.

The Gay Pride Parade was the largest ever. Several other states were represented, along with several other Texas cities. The floats were something to be proud of. The crowd along the parade route was very receptive of us.

Many people worked long and hard to put Gay Pride Week and parade together, and we thank all of them for a splendid job well done. A special thanks to Larry Bagneris who pulled it all together.

From donations at our reception at Liberty Bank, Family and Friends of Gays are able to give \$50.00 to the KS/AIDS Foundation for printing information and literature to educate the public about the needs of victims and research right now. We wish we could have added another couple of zeros to that amount! The son of one of our members is an AIDS victim so we have very special feelings about this.

At our June 19th meeting we reviewed our last months activities and plans for the International Convention of Parents Flag in New York City in October. Freda is definitely attending, and hopefully Dick. We hope more will go. Freda has been in contact with our International President, Adele Star, and has been contacted by Jean S. in Pensacola, FLA to represent the South Central and South Eastern United States. This is Freda's first time at the convention, so keep her in your prayers.

At our June meeting, Dick was elected our new treasurer to replace John who has left us. We know Dick will do a good job. Thank you, Dick!

Getting back to the convention-- going takes money. We need to raise the money for the expenses we will have such as registration fees, transportation, hotel, meals, etc., etc., etc., and the Gay community needs to help us again. There are some organizations of gay professionals out there that could help us a lot, and hopefully will. We are the only non-gay organization in the gay community who supports your right to be gay. We are your parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and even your children. We all have someone gay that we love very much, and support his/her personal, private, civil, and public rights. Will you send us to the convention so we can learn better how to give you this support?

WE WILL SEE YOU SUNDAY AT THE MEETING.
PLEASE BE THERE.

Family and Friends of Gays Houston, Texas

President: Freda 464-6663
Vice Pres.: Betty

Secretary: Georgia
Treasurer: DICK

Issue #9

NEWSLETTER

September, 1983

Family and Friends of Gays will not have a meeting in September.

We continue to get many calls from families who are distressed upon learning a child is gay. Most we can handle ourselves, but unfortunately none of us are able to converse in Spanish. We have learned that the Gay Switchboard can help us out there. Thanks to them. This tells us that we really do need those Hispanic families that we have been hoping to get into our organization.

CONTINUED FFOG GARAGE SALE AT MONTROSE JAM

HELP We made a little money on our garage sale, but not nearly enough to send two delegates (or one) to the convention. We will continue the sale next Sunday. We also need gay organizations, churches, and businesses to help us as we are the only non-gay organization in Houston that strongly support gay rights!!!

Our dues to the International (Parents Flag) need to be paid now for us to have a vote at the convention. We are prepared to offer Houston for the convention next year, so please support us there.

Freida and Frank attended a Celebration of Freedom honoring gay/lesbian lobbyists in Austin, Ms. Betty Naylor, and Lesbian and Gay Advocates in Texas at the Meridian Hotel on August 30.

Freida, Frank and Dick attended the screening and endorsement of candidates for the upcoming city election. Dick is himself a candidate for Mayor of Houston.

Quote of a quote and then a quote from Phoenix newsletter: "a different world cannot be built by indifferent people. I wondered why somebody didn't do something. Then I realized that I was somebody," and "Moral Majority is at it again. Jerry Falwell is now preaching that God's punishment for being gay is AIDS. People show their character very clearly by what they ridicule or laugh at. Phil Donahue had a very informative program recently about AIDS." Also a quote from NOW THAT YOU KNOW by Betty Fairchild and Nancy Hayward: "Whenever a parent or child will not listen or talk to the other, the flow or comfort of learning that would help them both is closed off. Coming to an understanding of our gay children is not something we parents can do by ourselves--nor is it something our children can do for us. What a family must do is work it through together, with as much open communication as possible (listening as well as speaking) and with honest expressions of feelings, questions, and personal experience by both parent and child. The people who respond well, who come through it successfully (and those from whom we continue to learn much ourselves) are those who, no matter how distressed initially, are willing to make an effort."

Quote from Los Angeles September newsletter:

"THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT ON TRANSMISSIBILITY OF AIDS AND RISK OF AIDS TO THE GENERAL POPULATION

"Although the cause or causes of AIDS is still unknown, evidence gathered by the Centers for Disease Control and others, shows that AIDS seems to be spread sexually, or by blood or blood products.

"There is no evidence to suggest that casual social contact with AIDS patients or with healthy members of groups at increased risk for AIDS has resulted in acquisition of AIDS. By casual social contact we mean shaking hands, hugging, working with or otherwise being near others. In addition, there is no evidence for airborn spread (which includes coughing and sneezing). This is strongly supported by the failure to identify cases among friends, relatives and co-workers of AIDS patients who are not themselves independently at increased risk.

"Because of presumed spread of AIDS sexually we have distributed risk reduction guidelines

*Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
Houston, Texas*

President: Freda 464-6663
Vice Pres: Betty

Secretary: Barbara
Treasurer: Frank

Issue 11

NEWSLETTER

November 1983

Meetings are held on the third Sunday of each month at 2:00 P.M. - Presbyterian Church Center, 41 Oakdale, Houston, Texas.

What do you think of our new name? All groups across the country are asked by our National office to use the National title of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays so we will all be identified as the same people with the same purposes. Houston is happy to conform even though we will all need to learn a new name. Hopefully we will learn quickly. Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (Parents Flag) continues to grow. New groups are added rather rapidly. There is a saying that "gays are everywhere" and so are we. More people are accepting and supporting their gay children the same as their non-gay children and that is as it should be.

At our last meeting we had a guest speaker and friends from the Montrose Counseling Center. They were appreciated by everyone and answered a lot of questions. We so hope they come back another time. They are really good.

We also had a group from Dignity (gays who are Catholic). They are visiting different organizations and we were privileged to be the first group. It was really good to have them as guests. They are a splendid group. We also hope that this will not be the last visit from them. We are already anticipating them being with us again. Some of us are Catholics and they are our friends.

Freda was asked to speak to Aytz Chayim, the gay Jewish group, and it was a most moving experience worshiping with them as well as telling them about our organization. I felt deeply that this is where my religious roots came from and intend to visit them again.

Freda and Frank recently went on a weekend retreat at Surfside with Dignity. It was a very spiritual experience, very sharing, learning and loving. It rained while we were there but no ones spirits were dampened. The sun did shine occasionally. It was also a lot of fun and fellowship. Everyone really enjoyed the weekend and returned to the city better for going.

We will not have a meeting in December. People are too busy with the holidays. Our next meeting will be January 15, 1984.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO EVERYONE

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

CONVENTION

CONVENTION
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CONVENTION

1720 Moritz #24
Houston, TX 77055

President: Freda 464-6663

Secretary: Barbara

Vice Pres: Betty

Treasurer: Frank

Issue 14

CONVENTION
NEWSLETTER

MARCH, 1984

Meetings 2:00 P.M. the third Sunday of each month - Presbyterian Church Center,
41 Oakdale, Houston, Texas.

The big news again this month is CONVENTION -- THIS IS THE MONTH OF PARENTS FLAG CONVENTION, MARCH 30th and 31st!, yes, 1984 at the HOLIDAY INN, 2100 MEMORIAL DRIVE in, yes, HOUSTON, TEXAS, and it will be a good one and very educational for everyone. The cost for the convention and banquet is only \$50.00 per person. Banquet is only \$35.00 per person. Make reservations NOW - Call 464-6663.

"The Board of Trustees of New Ways Ministry, Inc. deeply regrets the recent pressure exerted by Archbishop James A Hickey, the local ordinary of Washington, D.C., upon the Society of the Divine Savior and the School Sisters of Notre Dame in an effort to curtail the involvement of two of their members in this successful work on behalf of sexual minorities. Robert Nugent, SDS, and Jeannine Gramick, SSND, with the continued support of their religious congregations, have served invaluable as co-founders and co-directors of New Ways Ministry since 1977. Indeed, all religious who have participated in this sensitive ministry have done so with the approval of their religious administrators.

We deplore the disregard of the insights, charisms and authority of religious communities who discern and seek to minister to the perceived needs of different groups of people. We warmly commend all religious congregations, especially the Society of the Divine Savior and the School Sisters of Notre Dame, for the support extended to those religious who have been involved in this new and much needed ministry of the Church to sexual minorities.

Although the national office of New Ways Ministry is located in the Washington, D.C. Archdiocese, New Ways Ministry as a legal entity is civilly incorporated in the state of Maryland as a non-profit, charitable, educational organization. It has been nationally recognized as a prophetic catalyst through its efforts to bring the sensitive and complex issue of homosexuality to the attention of the Catholic Church community at all levels.

As a ministry deeply concerned with education, reconciliation and justice, New Ways Ministry seeks to promote understanding and theological dialogue, reflective of honest human experience. As a means of accomplishing this we feel that intellectual responsibility demands the presentation of a broad spectrum of sociological, psychological, historical and theological data as it pertains to the issue of homosexuality, in order to convey a realistic picture of the topic in question. It is therefore, with pride and deep conviction that we, the Board of New Ways Ministry, pledge to continue and to expand the work of New Ways Ministry. In addition to the usual workshops, retreats, research, publications and the Catholic Coalition for Gay Civil Rights project, New Ways Ministry has just received a grant to undertake a new project concerning members of religious communities and sexual orientation.

In union with others who are experiencing the wave of increased repressive tendencies in the Church, we call upon concerned organizations and individuals to continue and to increase their moral, spiritual and financial support of this vitally important ministry. We especially urge religious congregations, peace and justice groups, parish and diocesan organizations, as well as national Catholic groups and others who have first hand knowledge and experience of our work to join in our efforts on behalf of justice and Spirit-filled renewal within the Church." This article was taken from Bonding; the New Ways Ministry publication.

It is truly unfortunate that this has happened. Their message reaches and comforts so many parents of Gays. Fr. Nugent and Sr. Gramick have been in Houston and they are wonderful speakers. We hope that Arch. Bishop Hickey will reconsider his decision. We as parents of Gay men and women feel that homosexuality is a natural orientation that MUST be considered in all fairness to us and our children. If you wish to write New Ways Ministry about this issue their address is 4012 29th St., Mt. Rainier, M.D. 20712.

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Dr. Norman Pittenger will be at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church at W. Alabama and Woodhead on Monday, April 2, 7:30 P.M. Dr. Pittenger, formerly a Professor of Apologetics at General Theological Seminary in New York City is now a Lecturer in Divinity at King's College, Cambridge University, England. He is a priest, professor, theologian, scholar and author of some 80 books. He is a very interesting person and it is well worth your time to hear this noted man. Only \$3.00 donation at the door. He is being sponsored by Integrity-Houston, Dignity, Lutherans concerned and Metropolitan Community Church. Don't miss him. This article taken from Integrity-Houston, newsletter.

Next meeting of Parents Flag - Houston is APRIL 15, 1984, 2:00 P.M. at the Presbyterian Center.

GARAGE SALE - The Gay Switchboard will have a GARAGE SALE on Saturday, March 24, from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, March 25, from 10:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. The sale will be on the lot at the corner of W. Alabama and Roseland. Please support this group that provides such a service to all of us. Bring what you can to their garage sale.

BRING YOUR PARENTS TO OUR CONVENTION

APRIL MEETING

Parents Flag Regional convention is behind us now. It was not a large convention but it really was a good one. Parents and Lesbians/Gays together. It was very good for both to be together. The workshops all were excellent and well done - very educational for parents and gays. I know that we appreciate each other more now. The love was always there but not the understanding. People who were not there were the losers. People who were gained tremendously. Mayor Kathy Whitmire was unable to attend but Kay Little, the mayor's assistant, represented the mayor and presented a proclamation to Parents Flag - Houston. City Councilman George Greanias honored us with his attendance and spoke to the group. It was nice to have him with us. We thank Councilman Greanias and Kay Little as well as all the people who gave workshops that were so good. We have a great city here. There is no place like Houston to live.

We could not have had a good regional convention without Bill and Jean from Pensacola, Florida and Julina and her husband from San Benito, Texas.

The weekend after the convention Freda, President of Houston Parents Flag, gave an all-day workshop to the Gay and Lesbian Activist Alliance at the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma. Dr. Dan Siminoski, the gay political scientist who has a lawsuit against the FBI to open their files on homosexuals, was in Oklahoma City and Freda was invited to stay over. Dan and Freda spoke together and were interviewed on Channel 9 there. It was a pleasure to be with him and the gay community in Oklahoma City. The gay community there is really united; men and women both involved in everything including a new community center. I met some wonderful people including a man from Tulsa who wants to get a parents group started in Tulsa.

In The Courage to Love, William Sloane Coffin wrote "Aside from their extraordinary contributions to human progress and happiness, what did the following have in common--Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Christopher Marlowe, King James I of England, Sir Francis Bacon, Thomas Gray, Frederick the Great of Germany, Margaret Fuller, Tschaikowsky, Nijinsky, Proust, A.E. Housman, T.E. Lawrence, Walt Whitman, Henry James, Edith Hamilton, W. H. Auden, Willa Cather, and Bill Tilden, the greatest tennis player of his time?

"Some of you no doubt have the answer--they were all homosexual. And why do I bring up this subject, probably the most divisive issue since slavery split the church? Because the once unmentionable has become unavoidable. Christian ministers are claiming authority for the judgment that gay men and women are not only different, but sinfully different; gay men and women are being physically and psychologically abused; they are being excluded from their families, frozen out of churches, and discriminated against in a variety of painful legal ways. We have no choice but to bring up the issue. Straight and gay American citizens, and especially American Christians, can remain neither indifferent nor indecisive." -- The Akron Newsletter.

WHO CHANGES? "When parents are able to accept the reality of having a gay child, they can start a process of changing themselves. It is a hard task and very tiring, but painfully and courageously such parents work at the job of unlearning the old messages and replacing them with the facts of homosexuality. At times they would like to give up, but like a beacon in the storm the love they feel for their child beckons them on. Even though they may be filled with fear and confusion and may say and do things they will later regret, the welfare of their son or daughter remains high on their list of concerns. A circle of love sets the limits for parental behavior, and nothing will interfere with the relationship they have with their child. This deep commitment is the common thread for parents who adjust to and understand their child's sexual orientation. There is no other. They do not want to lose contact with their children psychologically or physically. They see their own actions and reactions as the prime area to be changed, not those of their children." From the St. Louis Newsletter.

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Fourteen corporations are named, seven of which lobby against consumer legislation, and seven of which support anti-Gay groups like Religious Roundtable, Christian Freedom Foundation, Heritage Foundation and the Conservative Caucus.

Those mentioned as supporting anti-Gay groups (whether religiously oriented or not) are AMWAY Corp., R. W. BECKETT Corp., COORS Brewing Corp., DOW Chemical, FLUOR Chemical Corp., MOTOROLA, and SEARS ROEBUCK. COORS, AMWAY, and FLUOR are the "big three" giving the most time and money. (Above news articles taken from the Rochester Newsletter.)

Information
Phone (713) 464-6663

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Meetings - 2 PM Third Sunday
Each Month, Presbyterian Center
41 Oakdale

MAY 1984 NEWSLETTER
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We have recently had six interested parent contacts. One couple attended the May meeting and the others will be at our June meeting. We welcome these new people, sharing our hurts and learning together in healing.

People are still talking about our convention, and Jean Smith from Pensacola, Florida, my co-director has written the excellent report that follows.

PARENTS FLAG, SOUTHERN REGIONAL CONVENTION MARCH 30 - APRIL 1, 1984, HOUSTON, TEXAS

If you're feeling left out and isolated after missing a most meaningful and productive Parents FLAG Southern Regional Convention, we'd like to share some of the experiences with you. Freda Jerell, Director and Jean Smith, Co-director, exchanged ideas by phone, and printed material by mail, but being 550 miles apart, Freda, made all the arrangements and did all the footwork.

Following the excellent workshops and panel discussions, the highlight at the Banquet Saturday night was Guest Speaker, City Councilman George Greanias; and Kay Little, Assistant to Mayor Kathryn J. Whitmire, who read and presented the Mayor's PROCLAMATION to Freda:

WHEREAS, Houston is the chosen site of the Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays Southern Regional Convention; and

WHEREAS, Houston offers all the necessary ingredients to ensure each participant a most successful and interesting visit, and the unique opportunity to share in the Houston experience, giving them a lasting impression of the vitality and spirit which is characteristic of this great city; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the outstanding success of this Southern Regional Convention, each participant shall serve as Goodwill Ambassador for this City, with full power and authority to inform others of the genuine hospitality and friendly atmosphere which prevails in Houston, Texas;

NOW, THEREFORE, I Kathryn J. Whitmire, Mayor of the City of Houston, do hereby proclaim the days of March 30 through April 1, 1984, as Parents FLAG - Houston Convention Days in Houston, Texas, and do urge all citizens to join me in extending cordial greetings and best wishes for a most successful Convention.

What a refreshing treat for us and a lasting tribute to the continuous efforts of ONE dedicated Mother in the Houston area, Freda Jerell. It gives encouragement to all of us in the Southern Region, most of whom are working alone in our own communities. Freda has much support and assistance from the numerous gay organizations in Houston. (Partial secret to her success, but the responsibility has been all hers.) For instance, Jerry, MCC, donated 3 beautiful floral arrangements - Ti Leaves and Bird of Paradise. Linda, MCC, was everywhere photographing the significant events, which seemed to be everything! Following the Banquet, the Parents attending enjoyed visiting two popular gay bars in Houston. It was fun for us, and encouraging to see other gay sons and lesbian daughters openly dancing and enjoying themselves, forgetting some of their own personally painful experiences. That concluded our very exhausting but memorable weekend together.

Now back to the beginning: The \$50 registration included two Continental breakfasts, a luncheon buffet and the banquet, all outstanding feasts. Freda's packets contained reference material from ALA Gay Task Force (including one for Religious

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We shared the Holiday Inn with the National School Board Association Convention. Of course, we observed a few humorous homophobic reactions, but Frank Jerell had some interesting conversations with some of their members while attending our display materials. We were pleased to learn some wanted, and took, our printed material! Thanks, Frank, for your significant contribution.

The workshops and panel discussions included: Gay Senior Citizens; Gays in the Workplace; Communicating With and Relating to Deaf Gays, Ethnic Gays; Handling the News Media; Politics; Psychological Approach to Homophobia; Aids; and Gays and Religion. To coincide with Parents FLAG's theme this year of dealing with religious issues, Freda scheduled an excellent Ecumenical Religious Panel, gay and nongay ministers of MCC, Jewish, Catholic, and Presbyterian denominations to bring us up to date with current attitudes toward our gay sons and lesbian daughters in the various religious faiths.

Rev. Matthew Costello, Priest, Professor, M.S.W., M. Psychology and PhD candidate (Freda's friend) from Notre Dame College in Belmont, CA was the featured speaker and spoke on "The Psychological approach to Homophobia." It was excellent and we all understand homophobia better now and know that we must continue to educate those who have a fear of and a misunderstanding of homosexuality.

In short, it was terrific. Make your plans now to attend the 4th International Parents FLAG Convention in Denver, September 28th. You can't imagine the support from being with other families sharing similar circumstances.

Also consider volunteering your area for the next Southern Regional Conference in March, 1985. No one is expected to do what Freda has done, especially those of us living in small communities. Just sharing with one another is enlightening and rewarding.

The Year of the Church is the theme to which we are adhering. At the April meeting the Rev. Ignacio Castuera, Superintendent, the Los Angeles District of the United Methodist Church, supplied insights that give meaning to the many currents of activity in the relationship between the gay and non-gay communities. Dr. Castuera says he is hopeful because of the struggle about homosexuality. The struggle, he says, brings homosexuality out into the open. "Homophobia is only the tip of an iceberg. The real issue is "HETEROPHOBIA", the fear of any 'other'. In the Church there is always a pulling of nostalgia versus the future." These thoughts are equally applicable to other forms of bigotry and discrimination. To which should be added what the Reverend said at the March 17 United Methodist Convocation in Long Beach, "the word of God IS IN the Bible; but the Bible IS NOT the word of God." (Los Angeles Newsletter)

Have you wondered why is it that Jerry Falwell-who claims to speak for Jesus -- has more to say about homosexuality than Jesus?

Adele Starr, president of the Federation of Parents and Friends had a letter printed in the Wall Street Journal on the Letters To The Editor page February 2, 1984. Please write or call local TV stations, national networks, newspapers, etc. and voice your opinions on shows or written articles that have to do with the gay issue. Write if you like them or dislike them -- but let them know your feelings about what is shown or written and how it comes across to you personally. The Phil Donahue Show has had several programs dealing with various gay issues and does a good job keeping negative opinions from becoming too hostile. That address is Donahue Show, 630 N. McClurg Court, Chicago, IL 60611. Let him know what you like or dislike about those shows. You can do a lot with a written note or letter or a telephone call. Let's do it!

A WORD TO PARENTS:

"The more unsure you are about yourself as a person or as a parent, the more terrifying may be the thought of standing revealed before others as the father or mother of a same-sex-oriented child. This is not merely an impersonal fact that you are considering passing on....All you know is that at all costs this information about your child must be kept secret.

"To your son or daughter, however, this need for secrecy may seem like betrayal. 'My parents are ashamed of me. They are denying before our relatives and friends the person I really am. If my parents really loved me, they would let people know I'm lesbian (gay)'. Mary V. Borhek, Coming Out to Parents (Chico Newsletter)

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LAST MEETING: Dr. Fred Whitam, professor of sociology at ASU was our guest speaker and talked about cultural differences in how homosexuality is treated. Homosexuals in native American groups have been observed as early as the year 1528. Fred has also rated the countries of the world in four categories as to their social tolerance of homosexuals. The categories are: Very Repressive, Somewhat Repressive, Somewhat Tolerant, and Very Tolerant. Cuba, Iran, Libya, Romania and U.S.S.R. are rated very repressive. Australia, Canada, India, United Kingdom and United States are among the countries rated somewhat repressive. The largest group of countries is in the somewhat tolerant group and include East Germany, France, Italy, Israel, Spain, Switzerland and Japan. Countries who are very tolerant include Brazil, Denmark, Egypt, Guatemala, Haiti, Netherlands, Norway, Phillipines, Sweden and Thailand. Phoenix Newsletter

Freda's husband, Frank, has been in V.A. Hospital for five weeks with coronary and malignancy problems but will be coming home soon. We thank all the people who shared their love and concern in so many ways and especially the gay community, particularly M.C.C.R. This is why the newsletter is late this month. Keep us in your prayers, we still need them.



Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Meetings - 2 PM Third Sundays
Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale

Houston, Texas
(713) 464-6663

JUNE 1984

City Council in Houston (by a narrow majority) passed two amendments to the city's affirmative action and civil service laws to add "sexual orientation" to the list of groups protected against discrimination. The list also includes "race, color, age, disability, sex and national origin." This was to pass without a referendum but a Pandora's box has been opened by councilman Ben Reyes, who asked council for a referendum.

Russ Mather, Chairman of the Republican Party of Harris County is spearheading a drive to obtain enough signatures on petitions to call for a referendum. He says that passage of the sexual orientation amendments legitimizes homosexuality. Isn't it about time all our sons and daughters are legitimate?

Parents now is the time to speak out and be heard. When gays are in the news the way they are now Russ Mather, Ku Klux Klan, religious fundamentalists and some city council members do not recognize the fact that every gay man and lesbian woman have parents who love them as much as their non-gay children and that there is no family (including John Goodner's and Russ Mather) that is exempt from having a gay child or grandchild. We would hope that they could love them.

It is true that there are "trash and bums" from both heterosexuals and homosexuals, but there are a real minority on either side. Most people are good. Our gay sons and daughters live good lives the same as other people, and we are proud of them. They may be your doctor, clergyman or woman, policeman or woman, teachers, etc. and you don't even know it. You may even hold them in high regard; perhaps love them. There is no difference between them and anyone else except the sexual orientation that is given to them by the same God that gave us our different sexual orientation. Both are holy and good.

PARENTS BEWARE!! We have learned that there is "Uplift" at River Oaks Baptist Church and "Homosexuals Anonymous" at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, both claiming success in changing homosexuals from the "lifestyles" they have supposedly "chosen" into heterosexuals. We know this. We know that all attempts to change a true homosexual have failed. Some gays have tried it and have been disappointed. We know that no one knows just when a person's sexual orientation is established; whether before, during or after birth. We also know that gays are not recruiters of children or anyone else. Pedophiles are heterosexual. There is absolutely no difference between gays and non-gays except sexual orientation. Everyone puts their pants on the same way. To attempt to change a gay child only brings pain and sorrow to both gays and parents.

While organized religion is the greatest source of homophobia, there is hope for change. We must educate and make the ignorant homophobes aware that the Bible nowhere mentions homosexuality (as distinguished from homosexual acts by heterosexuals); one may search the Ten Commandments and the Gospels in vain for any reference to homosexuality. Why, then, the shrill hatred and abuse from self-appointed moralists in our churches and synagogues? It takes time, but we can show those who really believe the teaching of the Bible that it is they who are immoral in denying expression to our children's true and abiding nature. We must keep on trying.

Rev. Don Lemke, a Lutheran minister who frequently attends POG meetings, was our May speaker. Don told of the efforts of Lutherans Concerned to reach and persuade members of the Church that gays and lesbians are included in the basic precept that all are loved by God take the way they are. Although there are many religious homophobes who act as if they were wiser than God, there are many, including bishops with whom Don has served, who are beginning to understand that all people should be loved, not hated, as they are.

EXCERPTED FROM THE N. Y. C. NEWSLETTER

Dan Harms from Lutherans Concerned - Houston was the speaker at our June meeting, telling us that gays and their families both are involved in Lutherans Concerned and that there are many issues other than homosexuality that they are concerned about. That's the way it should be, and I believe that most of us are. It was a pleasure to have Dan and we hope he, they and

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Gay Pride Week and parade '84 are in the past now until next year. Since Frank was critically ill at the time, there was no one else to show support of parents to the public by being in the parade. Frank and Freda were disappointed. Frank is recuperating at home now and we will be in the parade next year in fact instead of in spirit. We thank everyone for prayers. We know that it is the prayers from so many that is healing Frank. We love you.



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JULY, 1984 NEWSLETTER

Gay Pride Week and parade, the Democratic Convention and the march to the Moscone Center are all in the past now. It was exciting to watch it all on TV, but sad that we could not be a part of it. Next is the Republican Convention so we can get excited again.

We are certainly looking forward to Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays International Convention in Denver Friday, September 28th through Sunday the 30th. We in Houston need to raise funds for two of us to attend. Freda and Pat are ready. Freda is on the National Board of Directors and Pat's son is a member of Denver Parents Flag.

We in Houston would certainly welcome some gays and lesbians as members. Also every gay person who is "out" should encourage their parents to become a Parents Flag member regardless of where they live. If there is not a group where they live they can contact the nearest group and become "long distance" members. We all probably have that kind of members and they are valuable and welcome. Together we can educate and support each other.

63,800 people have signed petitions in opposition to grant job protection to gays in City employment (TWT). There is a possibility that this will lead to voting on a referendum. The ignorant homophobes have come out of the woodwork in large numbers, but we must do all we can to win this one. We cannot let this happen in Houston, Texas. Let's all work together.

We are having a speaker at our monthly meetings now and our membership is beginning to grow again. Rev. Bob Shaibly of Houston's First Unitarian Church was our July speaker and had us spellbound with his excellent and interesting presentation on the history of religion going back to pre-christian times. He spoke about the gods and goddesses in very early religions, stating that there were female gods even before male gods. Sexuality was not frowned upon. In fact, sex was spiritual and practiced in the temples. Rev. Shaibly quoted Ann Frank about her erotic feelings of a young girl. Also Ralph Waldo Emerson's attraction to a young man in his class, which did not prove that either were gay. People should not hide who they are. Be open about yourself. He also said that parents don't make gay children. We hope to have him back again to explore these things more deeply.

We will have an AUGspeaker, yet unknown, and Councilman George Greanias will probably be our SEPT. speaker. We are really looking forward to him to learn more about **WHAT WE CAN DO TO PROTECT THE HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS OF OUR GAY SONS, DAUGHTERS AND FRIENDS.**

From Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Phoenix, Arizona:

Expelled Soviet Author, Tatyana Mananova, in a recent interview stated that there are lesbians in the Soviet Union, but if they are discovered they can be put in mental hospitals and are subject to loss of jobs and designation as unfit mothers. It's not illegal to be a lesbian but it is illegal for a man to be a homosexual. (Phoenix)

Coming Out to Parents, by Mary V. Borhek

"I remember the parents of a gay man saying at a Families of Gays and Lesbians meeting, "Between meetings we kind of forget that Jack is gay, and we get along fine. Then we see the meeting date on our calendar, and it forces us to remember that Jack is gay. Every month we struggle with the decision of whether to come to the meeting and think about his being gay, which makes us feel bad, or not to go to the meeting and forget about his gayness." (Phoenix)

Decisions made by the General Conference (world meeting) of the United Methodist Church regarding homosexuality were all negative and contrary to the beliefs and knowledge and understandings that we have gained and hold dear at PFG. They are as follows:

1. They retained the language in the Book of Discipline that reads "but we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider it to be incompatible with Christian teaching."

2. Another standard for ministers was added: "fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness."

3. No funds will be granted to any person or entity to "promote" a homosexual lifestyle.

4. A new statement was passed for the church which explicitly states that "self-avowed practicing" homosexuals cannot be trained for the ministry, ordained into the ministry, or appointed to a church to serve in the ministry."

But even in the midst of all of this overt and blatant persecution of homosexual persons, we see hope--not for the short term, but for the long term. First of all, out of 1,000 delegates, 405 of them voted by secret ballot in our favor on the final proposition. That is about 400 more votes than we would have had 16 years ago when I left the church as a professor. 11

valuable and welcome. Together we can educate and support each other.

63,800 people have signed petitions in opposition to grant job protection to gays in City employment (TWT). There is a possibility that this will lead to voting on a referendum. The ignorant homophobes have come out of the woodwork in large numbers, but we must do all we can to win this one. We cannot let this happen in Houston, Texas. Let's all work together.

We are having a speaker at our monthly meetings now and our membership is beginning to grow again. Rev. Bob Shaibly of Houston's First Unitarian Church was our July speaker and had us spellbound with his excellent and interesting presentation on the history of religion going back to pre-christian times. He spoke about the gods and goddesses in very early religions, stating that there were female gods even before male gods. Sexuality was not frowned upon. In fact, sex was spiritual and practiced in the temples. Rev. Shaibly quoted Ann Frank about her erotic feelings of a young girl. Also Ralph Waldo Emerson's attraction to a young man in his class, which did not prove that either were gay. People should not hide who they are. Be open about yourself. He also said that parents don't make gay children. We hope to have him back again to explore these things more deeply.

We will have an AUG speaker, yet unknown, and Councilman George Greanias will probably be our SEPT. speaker. We are really looking forward to him to learn more about WHAT WE CAN DO TO PROTECT THE HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS OF OUR GAY SONS, DAUGHTERS AND FRIENDS.

From Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Phoenix, Arizona:

Expelled Soviet Author, Tatyana Manonova, in a recent interview stated that there are lesbians in the Soviet Union, but if they are discovered they can be put in mental hospitals and are subject to loss of jobs and designation as unfit mothers. It's not illegal to be a lesbian but it is illegal for a man to be a homosexual. (Phoenix)

Coming Out to Parents, by Mary V. Borhek

"I remember the parents of a gay man saying at a Families of Gays and Lesbians meeting, "Between meetings we kind of forget that Jack is gay, and we get along fine. Then we see the meeting date on our calendar, and it forces us to remember that Jack is gay. Every month we struggle with the decision of whether to come to the meeting and think about his being gay, which makes us feel bad, or not to go to the meeting and forget about his gayness." (Phoenix)

Decisions made by the General Conference (world meeting) of the United Methodist Church regarding homosexuality were all negative and contrary to the beliefs and knowledge and understandings that we have gained and hold dear at PFG. They are as follows:

1. They retained the language in the Book of Discipline that reads "but we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider it to be incompatible with Christian teaching."
2. Another standard for ministers was added: "fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness."
3. No funds will be granted to any person or entity to "promote" a homosexual lifestyle.
4. A new statement was passed for the church which explicitly states that "self-avowed practicing" homosexuals cannot be trained for the ministry, ordained into the ministry, or appointed to a church to serve in the ministry."

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All social change comes painfully and slowly, and this is certainly no exception. Those of us in this movement must realize that homophobia does not reside in the brain. It resides in the stomach. It has been inculcated into each of us. In order to eliminate homophobia, we must touch people's hearts first of all. We cannot change society all at once. Nobody can. Yet we can change individuals, and this is the work we are about, one by one, if necessary, and eventually we will eliminate hatred and bigotry and prejudice. (Denver newsletter)

Remember our meetings are always on the third Sunday of each month at 2:00 P.M. at the Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale. Our telephone number is (713) 464-6663. Anyone is welcome!

HERE WILL BE A REFERENDUM, IN JANUARY, 1985, ON JOB PROTECTION OF GAYS IN CITY EMPLOYMENT, DECIDED AT CITY COUNCIL AUG. 2

DIANE BERG - CITIZENS FOR UNITED Houston
WILL BE OUR SPEAKER ON AUGUST, 19 2 PM



Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Houston, Texas
(713) 464-6663

Meetings - 2 PM Third Sundays
Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale

August, 1984

Parents FLAG-Houston participated in the Pacific Street Festival on Saturday and Sunday, August 25th and 26th. Dignity invited us to share their table - thanks, Dignity. It was a lot of fun and we saw friends whom we had not seen for a while plus meeting new ones. Some gays also talked to us about their parents. We had ABOUT OUR CHILDREN and our Parents FLAG brochure to give them. We will also participate in the Gay Festival benefit for A.I.D.S. on October 2.

Someone has been kind enough to list Frank and Freda in a swingers magazine and Freda has had many phone calls; not that we mind, but there had been some embarrassed people when they learn that we are not swingers. They and I have laughed together about it though. I am wondering if this listing was instigated through John Goodner, Rev. Davis, Russ Mather or Bill McGlashen or their ilk to discredit Parents FLAG-Houston. It won't work.

Meri Bradley of Homosexuals Anonymous (anti-gay) would like to attend one of our meetings. Whenever I can be certain of a large group of gays as well as our members backing me up, I intend to invite her. Perhaps we can educate her that homosexuality is not bad.

Parents FLAG National Convention is in Denver the last weekend of September. Houston is in need of funds so we must get busy at once.

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FLASH!! Dotti Lamm, wife of Gov. Richard Lamm of Colorado will be a participate at the Convention!

The Democratic Convention in San Francisco attracted many special interest frroups to the city. Among these was Jerry Falwell's "Pro-family" Forum. In an open appeal to the "Pro-family" group Adele Starr at the press conference stated "We appeal to you, Jerry Falwell, on behalf of parents and families everywhere, to stop tearing families apart because a family member is Gay. Do not use relition to hurt our children". Adele Starr and Harlan Adams, national officers of Parents FLAG, delivered speeches at the Rally which followed the National March for Lesbian and Gay Rights. From Harlan Adams speech we quote "People tell me 'it's alright if they just don't flaunt it'. I looked up "flaunt" and it means 'to display with pride'. So I tell you today that I flaunt my gay son and his lover of 12 years". Adele made a telling point when she said "We have learned there is no choice. If there is any choice, it's God's choice!!" The purpose of the March was to focus national attention on 12 specific points that would establish equal rights for lesbians and gays. Also the March was to adknowledge the Democratic Party for including Lesbian/Gay Rights in its National Platform for the 1984 elections. (Los Angeles, CA Newsletter).

Los Angeles Times, in the Opinion Section on 18 July printed an article by Morton Kondracke, executive editor of the magazine "New Republic". The title was "Homosexual Rights: The Democrats Just Can't Say "No" to Pressure." Kondracke zeroed in on gays and showed his ignorance of gay persons with the following outrageous commentary: "Slowly but inexorably the Democratic Party is becoming a vehicle, as the Republican Party is not, for the advancement of gays to equal acceptance and political power. What's wrong with this? What's wrong in part is that full acceptance of gays will lead to acceptance of the pathologies connected with the gay life style, including promiscuity and sado-masochism." Well, for sure some gays are promiscuous; and some are sado-macoshists. Does that mean that ALL are? Some hetrosexuals are also; does that mean all are? Some heterosexuals are not stupid; does that mean all are? We have contacted Morton Kondracke at the New Republic, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 protesting his homophobic article. We urge you to do the same. (L.A. Newsletter)

NO WELCOME MAT FOR MORAL MAJORITY: The Family Forum, sponsored by Falwell's Moral Majority and the Free Congress Foundation, met in San Francisco a few days before the opening of the Democratic Convention. The forum included a section purported to inform the participants on "the threat of homosexuality." Last year, Falwell called the AIDS epidemic

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VIOLENT DEATH OF GAY MAN: A gay man who was attacked by youths screaming "faggot" and "queer" dies yesterday (August 1, 1984) of brain injuries at San Francisco General Hospital. Police said the four attackers had no apparent motive for killing John Dennis O'Connell, 40, other than the belief that the man was gay. A long-time friend, Andrew Woodward, who had been walking with O'Connell told the Chronicle, "I was lucky. I got away by creating a lot of hysterics. But they got my friend, hit him hard in the face. He fell into the gutter and hit his head on the concrete." Police said the youths laughed and then fled.
(from the SF Chronicle 8-2-84)

JON SIMS' MEMORIAL: A celebration of the life of Jon Sims was held Friday, August 3rd, at Grace Cathedral. The event honored the founder of many of the city's prominent gay musical organizations. Jon died July 16th in San Francisco of AIDS. In June of 1978, Jon Sims founded the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Marching Band and Twirling Corps. Dozens of gay musical organizations have since sprouted up across the United States as a result of his vision. Jon inspired thousands of persons to use their musical ability as a vehicle for sharing their gay pride. (from the Bay Area Reporter 7-26-84)

The State Press, ASU newspaper, had an excellent article by Don Slutes on June 14th about Gay Pride Week promoting the rights of individuals. Some excerpts of the article follow: "One of the most maligned, misunderstood and reviled minorities in human society is trying to muster some pride this week - with my best wishes. Because gay is O.K. -- Gays in America still face a tremendous battle for the acknowledgement that they deserve the same rights that belong to every other citizen. And this acknowledgement is only a first step in what looks to be a long, long climb to unequivocal social equality. While the ruling classes have agreed to confer equal status upon the rest of society's second-class citizens, gays remain in the dark. The feeling that gays are somehow subhuman and not entitled to comparable rights persists among many powerful people." And the last paragraph as follows: "As any civil rights activist will tell you, a group's struggle for equality benefits everyone in the long run. The current gay rights movement, when successful, will be a victory for every citizen's individuality." (from Phoenix, AZ newsletter)

HOW DO I TELL THEM?

LOVE ME, DON'T HATE ME---ACCEPT ME AS I AM
FOR I AM STILL A WOMAN---I AM STILL A MAN
HOLD ME CLOSE TO YOU---AND DO NOT CAST AWAY
THE HAPPY YEARS OF MEMORIES---BEFORE THIS BITTER DAY
TALK TO ME AND THRU YOUR TEARS---TRY TO UNDERSTAND
I'M NOW A HAPPY WOMAN---I'M NOW A HAPPY MAN
SHARE MY HOPES AND SHARE MY DREAMS---WHATEVER THEY MAY BE
AND I WILL DO MY VERY BEST TO MAKE YOU PROUD OF ME
MY LIFE IS SET, I CANNOT CHANGE AND WOULDN'T IF I COULD
FOR I'M AT PEACE WITHIN MYSELF, IF YOU ONLY UNDERSTOOD.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN
(from SF Newsletter)



Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Meetings - 2 PM Third Sundays
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Houston, Texas
(713) 464-6663

SEPTEMBER, 1984 NEWSLETTER

Our good and open-minded City Councilman, George Greanias, was the speaker at our September meeting. He spoke on the referendum, which could or could not take away the rights of our sons and daughters employed in City government. He said that there will be a lot of bad things said by some people, but the best things we can do is remain calm and know that it is going to take a lot of money. Councilman Greanias answered many questions that we had so we all understand the seriousness of voting in this referendum. We all enjoyed having Councilman Greanias with us. Our members who were not there are really losers. He is a wonderful man.

Parents FLAG-Houston voted to plan a fundraiser for the referendum (with the help of our gay friends). Councilman Greanias said we should plan this event to be after the November election.

In the Southern region of Parents-FLAG, which is from the East coast through Arizona, we now have 33 groups or hotlines. Oklahoma now has contacts in Tulsa and Oklahoma City. Welcome! Every state in the South is represented. It has been my pleasure and privilege as Director of this region this year. We are a big family.

The big news at the moment is our International Convention in Denver, Colorado, September 28 - October 1. Pat and I are going from Houston. It will be very educational, tiring and enjoyable. The speakers are the best from every segment of the professional and religious world. Members are attending from as far away as England, Denmark, Sweden and Hawaii. Good news when we return.

LIFESTYLE: We who are gay have learned some bad lessons about scripture. Trained in a society, that too often uses the bible as a "rule book", we are told frequently what the rules are, but seldom encouraged to understand the Word of God. Having then been programmed with culturally biased perceptions of the scriptural teaching about homosexuality, it often has been difficult for us to gather sufficient courage to study the bible for ourselves. It has been easier for many of us to reject the whole of scripture using the commonly available excuses of the day (...it's ancient and outdated.. mistranslated..open to any interpretation). Yet within us, as within all of human kind, there lies that genuine desire to know what is right and to follow the truth. Traditionally the Church has taught us (directly or by inference) that we may be either Christian or Homosexual, but that the two are mutually exclusive. However, there are other issues about which the church has been historically in error concerning oppression of "minorities" (e.g. slavery, racism, sexism). And as the Church of Jesus Christ has begun to look anew at this issue of Homosexuality, there is a growing opinion throughout Christendom that our past teaching has been conditioned by our cultural prejudice than by our biblical understanding. Gay and non-gay Christians are beginning to take a fresh look at those passages which long have been used to alienate and frighten gays and lesbians. Though the opinions of theologians are still divided, there is a growing abundance of biblical research which encourages us to be bold to seek God's truth without fear of condemnation. Jesus said that we shall know the truth and the truth shall set us free. Our experience of seeking God's truth has been entirely freeing and we hope that in the weeks to come you will find freedom in the

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(From "Gay Times" the Lubbock Lesbian/Gay Alliance Newsletter of 9-84).

Please plan to attend our October meeting, as we wil be back from Denver with lots of news from the convention and about what's going on elsewhere.



Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

Meetings - 2 PM Third Sundays
Presbyterian Center, 41 Oakdale

Houston, Texas
(713) 464-6663

OCTOBER, 1984 NEWSLETTER

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (Parents FLAG) National convention in Denver, CO, is in the past now, but it was a wonderful affair. The workshop speakers were top quality from across the country - Dr. Mary Calderone, Bishop Wheatley, Dr. Charles Arehart. Ralph Bice, Jr., Mary V. Borhek, Marion Gay Bossart, Dr. Donald Bossart, Betty Caldwell, Dr. Norma Kearby, Rev. Merrill Folaresbee, Rabbi Steven Foster, Rev. Julian B. Rush, Rev. Jan Adams Spakr, Mayor Frederico Pena, and the list goes on and on and includes educators, scientists, psychologists, authors, artists and musicians and more. The estimated attendance was about 500 from across the country. Many, many lesbians and gays attended and some gave workshops

It was good to renew friendships from last year and meet new people, some of whom we have had conversations with by phone. We are all tired, but looking forward to next years convention.

The national board voted to continue our outreach and education to all religious denominations and to have the same outreach to all politicians to insure acceptance of our gay children and friends. We refuse negative considerations. We want the best for our loved ones, whether gay or non-gay.

* * * * *

In the prologue to her book (The Courage to Grieve), Judy Tatelbaum quotes from THE PROPHET, by Kahil Gibran: "Your joy is your sorrow unmasked. And the selfsame well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears."

It is these experiences that threaten to destroy us which can also open us up to the most intense experiences of growth and ultimate joy. I want to emphasize that word "ultimate". Because growth can be painful, sometimes we try to avoid it. Joy comes only after we have submitted to the growth.

Any experience that wounds has the potential for cracking open the tight, constricting husk that often imprisons a part or all of one's soul. Confronting your child's same-sex orientation is one of these experiences. You will not escape the confrontation without pain. Your only choice is whether the pain is going to be destructive to you, to your enjoyment of life, and to your relationships with your child, or whether you are going to allow the pain to be a constructive influence in your life. Are you going to allow it to open you up? Are you going to allow yourself to grow? Are you going to come to grips with this unwelcome circumstance and make it into something that broadens and deepens your life?

None of us wants to experience the destruction of his or her hopes, dreams, goals. It seems to us that a dark cloud has descended on us, obliterating the familiar landscape about us. Before us stands a bleak, forbidding door that promises us nothing but separation from everything we had hoped for. We can choose to remain outside this door for the rest of our lives, but we cannot go back to life as it was before. We can also, by our own volition, step through the doorway. Probably the majority of parents of same-sex oriented children are dragged, protesting, through the doorway into what may seem to us to be the utter void on the other side.

"There was no strain of music from within, no smell of eternal orchids at the threshold," C. S. Lewis wrote about his experience of being "dragged through the doorway" as his atheism yielded reluctantly to faith. Each of us at some time in life is dragged through a doorway he or she would not have chosen. We see only what we believe is the everlasting extinction of our dreams. We cannot imagine that there will ever again be music or fruitful orchids in our lives.

There can be joy on the other side of bleakness, of darkness. How could I have known that out of divorce and then out of learning of my son's gayness would come some of the most fulfilling experiences of my life? It can happen. There is no reason why it should not.

One final recommendation is important: Start now! For a time denial may be necessary for you to survive. Do not make it a way of life. Begin to take hold of the circumstance that has befallen you. Act now. None of us knows what time allotment she or he may still have in which to accomplish this reconciliation of his or her feelings. (Coming Out to Parents - A Two-Way Survival Guide for Lesbians and Gay Men and Their Parents) Mary V. Borhek.



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NOVEMBER, 1984

All of us are still thinking about and talking about the National Convention. Phoenix, Arizona Newsletter has a wonderful report on the affair and some other news that Houston is proud to pass on. Thank you Phoenix.

"THOUGHTS ABOUT THE CONVENTION It was snowing when we arrived in Denver creating a real winter wonderland, and the whole weekend continued to be a very special time. Four large banners of welcome to Parents coming to Denver for the convention were put up in the airport after paying a fee of \$100. These were all torn down the following morning before most of us arrived. When the speaker told us about this and asked what we should do, a voice cried out from the back of the room "Put up more banners".*****Federico Pena, mayor of Denver, welcomed we Parents to Denver. He won the election by only 4,000 votes with the support of many from the gay community. Thru his efforts for equality and civil rights for all progress is being made in Denver.*****The first time the word homosexual was used was in 1893.*****Dr. Mary Calderone, author and former President of the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States, said when science discovers what makes people heterosexual then we'll know what makes someone a homosexual. Homosexuality is usually known by age 8. People who hate homosexuals love to hate, and many who love to hate are Christians. A male fetus has an erection every 90 minutes from the age of 17 weeks on.*****Bishop Wheatley told us to be careful who we give the power to to define who we are. Also we need to reverence the reverences of other people.*****The lesbian physician who told us she had been going to medical and church conventions for over 25 years and this was the first time she had felt she really belonged.*****The swan was chosen as the symbol for the convention. A beautiful large ice carving of a swan was in the foyer of the ballroom when we were having the banquet Sunday night. Later between dinner and dessert the waiters and waitresses each came in holding high a tray that had a small ice carved swan with a candle inside, and then we were told the reason the swan had been chosen as the symbol. Hans Christian Anderson wrote the story "The Ugly Duckling" and it is thought the story was of his own personal change into accepting himself. And there were no ugly ducklings in that room Sunday night--just beautiful swans.*****Saturday night a variety program was presented for the Parents. A festival chorus of 140 voices from the Denver Gay Chorus, Lesbian Chorus and Parents sang at the end of the program. There were over 1,000 people in that ballroom counting the audience and performers, and it's impossible to describe the feelings we shared in that large room in reaching out all around us.*****I had tears in my eyes so many times during that weekend as it was such a deeply moving experience, and I saw fathers and mothers also moved as I was. A physician sat beside me at the banquet and said the Parents conferences are different from any he's ever gone to and he thinks it's because we Parents are so honest. He said we didn't have to say we have a gay son or lesbian daughter, but we have.*****Probably one of the best things for me is having met so many people who I know now are working in various parts of the country for the same things we are working for here in Phoenix. Our bond with each other is so deep because we're bonded together out of love for our children. (Phoenix)

PARENTS OF THE HOMOSEXUAL by Switzer "If you are angry, just say so to your son or daughter. Try to be in touch with the intensity of the hurt, the shattered dreams, the frustration, the wanting it to be different but feeling helpless and afraid. These feelings should be shared between husband and wife and between parent and child. Remember these are the original source of your anger, and when these other emotions and the experiences that produce them are fully felt and talked about and begin to diminish, the anger also will gradually diminish and usually disappear. Also be aware of the fact that a part of love is revealing ourselves even

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The City Human Relations Committee will meet on Thursday, November 8th, at 4 P.M. in conference room A at the main library at Central and McDowell. Carl Brown was appointed to the committee and spoke at the Parents meeting several months ago. There may not be an opportunity for anyone from the

audience to speak, but it is important that we be there if possible to show our support for changing the ordinance to make it illegal to discriminate against gays and lesbians in housing, jobs, etc. (Phoenix) Houston has a referendum coming up for vote in January. We MUST be aware of meetings such as this in Houston--and attend them to show our support.

The following was taken from a pamphlet distributed by the NF/PFOG National Committee on Social Concerns & Human Rights: One of the problems we face in getting gay civil rights legislation passed in the United States is that many members of Congress have never heard from a gay person (or from parents of G&Ls). Thus, most Congresspeople have heard very little about gay rights from their constituents. They are not going to take the necessary initiative unless they feel there is a constituency back home which wants them to do so. For example, we know a Congressperson who changed his mind on a bill after getting only a dozen letters. He just did not know anybody wanted him to support the bill before! We can make a difference! Without out input, opponents of gay rights can point to the lack of letters, telegrams, and calls to bolster their arguments. Letters to Congress are effective. President John F. Kennedy told a group of editors in 1963: "I think letters have an affect on members of Congress. Everybody's vote counts in America, but those who sit down and write letters make their votes count more times...Nothing is more effective than a letter that reflects both an understanding of the question involved and a sincere expression of a personal viewpoint based on that understanding." Remember that on many issues, even important ones, members of Congress receive very little mail. This has been especially true of gay civil rights. Thus, those who express their opinion magnify their influence with members of Congress...All members of the Congress can be addressed as:

The Honorable _____
House of Representatives Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable _____
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
(Phoenix)

Following is part of a welcome printed in Denver's gay "Up Front", September 28th: In recent years there has been a quiet movement in dozens of cities across the country that promises to have the most profound impact on the movement for gay rights and gay liberation. In churches, in living rooms, in donated meeting rooms, men and women who have gay and/or lesbian children are coming together to heal the pain of shattered expectations, to share information that helps dispel homophobic myths, to fortify themselves so they can help their children in their ongoing fight for dignity and live lives richer with opportunity. The voices of the men and women who have brought gay children into the world are beginning to be heard in places that openly gay men and women cannot effectively reach--in churches, among neighbors, in political groups, at family gatherings, in the mass media. Many of the moms and dads who loved us in childhood have joined hands with us in adulthood to help make our lives richer, safer, and more honest. As gays and lesbians courageously come forth to speak out on the issues that most affect us, our movement has gained our most powerful ally of all - parents who love us enough to add their voices to ours in demanding a more humane, more loving, more opportunity filled world. In the places where our own voices will be drowned by intolerance, the voices of our parents can ring out loud and clear. In places where our deeds are shunned, the deeds of our parents may lay new foundations for progress. In places wherer our ideas are ignored or rejected, those of our parents will receive thoughtful consideration. We at UP FRONT extend a hearty welcome to the moms and the dads and the friends of gay people who are in town and wish you a pleasant trip to our fair city. And we also congratulate everyone on the local end for your outstanding work in organizing this monumental convention. We believe we echo the voices of tens of thousands of Colorado's gays and lesbians when we say a simple, but heartfelt, "Thank You!"

Parents FLAG-Houston had planned a fund raiser for the referendum, but with Frank so sick for so long and now Betty also sick, it looks like it will have to be delayed for some time. Perhaps early next year we will be able to do something. Freda is now making appointments and speaking with as many pastors and Rabbis as possible about our children and the referendum.

We do not have a meeting in December, so we will be back in the New Year. Parents FLAG-Houston wishes the happiest, healthiest and holiest holidays to everyone!

The Honorable
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
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