

PFLAG FLYER

PO Box 53796

Houston, Texas 77052-3796

(713) 867-9020

July 1995

Next Meeting July 9

A Celebration of Affirmation

Are you tired of the myths and stereotypes?

Are you tired of reading about the tragic lives of gay men and lesbian women?

Are you a new parent who desperately needs to know that there is good news?

Have you recently come out and feel alone and discouraged?

Are you ever despondent by the thought of how far we have to go?

Do you ever wonder what is the driving force that keeps families and friends working so hard for PFLAG?

If you answer yes to any of the above questions, you need to be at the July meeting. This meeting will be an affirmation meeting. We all know hundreds of stories about how homophobia hurts us all. Now is the time to share positive, hopeful, surprising, courageous and self-affirming stories.

Bring your family, friends, and neighbors with you. Good feelings and good news needs to be shared with all. We cannot afford to keep things to ourselves. This is your opportunity to speak in a caring, supportive environment. Who knows who you might tell next!

PFLAG small group discussions, including a special group for first-time visitors and groups geared towards HIV+ as well as Straight Spouse Support, follow the program. These sessions are the heart of PFLAG, with families sharing their journeys and learning from each other. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting! Come join us!

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Farewell from Stuart Hoke

An Open Letter to PFLAG Houston

The following letter was delivered to PFLAG Houston from the former Rector at Saint Francis Episcopal Church on his



May 7, 1995

The 4th Sunday of Easter

Dear PFLAG members and special friends of Saint Francis,

Today I celebrated my last Sunday as Rector of Saint Francis. In my sermon I spoke of standing around the altar of God in company with all sorts and conditions of colorful humanity, celebrating the great freedom that comes from owning the Truth. I had you there in spirit. I knew you would be here this afternoon, and I thought of you a number of times during the Eucharist. How very happy I am that Saint Francis could open herself to your presence and ministry. I hope you have found here a warm and hospitable space where it has been possible to reach out to one another and to reveal your special gifts.

I leave next week to enter a new phase of ministry in the Episcopal Church. After twenty-three years as a parish priest, I am about to do something wild and crazy by entering full-time graduate study at the General Theological Seminary in New York City. I hope to earn the academic credentials required for teaching at the seminary level, and my field of interest will be Ascetical Theology, or Christian Spirituality.

You may be interested to know that the General Theological Seminary is the oldest and most revered seminary of the Episcopal Church. As a bastion of learning and a champion of Anglican tradition, there are no equals. Recently General Seminary's Dean, Faculty and Board of Directors surprised the Church by adopting a new housing policy for students. Not only does it honor married couples who want to set up house together, these days it also honors same sex couples who choose to be together for graduate theological education. I am pleased to be entering a community where this kind of openness and sensitivity is actively practiced.

Your presence at Saint Francis has blessed us in ways that you are probably not even aware of. Many of our people struggle with issues relating to sexuality—be that their own sexual identity or that of family members—ask lots of questions about you and seek all kinds of

Upcoming Events

- | | |
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2:00 PM-4:30 PM
St. Francis Episcopal Church
345 N. Piney Point Rd. |
| Aug. 6 | PFLAG Meeting |
| Sept. 10 | PFLAG Meeting |
| Sept. 28 - Oct. 1 | PFLAG National Convention in Indy, IN
(More info next month!) |

Jewish Group Recognizes Same-Sex Marriages

The fourth largest Jewish denomination in North America, the Jewish Reconstructionist Movement has approved same-sex marriage.

The Reconstructionist Movement is an offshoot from Conservative Judaism and makes up just over two percent of North American Jews. They opened a rabbinical seminary in the late 1960's and have always ordained women, gays, lesbians, and (presumably) bisexuals. At the rabbinical association meeting a few years ago, congregations were invited to go ahead with same-sex marriage (without mandating that they have to.)

The Reconstructionists are little known outside of Jewish circles but are enormously influential among the non-Orthodox. The founder, Mordecai Kaplan, is one of the greatest Jewish thinkers of this century, formerly a faculty member at the Conservative movement's seminary.

It is by far and away the fastest growing Jewish denomination in North America and is fully recognized by the State of Israel (its converts are recognized for the purposes of the law of return) and the communal structures here in North America, like the United Jewish Appeal, Hillel (campus ministries), and the federation umbrellas. (In other words, the Orthodox may protest if JRM is used



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Continued in next column



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Your presence at Saint Francis has blessed us in ways that you are probably not even aware of. Many of our people struggle with issues relating to sexuality--be that their own sexual identity or that of family members--ask lots of questions about you and seek all kinds of information about your work and express gratitude that this be one place where it is okay to tell the truth. With these good seeds now planted, maybe someday a few more will gather up the courage to be front and center at your meetings, and

Continued on page 3

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Same-sex marriages are termed kiddushin in Hebrew.



Recyclable Reprint

Editor's Note: Everyday I receive 2-3 electronic mail messages from the following author on news items related to the gay and lesbian community. LelioRisen is his pseudonym on American Online.

Gay and Lesbian Friendly Folk Music

by LelioRisen@AOL.COM

A couple of weeks ago I posted to several newsgroups about the new Peter, Paul & Mary CD "Lifelines". It contained a very gay-friendly duet from Mary Travers and Holly Near, titled "Home Is Where The Heart Is". Today, I am expanding my posting on this, because....as of today....Warner Brothers has released the song as the albums first single! The following was sent to radio stations nationwide today from Warner Brothers records. I am specifically including the part of the release dealing with the songs content:

"Their first single from the new project 'Lifelines' is 'Home Is Where The Heart Is'. A very human song that will touch all of us. In their 35 years together, Peter, Paul & Mary have always been controversial...From being in the fore-front of protest music, straight ahead folk music, their relationship to children (possibly you as a child and also your own children) and today with their concerts always sold out!!

"Today with American Life Styles changing (caps theirs)...we are all trying to hold on to our neighborhoods or get them back and as Crosby, Stills & Nash have said to 'Teach your Children Well'. 'Home Is Where The Heart Is' is that kind of record...poignant, sincere and human. The chorus says it all:

"Home is where the heart is
no matter where your heart lives.
Inside your heart where love is,
that's where you've got to make yourself at home."

I realize that the release does not specifically relate to the gay content. It does not need to, the song is not very subtle about it. In the first 2 lyrics a gay couple and a lesbian couple are introduced. As the singers' young daughter inquires about the couples the mother answers with the above refrain. In the 3rd verse, one of the gay men is left alone (while not totally obvious, the presumption is that he has lost his mate....most likely to AIDS) and the daughter wonders 'where he will live'. In the 4th verse, the surviving man is ill himself and the woman brings her daughter over to read him stories. The little girl becomes the 'string on the kite that leads him into the wind'. As the daughter wonders 'who will take care of him' the mother and daughter take hold of the man and sing the chorus to him to let him know he is not alone. As performed by Near and Travers, with Peter and Paul on guitar, the song becomes a haunting tribute to true family values. Without hitting anyone over the head it eloquently expresses the belief that gay and lesbian homes are no different than any other homes. It is a powerful and important message. As a radio broadcaster myself, I would like to encourage the following steps be taken to help insure that the song gets played on radio stations around the country. First, let me just say that if a station chooses not to play the song, it may have nothing at all to do with homophobia. Peter, Paul & Mary have not had a charted hit in years and it will take a lot to get this played. However, this is possibly their most marketable album...with an all-star lineup...production by Phil Ramone...and a tie in to their current tour and 35 year history. Here is what I would like to suggest:

- 1 Contact Warner Brothers and commend them for their decision to release the single. Let them know that their decision will encourage you to purchase their products in the future and that you intend to purchase the single and CD. They are on-line on AOL with a full messaging system. However, from the Internet you could try writing them at Maxwarner@aol.com If I know of a better email address, I will send it. The phone # is 818-846-9090, fax # is 818-846-8474, snail mail is Warner Bros. Records Inc, 3300 Warner Blvd., Burbank, CA 91505-46594.
- 2 Share this release with as many gays, lesbians, bis (and our friends) as you can. If you publish a paper or newsletter, please include the relevant information. Let the community know about this. Pass the information on to your friends via email.
- 3 Purchase the SINGLE. If the store does not have it (most likely it will not) ask them to order it. Sales of a record will cause a song to chart. Once it charts, more stations will play it, thereby increasing sales. A record such as this needs a jumpstart. I believe the single code is..Warner Bros. Pro-CD-7579-R. Purchasing

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Page 2

like you are part of a record company campaign, because that will negate your effort. I am not aware if Warner Bros. is planning much of a push for this record. I do not think we should wait to find out. When requesting, do the following; First, target your station. This is primarily an Adult Contemporary format record. It is being targeted, essentially, at stations that play the following artists: Michael Bolton, Billy Joel, Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston, Phil Collins, etc...Those are the stations you should be contacting. Second, since this is a new record, don't lie and say you heard it on other commercial stations (unless you did). Say you heard it on a college station, or own a copy, or heard it on a jukebox.

In coming weeks, if the song starts getting played, you can refer to the competition. Third, faxes to the station are even more potent than calling the request line. Don't overhype, just state that you would like to hear the song.

I plan on monitoring the progress of the song and will keep you posted through various newsgroups such as soc.motss. If you know of stations that are actually playing it, please send me the information at LelioRisen@aol.com

Does It Matter?

By An Anonymous
High School Student

My father asked if I am gay.
I asked Does it matter?
He said No not really. I said Yes.
He said Get out of my life.
I guess it mattered

My boss asked if I am gay.
I asked Does it matter?
He said No not really. I said Yes.
He said You're fired, faggot.
I guess it mattered.

My friend asked if I am gay.
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My lover asked Do you love me?
I asked Does it matter? He said Yes.
I told him I love you.
He said let me hold you in my arms.
For the first time in my life something matters.

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- 4 Purchase the album as well. It is called 'Lifelines' and should be readily available in stores. In addition to showing support, the higher the album charts, the better chance the single will get airplay. Besides, it is a brilliant record. Possibly their best.
- 5 Request that your radio station play that record! As one who knows the impact of these things, requests have a lot of weight. However, you do not want it to look

like you are part of a record company campaign, because that will negate your effort. I am not aware if Warner Bros. is planning much of a push for this record. I do not think we should wait to find out. When requesting, do the following: First, target your station. This is primarily an Adult Contemporary format record. It is being targeted, essentially, at stations that play the following artists: Michael Bolton, Billy Joel, Mariah Carey, Whitney Houston, Phil Collins, etc...Those are the stations you should be contacting. Second, since this is a new record, don't lie and say you heard it on other commercial stations (unless you did). Say you heard it on a college station, or own a copy, or heard it on a jukebox.

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My lover asked Do you love me?
I asked Does it matter? He said Yes.
I told him I love you.
He said let me hold you in my arms.
For the first time in my life something matters.

My God asked me Do you love yourself?
I said Does it matter? He said Yes.
I said How can I love myself? I am gay.
He said That is the way I made you.
Nothing again will ever matter.

Notes on Membership Renewal

from Irv Smith, Membership Chairperson

Here are a few notes on membership and renewal. At this time of year we get many questions about how to renew one's membership in PFLAG Houston. The following should answer a few questions.

- 1) You join our local chapter for one year at a time. Your expiration date is shown on the mailing label.
- 2) We occasionally send out reminders that it is time to renew, but you always can do with the form included in each newsletter.
- 3) At the meetings, members register by checking off their name on the clipboard. If overdue, your name won't be listed.
- 4) In that case, just write in your name (and any address/phone update). Get a renewal form from membership desk.
- 5) You do not also need to join or renew as a national member. (It is mainly for people living where no local chapter exists.)
- 6) We send National \$8 annually for each member/couple to enroll them as national members.
- 7) National members automatically get the national newsletter and other items, mailed "open."
- 8) Check the appropriate box on the renewal form if you don't want to get these mailings.

Irv Smith, Membership Committee

Family Letters

Editor's Note: The following excerpts came from a letter from one of our friends at Texas A&M in College Station. Hopefully it will encourage you as it did me regarding the effects of the PFLAG Flyer.

"About the time I think I'm becoming another cynical homosexual, the articles in the PFLAG Flyer make me laugh and cry at the same time while seeing parents and friends cope on a day-to-day basis."

"The choice of Bobby Griffith's mom's story was especially meaningful to me. My freshman year at A&M, when I was still struggling with my sexuality, I did research papers on gay youth suicide for my genetics and English classes with Bobby Griffith as one of my center focuses. The excerpts from his personal journal were enough to make anyone weep - even the most hateful person."

"This is all very important to me as I am faced with the challenge of coming out to my family soon. It's been a year since I came out to my friends and started my own personal journey as an out, gay man. I thrive on the success stories of gay-positive parents and can only hope that my family doesn't go ballistic when I tell them."

"Please keep up the great work because it is so very important to so many people. The positive exposure is essential. **How many times did I wish as a teenage to see a parent who loved and supported their gay child?**"



Notes from the Editor

by Doug Upchurch

Once again I find myself reflecting on the past month as I write these notes. This time it seems as if the time has gone much more slowly than normal. During the past month, I have undergone a major life change. My apartment is clean. Actually my boyfriend, Tyler Reeves, has finally moved here from Salt Lake City. After an 8 month long distance relationship, we are finally in the same town.

What does that have to do with the PFLAG Flyer? I am now learning how people react differently to gay couples as opposed to individuals. Just the existence and example of these relationships remind us of the fact that part of seeking to understand homosexuality is seeking a greater understanding of love.

I am so glad that when I first attended PFLAG I was able to meet several same sex couples as well as many wonderful individuals. The realization that this type of committed loving relationship was even possible was an inspiration to someone recently out of the closet.

Thanks to all the gay and lesbian couples that are examples for us all of the truth that love is love no matter what the gender of those in love.

Please continue to send in your articles or letters for the Flyer. As always, I can be reached at either 528-3684 by phone, 1903 Portsmouth #6, Houston TX 77098 by mail, or DougUp67@aol.com by e-mail! The deadline for the August newsletter is July 21. **Special Thanks to all who helped with the 1995 Pride Parade.** ☺ ♥ ▼

Join Us in the Work of P-FLAG

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

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

Family/Couple: \$40 ____

Individual: \$25 ____

Student/Limited Income: \$10 ____

Your donation is tax deductible

P-FLAG Houston is a Non-Profit

501 (c)(3) organization

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

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

- 3) At the meetings, members register by checking off their name on the clipboard. If overdue, your name won't be listed.
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I / We don't wish to join, but would like to contribute to the work of P-FLAG HOUSTON \$ _ .

Name(s): _____

*Mailing Address: _____

Street Address: _____

City & State: _____

Zip+4: _____

Home Ph: (____) _____ () Please mark

Office Ph: (____) _____ () confidentiality

FAX: (____) _____ () required on

Pager: (____) _____ () these phones.

e-mail: _____ ()

* The P-FLAG National Newsletter will be mailed "open" to this address unless you check here: _____

Please make all checks payable to and mail to P-FLAG, PO Box 53796, Houston, TX 77052-3796.

Together, We Will

by Gail Rickey

As you probably know by now, state representatives voted 70 to 68 to table the Hate Crimes Bill. Please note that contrary to some newspaper reports, there was no actual vote on the bill, but instead, a vote not to deal with it.

Six PFLAGers were on the scene, including four of us from the Houston chapter. While we were deeply disappointed at the outcome—especially, over the House vote to table SB 141, we were very encouraged by the breadth and depth of the support that we heard, both from legislators who spoke to us directly and from representatives speaking on the floor of the House. Steve Wolens, a representative from Dallas, made an eloquent speech on our behalf. Numerous other reps went to the mike to speak up for us.

We came home committed to start working NOW toward the Jan. '97 legislative session. Whatever the relevant issue is by that time—hate crimes or job discrimination or the sodomy law—we will want legislators to vote for laws that are beneficial to us.

Our goal is to (a) educate PFLAG members on the issues, (b) build a relationship with our legislators, educating them as to our concerns, (c) develop allies—friends, neighbors, church members—who will join us in speaking up for equal rights for gays and lesbians.

We'll start to work at the July meeting during the "small groups" portion of the meeting. Whether you regularly attend PFLAG meetings or not, we encourage you to come to this session. We need a diversity of people who will join in this project. We'll define our mission, pool our talents, and get to work!

If you absolutely cannot attend, but want to be counted "in," please call me at 440-0353 and give me your input. I plan to develop a special mailing list of people who want to be part of this team.

Below is an example of a letter written by Ann Chapman after the efforts in Austin by her and other PFLAGers. Feel free to copy and modify as necessary for your use in writing the legislators that supported us. (See related article in next column.)

Dear Representative -----,

I visited with you in your office last week with my friend Gail Rickey, who is one of your constituents. I live in Victoria but now realize that my daughter and her husband are also your constituents. Gail and I were there in support of S.B. 141 (Hate Crimes).

I want to thank you for the time you spent with us and for your respect and compassion. We work tirelessly for the rights of the lesbians and gay men we know and love, and for countless others we do not know, who have so few champions in their quest for justice. Gail and I were impressed with your knowledge and understanding of the issue, and though you felt you could not vote with us on this particular bill, I am hopeful that you will be with us on some future bills.

As I lunched that day in the Capitol, I overheard a House member say that he had voted to table the Hate Crimes Bill because to discuss it further would encourage "all those activists to be up here." His vote was in vain. This straight gay activist grandmother will not be silenced; I will be there many times in the future.

Thank you for proving that there are decent, well-educated, dedicated leaders in Texas. I appreciate you.

Sincerely,

Farewell Letter from Stuart Hoke, Continued from Page 1

active in your service projects. I've also fielded a huge number of telephone calls and letters from other Episcopal clergy asking questions about PFLAG and wondering where information can be found for local congregations. You are very important leaven in the lump, and I pray your work continues to prosper in this community.

I wish I could have been with you today. A gala farewell to my wife and me keeps me away. Thank you for your godly presence and your gifted ministry. May the Lord by his Grace uphold you in whatever service He lays upon you.

PFLAG FLYER

July 1995
Page 3



Let Your Legislator Hear From You

If they didn't vote "with" us, try not to burn bridges, but to let them know your concerns. An excellent example of such a letter is included at the bottom of this page.

Houston Area Legislators Who Voted For SB 141 (or not to table it in House)

Senators: Rodney Ellis (author of bill)
Mario Gallegos
Jerry Patterson
John Whitmire

Representatives: Kevin Bailey
Fred Bosse
Ken Brady (voted not to
table; was probably
against bill, but
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Garnet Coleman
Debra Danburg
Diana Davila
Harold Dutton
Al Edwards
Jessica Farrar
Patricia Gray
Scott Hochberg
Senfronia Thomson
Gerard Torres
Sylvester Turner
Ken Yarbrough

Houston Area Legislators Who Voted Against SB 141 (or voted to table it):

Senators: Buster Brown
Don Henderson

Representatives: Joe Crabb
John Culberson
Gary Elkins
Peggy Hamric
Jack Harris
Talmadge Heflin
Mike Jackson
Kyle Janek
Joe Nixon
Robert Talton
Ron Wilson
Beverly Woolley
(Paul Hilbert was
absent.)



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I wish I could have been with you today. A gala farewell to my wife and me keeps me away. Thank you for your godly presence and your gifted ministry. May the Lord by his Grace uphold you in whatever service He lays upon you.

Faithfully,

Stuart H. Hoke,
Rector
Saint Francis Church

PFLAG Houston received permission to reprint this letter in this newsletter only. Please do not reprint this letter without express written permission from PFLAG Houston.

Hear From You

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Talmadge Heflin
Mike Jackson
Kyle Janek
Joe Nixon
Robert Talton
Ron Wilson
Beverly Woolley
(Paul Hilbert was absent.)



**THANKS TO ALL
WHO WORKED, MARCHED,
AND SWEATED!
1995 PRIDE PARADE
ONE DAY WE WON'T HAVE TO!**

PFLAG FLYER

PO Box 53796

Houston, Texas 77052-3796

(713) 867-9020

August 1995

Next Meeting July 9

What is Sexual Addiction?

This month's meeting will feature speakers from the group Sexual Addicts Anonymous that meets at Bering Church. This particular group focuses on the needs of those that are gay or lesbian. With the many myths and stereotypes that surround this issue, the August meeting will be a time to learn the facts about this addictive condition.

PFLAG small group discussions, including a special group for family members and friends that have recently found out that a loved one is gay or lesbian and groups geared towards HIV+ as well as the Spouse Support Group, follow the program. These sessions are the heart of PFLAG, with families sharing their journeys and learning from each other. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting! Come join us!

INDY95: 14th International PFLAG Convention

The INDY95 Convention begins on Friday afternoon, September 29 and ends on Sunday afternoon, October 1. The shorter schedule saves one night of hotel lodging for most delegates and allows us to make effective use of the time we do have. The convention begins in the first days of Indiana's beautiful autumn which will add, with help from our meteorologists, a special golden glow to convention activities.

With a theme guiding us toward love and acceptance, education and training are on center stage for the Indy95 convention -- the second of PFLAG's three legged stool. The convention will emphasize support, education and advocacy. Friday will zero in on Support and Sunday's emphasis will center on Advocacy. Saturday, the major full day of the convention, will offer many workshops and seminars to enrich our thinking and develop our skills.

The most important element in any convention are the people who attend. Without all kinds of people from all kinds of places, most of us might not want to attend. It's the mix! It's the mix of



entertainment, will get Indy95 off to an exciting start. By late Friday evening, we will be happy we came to Indianapolis. Mel has a great appreciation for PFLAG and dedicated his book Stranger at the Gate to us. Mel who had once ghost written Pat Robertson's autobiography, traveled to Virginia Beach in February to persuade Robertson to change his anti-gay rhetoric. When jailed by the Robertson organization for "trespassing," it was Mel's parents who intervened and persuaded Robertson to visit Mel in the Virginia Beach city jail and arrange for his release. Robertson has since said on his 700 Club that violence against gays and lesbians cannot be tolerated and that because persons may differ in their beliefs, there is no justification for harming each other.

Seminars and WorkShops will deal with such concerns as conflict mediation, religion and homosexuality, AIDS, making campuses, high school and college, safe for lesbian, gay and bisexual students, media skills training, keeping families together, minorities in the gay world, women's issues, educating the community, justice issues, coming out in small communities and rural areas, computer skills, parenting and grandparenting issues, health issues, status of same sex marriages and many more. Special workshops will help local PFLAG leaders plan for and finance effective PFLAG chapters. Suggestions for these seminars and workshops have come from dozens of PFLAG members throughout the US and Canada.

Sunday will begin with a time of spiritual reflection and celebration based on Native American traditions. Sunday morning Forums will enable us to think creatively about issues and concerns in our cities and neighborhoods. The closing Sunday luncheon program will challenge us with the need to be effective advocates of liberty and justice for all.

The dinner and Celebration of Hoosier Pride on Saturday evening in the Indianapolis Convention Center's 500 Ballroom will feature a special program of entertainment starring several of Indiana's well known entertainers. These talented people, many of them from the

Upcoming Events

- | | |
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| Aug. 6 | PFLAG Meeting
2:00 PM-4:30 PM
St. Francis Episcopal Church
345 N. Piney Point Rd. |
| Sept. 10 | PFLAG Meeting |
| Sept. 28 - Oct. 1 | PFLAG National Convention in Indy, IN
(See article on p. 1) |
| October | National Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual History Month
(See article on p. 2) |
| Oct. 1 | PFLAG Meeting |
| Oct. 11 | National Coming Out Day 1995 |

dinner program on Saturday evening and for all SkillShops, Seminars, Workshops and Forums on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

For Registration and Convention Information, please contact:
INDY95

PO Box 1406 Anderson, IN 46015-1406
Phone/FAX 317-644-3570
Email: kgprunty@aol.com

First class hotel accommodations at a special rate of \$90 per night for single or double occupancy at the Hyatt Regency Indianapolis will be held until August 29 after which reservations will be accepted on a space available and rate available basis. To make your reservations call 317-632-1234 and be sure to mention that you are attending the International PFLAG Convention so that you will receive the discounted rates.

You will enjoy staying at the Hyatt in the center of Indianapolis. Located just across the street from the Indiana state capitol, the new Circle City Mall and the RCA Dome and Convention Center, the Hyatt provides an ideal setting for our convention.

Look for more information on this convention at the August and September meetings.

Indy 95

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The most important element in any convention are the people who attend. Without all kinds of people from all kinds of places, most of us might not want to attend. It's the mix! It's the mix of diversity, of variety, of people young and old, gay and straight, parents and kids, friends, friends, and more friends. You and a thousand other delegates are the essential elements in INDY95. Come on to Hoosierland!

Mel White, an outstanding communicator and a much published writer and film producer, and special



entertainment, will get Indy95 off to an exciting start. By late Friday evening, we will be happy we came to Indianapolis. Mel has a great appreciation for PFLAG and dedicated his book Stranger at the Gate to us. Mel who had once ghost written Pat Robertson's autobiography, traveled to Virginia Beach in February to persuade Robertson to change his anti-gay rhetoric. When jailed by the Robertson organization for "trespassing," it was Mel's parents who intervened and persuaded Robertson to visit Mel in the Virginia Beach city jail and arrange for his release. Robertson has since said on his 700 Club that violence against gays and lesbians cannot be tolerated and that because persons may differ in their beliefs, there is no justification for harming each other.

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The registration fee if received before August 1 will be \$175 per person (\$220 after August 1). This registration pays for luncheons on Saturday and Sunday and for the "Celebration of Hoosier Pride"

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Indy 95

1995 PFLAG Convention





Recyclable Reprint

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Students' Bill of Educational Rights

1. The right to fair and factual information about sexual orientation in textbooks and other classroom materials.
2. The right to unbiased information about the historical and continuing contributions of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in all subject areas, including art, literature, music, science, sports, and history, among others.
3. The right to positive role models, both in person and in the curriculum; the right to accurate information about themselves, free of negative judgment, and delivered by trained adults who do not only inform lesbian, gay and bisexual students, but affirm them.
4. The right to attend schools free of verbal and physical harassment, where education, not survival, is the priority.
5. The right to attend schools where respect and dignity for all students, including lesbian, gay and bisexual students, is a standard set by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, supported by Boards of Education, and upheld by every principal and classroom teacher.
6. The right to be included in all support programs that exist to help teenagers deal with the difficulties of adolescence.
7. The right to legislators who guarantee and fight for their constitutional freedoms, rather than legislators, who reinforce hatred and prejudice.
8. The right to a heritage free of crippling self-hate and unchallenged discrimination.

Adopted from Project 10 (Los Angeles Unified School District) and Project 21 resources. Project 21, GLAAD/SFBA, 514 Castro St. Suite B, San Francisco CA

October is Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual History Month

Until quite recently, lesbians, bisexuals and gay men were excluded from historical study. In much the same way that women, African-Americans and other ethnic minorities have been erased from the historical record of the human family, the contributions of gay and lesbian people have been, to quote Paul Monette, "buried in shallow...graves." In many cases, key contributions were recognized, but questions of sexual orientations were removed from the official record so as to not offend. The recovery of stolen history is vital to the pursuit of freedom. Several authors have made this point in recent works regarding lesbian & gay history.

- ▼ When, as a lesbian, I "turned to history to help me understand the social arrangements which devalue me, and the lives and resistance of the women before me, I found that history almost entirely unrecorded." Lisa Duggan, "Frontiers", 1979.
- ▼ "Knowledge of Gay history helps restore a people to its past, to itself...The Study of the Gay past raises the question of whether this society can accommodate the demands of America's dispossessed for power and control over the machinery by which they make their lives." Jonathan Katz, "Gay American History".
- ▼ "Our stories have died with us long enough." Paul Monette, "Becoming a Man".

We have begun to create institutions that help us preserve our history. Community-based gay & lesbian libraries and archives, gay/lesbian owned publishing and media, and gay studies programs are just a few examples. Beginning this year, a concerted effort will be made to identify October as Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual History Month. Why celebrate October as Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual History Month?

1. To educate society about the contributions made by lesbians, bisexuals and gays to the history of our world.
2. To reclaim our heroes and heroines whose contributions have been "sanitized" of their sexual orientation to make them palatable to others.
3. To help in the identification of role models for the nation's gay & lesbian youth so that they can see a future where they are valued regardless of their sexual orientation.
4. To preserve the stories of the struggles of everyday men and women for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness against those who would deny this simply because of their sexual orientation.

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Page 2

PFLAG Volunteers Round-Up Calling all volunteers!!!!

PFLAG Houston has become one of the larger and more effective PFLAG chapters nationwide. However, as we continue to grow, we can't do this alone. It requires the effort of each and everyone of us. Events such as the homophobia conference are the results of hard work of many different individuals within PFLAG Houston.

Each month the newsletter will now feature requests for volunteers in a different area. There are many different and exciting areas that we will be moving into in the near future. In order for all of us to be effective in these ventures, we will need the efforts of many volunteers with different skills.

So here is this month's list....

- ▼ PFLAG Houston has been approached by a local gay and lesbian publication to start a monthly column entitled "Dear Mom & Dad." The column will address issues such as coming out, relating to extended family, and other family and friends issues. We currently need a group of individuals willing to share the responsibility of writing the columns each month.
- ▼ Money, Money, Money! Are you good at raising money? We are currently in need of volunteers willing to research, evaluate, present to the board, and implement various fundraising ideas.
- ▼ There are many other times that needs will come up during the month for volunteers. PFLAG Houston will now maintain a list of PFLAGers that are willing to be volunteers when available. If you are interested in being on the volunteer list, please drop a note to VOLUNTEER LIST, P.O. Box 53796, Houston, TX 77052-3796

If you are interested in any of the other opportunities, please call Doug Upchurch or Tyler Reeves at 528-3684 and leave your name, number, & interest.

Lesbian & Gay History Month

c/o Gerber/Hart Gay & Lesbian Library & Archives
3352 N. Paulina
Chicago, IL 60657

Together, We Will

by Gail Rickey

Last month, we called for readers who are especially interested in advocacy to meet together during the "small groups" portion of our July PFLAG meeting. I'm happy to report that more than 30 people attended. This new group, or advocacy team, began laying the groundwork for expanding PFLAG Houston's advocacy work.

One of our goals is to encourage PFLAGers to get to know their legislators, developing ongoing dialogues with them so that they understand our deep concerns. You may hear from a member of the advocacy team from time to time, asking you to write a letter or make a phone call in relation to specific legislation.

Right now, the most important piece of legislation in front of us is ENDA, the Employment Non Discrimination Act, which would prohibit employers from using a person's sexual orientation as the basis for hiring, firing, promotion, or compensation. ENDA exempts small businesses (fewer than 15 employees) and religious organizations, including educational institutions controlled or supported by religious organizations. It does not apply to the uniformed members of the armed forces, which means that it does not affect the law on gays in the military.

A bipartisan effort launched ENDA, introduced on June 23 by Senator Jim Jeffords, (R-Vermont). Senator Edward Kennedy (D—Massachusetts) is a lead sponsor.

Across the county, PFLAG chapters are now setting to work to help build support for ENDA. The top priority is to get legislators signed on as co-sponsors. The Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) has prepared a list of potential co-sponsors, and recommends that advocates such as PFLAGers make their voices heard to those legislators.

Listed below are the Houston-area legislators we want to address. I urge you to pick up a pen, or turn on your computer, or pick up the phone, and contact the following, ESPECIALLY if you are their constituent. If you live in Texas, you are a constituent of the first legislator listed below.

From August 7- Sept. 5 is a "Congressional District Work Period," so you can contact Houston-area legislators in their local offices.*

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Hart Senate Office Bldg., Rm. 703; Washington, DC 20510; 202-224-5922, email: senator@Hutchinson.senate.gov.

Hutchison is not on the targeted co-sponsor list, but we think that ENDA is an excellent topic to approach her with. She has voiced her support for non-discrimination. Let her know how important ENDA is to you. Talk about employment as a fundamental American value: the right of each person to do his or her job and earn a living.

Congressman Ken Bentsen, 515 Rusk, Suite 12102, Houston, TX 77002; 713-229-2244. Bentsen has indicated that he might consider signing on, and that he would definitely vote for ENDA. He has already signed HRCF's statement agreeing not to discriminate in hiring employees in his own office. Your message to Bentsen can be that ENDA is a basic issue of right and wrong, that you appreciate his standing up to the religious right on other issues, and that you urge him to sign on as a co-sponsor to a bill that is so important to you and your family.

Congressman Gene Green, 5502 Lawndale, Houston, TX 77023; 713-923-9961, email: green@hr.house.gov. Green recently signed on as a co-sponsor. Write to thank him and commend him for his stance. Let him know that ENDA is an issue that is very important to you.

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, 1919 Smith, Houston, TX 77002; 713-655-0050. Lee signed on to ENDA early. Write to thank her and to support her in her stance. FYI, Lee was a speaker at PFLAG Houston's first Healing the Hurt Conference in 1994. Make the connection, if you wish. Let her know how important the issue of non-discrimination in the workplace is to you.

Congressman Bill Archer, 1003 Wirt Rd., Suite 311, Houston, TX 77055; 713-467-7493. Archer is not on the potential co-sponsor list, but HRCF recommends that we write him asking that he sign the non-discrimination statement regarding hiring practices in his own office (see Bentsen, above).

Quoting from recent information sent out by PFLAG's national office: "Try to move your representative to the next level of support of gay, lesbian and bisexual people and their families. If your representative will not vote for ENDA, ask him or her for a commitment to not vote at all. If your representative supports ENDA, ask him or her to become a co-sponsor. If your representative is already a co-sponsor, ask him

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Page 3



BOOK CORNER

Instruction Book for Advocacy

"How to Make the World a Better Place for Gays and Lesbians"

by Una Fahy

In her new book, Una Fahy presents 50 different ways that each of us, gay, lesbian, and straight, can make the world a better place for gays and lesbians. With titles such as "Understand Homophobia," "Write a Letter to the Editor," "Call, Write, or Visit Your Representatives," and "Know Your Enemy: The Religious Right", Fahy presents informative and encouraging thoughts on becoming an advocate for gay and lesbian rights.

At the end of each section, the author presents addresses and specific things that each of us can do to impact our society and surroundings. Whether you are a candidate for advocate of the year, or still getting your feet wet, this book can give you a solid and sensible battle plan as you speak out on behalf of your loved ones.

The book has only 3 sections that are specifically for gays and lesbians and 2 sections are specifically for heterosexuals. The remainder of the book is applicable to us all.

With its focus on countering and combating homophobia, this practical handbook will give you ideas and encouragement that will empower you to help improve the lives of millions of American gays and lesbians and their friends, families, and supporters.

How to Make the World a Better Place for Gays and Lesbians by Una Fahy is published by Warner Books and retails for \$9.99.

Each of us CAN make a difference

to write a letter or make a phone call in relation to specific legislation.

Right now, the most important piece of legislation in front of us is ENDA, the Employment Non Discrimination Act, which would prohibit employers from using a person's sexual orientation as the basis for hiring, firing, promotion, or compensation. ENDA exempts small businesses (fewer than 15 employees) and religious organizations, including educational institutions controlled or supported by religious organizations. It does not apply to the uniformed members of the armed forces, which means that it does not affect the law on gays in the military.

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Congressman Ken Bentsen, 515 Rusk, Suite 12102, Houston, TX 77002; 713-229-2244. Bentsen has indicated that he might consider signing on, and that he would definitely vote for ENDA. He has already signed HRCF's statement agreeing not to discriminate in hiring employees in his own office. Your message to Bentsen can be that ENDA is a basic issue of right and wrong, that you appreciate his standing up to the religious right on other issues, and that you urge him to sign on as a co-sponsor to a bill that is so important to you and your family.

Congressman Gene Green, 5502 Lawndale, Houston, TX 77023; 713-923-9961, email: green@hr.house.gov. Green recently signed on as a co-sponsor. Write to thank him and commend him for his stance. Let him know that ENDA is an issue that is very important to you.

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, 1919 Smith, Houston, TX 77002; 713-655-0050. Lee signed on to ENDA early. Write to thank her and to support her in her stance. FYI, Lee was a speaker at PFLAG Houston's first Healing the Hurt Conference in 1994. Make the connection, if you wish. Let her know how important the issue of non-discrimination in the workplace is to you.

Congressman Bill Archer, 1003 Wirt Rd., Suite 311, Houston, TX 77055; 713-467-7493. Archer is not on the potential co-sponsor list, but HRCF recommends that we write him asking that he sign the non-discrimination statement regarding hiring practices in his own office (see Bentsen, above).

Quoting from recent information sent out by PFLAG's national office: "Try to move your representative to the next level of support of gay, lesbian and bisexual people and their families. If your representative will not vote for ENDA, ask him or her for a commitment to not vote at all. If your representative supports ENDA, ask him or her to become a co-sponsor. If your representative is already a co-sponsor, ask him or her to enlist the support of colleagues who do not support ENDA."

* Or write Senators at U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510.

Representatives at U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515

By phone, call the capital Switchboard: 202-224-3121

BOOK CORNER

Instruction Book for Advocacy

"How to Make the World a Better Place for Gays and Lesbians"

by Una Fahy

In her new book, Una Fahy presents 50 different ways that each of us, gay, lesbian, and straight, can make the world a better place for gays and lesbians. With titles such as "Understand Homophobia," "Write a Letter to the Editor," "Call, Write, or Visit Your Representatives," and "Know Your Enemy: The Religious Right", Fahy presents informative and encouraging thoughts on becoming an advocate for gay and lesbian rights.

At the end of each section, the author presents addresses and specific things that each of us can do to impact our society and surroundings. Whether you are a candidate for advocate of the year, or still getting your feet wet, this book can give you a solid and sensible battle plan as you speak out on behalf of your loved ones.

The book has only 3 sections that are specifically for gays and lesbians and 2 sections are specifically for heterosexuals. The remainder of the book is applicable to us all.

With its focus on countering and combating homophobia, this practical handbook will give you ideas and encouragement that will empower you to help improve the lives of millions of American gays and lesbians and their friends, families, and supporters.

How to Make the World a Better Place for Gays and Lesbians by Una Fahy is published by Warner Books and retails for \$9.99.

**Each of us
CAN make
a difference
in the
world
we all
live in!**



Austin Methodist Minister Attracts National Bishops' Attention

Methodist Leaders Issue Positive Statement for Gays and Lesbians

At the end of April, Reverend Charles Moore of the Grace United Methodist Church in Austin felt that it was time to call attention to what he believed was one of the great injustices in our society: discrimination against homosexual persons. He entered into a fast in order to call the attention of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church (UMC) and the Council of Bishops of the UMC to this issue. Rev. Moore will be our guest speaker at the September 10th meeting of PFLAG Houston. We will hear much more about his incredible story at that time. For now, here are portions of declaration the Council of Bishops made in response to this effort of one person.

"In the face of escalating violence against gay and lesbian persons and in keeping with the commitment of the 1992 The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, The Council of Bishops

- ▼ declares any behavior against gay and lesbian persons that violates civil rights to be unacceptable and wrong,
- ▼ confesses our own failure if by our inaction we have contributed to ostracism, stigma, unnecessary suffering, denial of civil and human rights, torture, persecution, and pains inflicted,
- ▼ calls on each United Methodist congregation to be
 - a place of hospitality where all people are welcomed into its redemptive fellowship
 - and a center of learning about the nature of homosexuality, using the United Methodist study guide on homosexuality..."

"The Council of Bishops invites all United Methodists to enter prayerfully into discussion on the matter of homosexuality in an attitude of respect for all persons, with a desire to strengthen relationships among people with varying viewpoints, and with a commitment to reflect the Spirit of Christ in such discussion."

Although the Council of Bishops still recognizes the anti-gay statement in the Book of Discipline that does "not condone the practice of homosexuality," the above statements represent a very serious step in the right direction on what has been a very long journey. Rev. Moore received 7 negative letters during his fast. He received over 50 positive and supportive letters. Here are some of the positive comments he received: "I am truly humbled by your dedication to an extremely controversial cause and the risk you have taken to speak out on behalf of my daughter and the entire homosexual community. I am forever indebted to you." "You give Christianity a good name." "It is a rare individual that is willing to bring attention to the pain of others by causing pain & discomfort to himself. I feel lucky to know you."

Be sure to attend the September meeting to hear Rev. Moore. You might want to bring a friend from church while you're at it!
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ANSWERING THE AMENS OF HATE WITH GAY PRIDE

Thursday, June 22, 1995, by Gabriel Rotello

New York - Every year around this time I get antsy about the term "gay pride." This third week in June is, if anybody needs reminding, "lesbian and gay pride week." It is marked by "pride" festivals where people wear "pride" T-shirts and buy "pride" souvenirs and go to "pride" parties and "pride" dances. The whole thing culminates on Sunday - called "Lesbian and Gay Pride Day" in most places - when "pride" committees put on "pride" marches where we carry our "pride" flags and...well, you get the idea.

As a cynical New Yorker living in the shame and sleaze capital of the world, all this seems a bit much. But just when my lip begins to curl and I start insinuating darkly to anyone who'll listen that pride surely goeth before a you-know-what, along comes a book like "Prayers for Bobby" to put me in my place. "Prayers for Bobby," (HarperCollins) by veteran journalist Leroy Aarons, is about a young gay man without pride, and the Christian fundamentalist mom who helped make him that way.

Bobby Griffith was fully aware of his sexuality at an early age, and his self awareness filled him with shame. His suburban California family, unaware of his secret, wasn't much help. "They've said they hate gays," he wrote in his diary at fifteen, "and even God hates gays, too. It really scares me when they talk that way because they are talking about me."

A short time later Bobby came out to his family, and for the next five years his mother worked tirelessly to change him. Mary Griffith prayed for Bobby, shamed him, nagged him, degraded him, and helped convince him that he was despicable. "I will kill the evil force inside me," Bobby pledged to his diary at one point. But pray as he might, he could not kill that force - his god given capacity to love. So at age twenty, Bobby threw himself under a tractor-trailer, killing himself.

This happens all the time in America. A government report a few years ago indicated that up to 35 per cent of all gay kids attempt suicide at least once, and far too many succeed: three out of ten youth suicides, it said, involve gay and lesbian adolescents. We almost never hear about them, but in this case Bobby left an eloquent diary detailing his inner turmoil, which his fundamentalist mom read. Mary Griffith eventually realized that neither Satan nor homosexuality had killed her son. He was slain by a profound lack of self love that she had helped foster.

In short, a lack of gay pride.

A good woman, Mary became active in gay causes. Her first speech as an activist was before a local city council meeting crammed with her old fundamentalist colleagues. "When the clergy condemns a homosexual person to hell and eternal damnation," she told the hostile crowd in her flat, restrained voice, "we the congregation echo 'Amen.' I did not know that each time I echoed 'Amen'...each time I referred to Bobby as sick, perverted, and a danger to our children, his self esteem and personal worth were being destroyed.

"There are children like Bobby sitting in your congregations. Unknown to you, they will be listening to your 'Amen's as they silently cry out to God in their hearts. Before you echo 'Amen' in your home and place of worship, think and remember. A child is listening."

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Lesbian and gay kids are indeed listening. But each June, when the airwaves and newspapers are filled with stories of "gay and lesbian pride," some may be listening to that as well. As long as the amens of hate echo in the homes and schools and churches of America, searing the souls of gay youth, "gay pride" must, and will, echo back. Not as an empty slogan, not as cheerleading, but as a necessary antidote to shame.

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Editor's Note: Even though we have already had one article on Leroy Aaron's new book Prayers for Bobby, I felt this one presented it from a very different perspective. Pride can sometimes be a matter of life or death.



ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

Gay and Lesbian Characters abound in current films

With the upcoming release of "Jefferey" and the previous releases of movies such as "Priest", "The Sum of Us", and "The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love", mainstream cinema is seeing a large increase in the number of films with gay or lesbian themes. Historically, films with gay or lesbian themes have been limited to independent production companies with little known actors.

On August 18, the film version of the hugely successful stage play "Jefferey" will look a little different. Starring Steven Weber of "Wings" fame, Patrick Stewart (known for his role as Jean-Luc Picard of "Star Trek: The Next Generation"), and Sigourney Weaver, "Jefferey" features these and other well known actors and actresses in this exciting venture into mainstream cinema for experienced screenwriter and playwright Paul Rudnick. Rudnick has written the screenplays for such successes as "Sister Act", "The Addams Family", and "Addams Family Values." This film will open at the Greenway Plaza 3 Theaters on August 18.

"The Incredibly True Adventures of Two Girls in Love" is a comedy about 2 teenage girls falling in love for the first time...with each other. This refreshing film takes a look at the old-fashioned coming of age story from the perspective of 2 young lesbians.

The curtain doesn't seem to be closing on this area either. Robert Altman has announced plans to make a film version of Tony Kushner's "Angels in America." A remake of the French film "La Cage Aux Folles" has been reported to star Robin Williams. Even Patrick Swayze and Wesley Snipes will star as 3 drag queens traveling across the country in the fall film "To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar."

Notes on Membership

1. You join our local chapter for one year at a time. Your expiration date is shown on the mailing label.
2. We occasionally send out reminders that it is time to renew, but you always can do so with the form included in each newsletter.
3. At the meetings, members register by checking off their name on the clipboard. If your membership is overdue, your name won't be listed.
4. In that case, just write in your name (and any address/phone update). Get a renewal form from membership desk.
5. You do not need to join or renew as a national member. (It is mainly for people living where no local chapter exists.)
6. We send National \$8 annually for each member/couple to enroll them as national members.
7. National members automatically get the national newsletter and other items, mailed "open."
8. Check the appropriate box on the renewal form if you don't want to get these mailings.

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Notes from the Editor

by Doug Upchurch

I don't know about you, but after the July meeting I was flying high! What a positive experience that was. Thanks to Barbara Winston and all those that spoke! All of your stories encourage each of us in our own journey.

Perhaps it was the July meeting or perhaps it is reality, but things seem to be looking up. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying our battle is even close to finished. But as you read this issue of the newsletter, there are several positive signs of change.

With the United Methodist Council of Bishops issuing their statement, Hollywood releasing mainstream films with positive portrayals of gays and lesbians, PFLAG Houston's plans for a bus trip to DC, and many other positive news, it seems as if more and more individuals are hearing our message.

I am not very good at advocacy letters. But tonight I received a phone call from a PFLAG mom. She was organizing PFLAGers to write thank you letters to Sheila Jackson Lee for her support of ENDA. It's one thing to have someone mention letter writing in a monthly meeting or in the newsletter, but when someone calls you in person, it is a little different. No, it shouldn't be, but it was. Thanks for the call! The note is in the mail.

Please continue to send in your articles or letters for the Flyer. As always, I can be reached at either 528-3684 by phone, 1903 Portsmouth #6, Houston TX 77098 by mail, or DougUp67@aol.com by e-mail! The deadline for the September newsletter is August 18. ☺ ♥ ▼

Join Us in the Work of P-FLAG

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

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

Family/Couple: \$40 ____

Individual: \$25 ____

Student/Limited Income: \$10 ____

Your donation is tax deductible

P-FLAG Houston is a Non-Profit

501 (c)(3) organization

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

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

Name(s):

Home Ph: ()

() Please mark

PFLAG FLYER

The Official Newsletter of
Parents, Families, and Friends of
Lesbians and Gays of Houston, TX
PO Box 53796
Houston, Texas 77052-3796
HelpLine: 713-867-9020

September 1995

Next Meeting September 10

Homosexuality & the Methodist
Church: One Man's Fight

Rev. Charles Moore, a United Methodist minister in Austin, TX, recently gained the attention of the General Council of Bishops for his denomination. How? By fasting in order to call attention to the injustices done by the Methodist Church doctrine, he gained the attention of not only his church leadership, but also of gay and lesbian groups across Texas. Rev. Moore will be joining us this month to talk about his experience as well as the exciting outcome of his fast.

PFLAG small group discussions, including a special group for family members and friends that have recently found out that a loved one is gay or lesbian and groups geared towards HIV Concerns as well as the Spouse Support Group, follow the program. These sessions are the heart of P-FLAG, with families

sharing their journeys and learning from each other. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!

Marriage Project News

Status Update from Lambda

Thank you for your support of the Marriage Resolution. You became part of the first wave of signatories—leaders in the work of engaging the American public on the freedom to marry, solidifying our supporters, and reaching out to the persuadable open-minded middle. Before we have even begun to do the public education work necessary, polls show that one-third of the public is already with us, and at least another third is reachable. Now we are ready for the second wave.

Doing marriage rights work with groups such as yours around the country, and based on research into the public's understanding of our effort to end government interference with couples who wish to marry, we have made some changes in the language of the Resolution. As we all do our part to enlist the second wave of signers, the new language is:

THE MARRIAGE RESOLUTION



your organization as supporting the Resolution, unless for some reason you would prefer that we remove your name. I apologize for the inconvenience of having to revote at boards or full meetings (the price of being in the first wave), but of course promoting discussion is one of the goals of the Resolution. We do believe the language and themes of the new version will be most effective. All of us should now make sure that our brochures, talking points, materials, etc. contain this version of the Marriage Resolution, preferably along with a tear-off sheet requesting organizations to sign and return their contact info to Lambda's Marriage Project as the central repository of signatories (list available to all at any time).

Finally, to keep discussion of, and support for, gay people's right to marry "snowballing," we ask that you go the next step of asking other organizations to adopt the Marriage Resolution. If everyone who has signed on so far summons ten more, and they ten more, we will then have a mighty coalition (and will ask you to go to the next step...).

Thanks for all your work so far, and your work and outreach to come!

Marriage Project
Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund
666 Broadway, Suite 1200
New York, NY 10012
(212) 995-8585

Local Law Firm Changes Discrimination Policy

Following Growing Trend in US

Houston's largest law firm has added a policy of not discriminating against employees based on sexual orientation following a growing trend among big companies and law firms.

Managing Partner Harry Reasoner said the new handbook doesn't change anything at his firm—it has told law schools for several years that it doesn't discriminate based on sexual orientation. Many top law schools won't let recruiters on campus unless they certify that their law firms don't discriminate against

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Sept. 10 | PFLAG Meeting
2:00 PM-4:30 PM
St. Francis Episcopal Church
345 N. Piney Point Rd. |
| Sept. 21 | Texas Freedom Alliance presentation at St. Paul's United Methodist Church (See article on page 2) |
| Sept. 28 - Oct. 1 | PFLAG National Convention in Indy, IN |
| October | National Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual History Month |
| Oct. 1 | PFLAG Meeting |
| Oct. 11 | National Coming Out Day 1995 |
| Oct. 14 | PFLAG Fall Picnic
Look for More Details Next Month!! |

and Williams, Birnberg & Andersen have had official policies banning discrimination based on sexual orientation for a couple of years, the addition of Vinson & Elkins to the list was a big step.

"A lot in our society is following the big guy," said Mitchell Katine, a partner with Williams, Birnberg & Andersen and a gay activist in Houston.

"It makes it safe for the smaller and medium-size firms to do the same thing," Katine said.

Vinson & Elkins' policy sends a symbolic message to its staff that it evaluates people based on merit, said Christopher Bacon, an assistant federal public defender and president of the Bar Association for Human Rights in Houston, which represents gay and lesbian lawyers.

The new policy also shows Vinson & Elkins doesn't tolerate discrimination, said Bacon, who used to work at the law firm.

The policy also makes it easier for management to deal with discrimination

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THE MARRIAGE RESOLUTION

Because marriage is a basic human right and an individual personal choice, **RESOLVED**, the State should not interfere with same-gender couples who choose to marry and share fully and equally in the rights, responsibilities, and commitment of civil marriage.

Since the goal and substance remain the

your organization as supporting the Resolution, unless for some reason you would prefer that we remove your name.

I apologize for the inconvenience of having to revote at boards or full meetings (the price of being in the first wave), but of course promoting discussion is one of the goals of the Resolution. We do believe the language and themes of the new version will be most effective. All of us should now make sure that our brochures, talking points, materials, etc. contain this version of the Marriage Resolution, preferably along with a tear-off sheet requesting organizations to sign and return their contact info to Lambda's Marriage Project as the central repository of signatories (list available to all at any time).

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Companies are forbidden by federal law to discriminate against employees because of sex, race, age, national origin or religion, but the law does not cover sexual orientation.

While other firms such as Baker & Botts

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The policy also makes it easier for management to deal with discrimination complaints, Bacon said. Offenders have a hard time claiming they didn't know they were doing anything wrong by making jokes or harassing others when there's an official policy stating the firm doesn't tolerate such behavior.

Anti-discrimination employment policies based on sexual orientation are also a trend at the nation's biggest companies.



Recyclable Reprint

A Letter To PFLAG Dads

By Pat Rickey

I am a PFLAG dad who would like to think out loud with all of you other PFLAG dads out there. Why is it that we dads seem to have a harder time in fully accepting our gay and lesbian children than the PFLAG moms? Not true you say? "I'm OK with it, I just don't see any reason to talk about it" might be a typical statement. My feeling is that if we aren't willing to talk about it, we're not really OK. In some cases, the dads will readily admit they have some serious problems with their children's disclosures that they are gay or lesbian. Of course there are exceptions, as some of our most active and supportive members are the dads, but we are definitely in the minority.

Maybe dads have more rigid views of what is acceptable in how their kids should turn out. Maybe we think it's manly to "keep a stiff upper lip" and not talk about things that are on our minds. Maybe we just simply have more trouble saying "I love you" when our kids, gay or straight, need it the most. Maybe I'm all wet, too. Right or wrong, it's a feeling I have had for some time. PFLAG needs more dads who realize that their children did not choose to be gay, can never change, and need our active support to feel OK about themselves and to lead as normal a life as possible in our homophobic society. I don't pretend to be any expert, but I'd like to offer a few thoughts for whatever they might be worth to any of you other dads.

- ▼ When your child comes out to you, remember he or she is the same wonderful kid you always thought they were. Nothing has changed except your information.
- ▼ Get some information. (I think dads are more hung up on facts than moms). PFLAG has a great lending library, or help line volunteers can make suggestions about good reading material.
- ▼ Talk to somebody about how you feel, even if it's hard. (If you don't know anyone to talk to, try me. I promise I'll be a good listener. Tell the help line volunteer to ask Pat Rickey to call you as promised in this note).
- ▼ Give yourself some time. We're all taught to be homophobic, so it's a rare dad who doesn't have some initial problems to work through. I know I did.
- ▼ Please remember to tell your kid you love them -- out loud -- in those words. They really need it a lot, and you probably do too.

Hang in there dads! I'll see you at PFLAG!

Pat Rickey, proud father of a wonderful lesbian daughter and a wonderful straight daughter.

Reality Check: Discrimination Still Exists!

FUNERAL HOME FIRES TWO MEN FOR BEING GAY

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The evil epistles in this particular case were sent not only to Ford & Sons Funeral Home but also to other area businesses and a few private citizens, clearly with the intent to engage the baser side of the recipients. "Would your loved one want a homosexual taking care of them when they die?" the letter queried in mock innocence, as if a corpse would have any thoughts on the matter at all. Someone, possibly the author of that irrational sentiment, also slayed two possums, leaving them as macabre decoration on Ford & Sons property. What a treat for the neighbors, some of whom no doubt had impressionable children. In addition, an egg was smashed open on one of the funeral parlor's hearses. I'm sure neighbors and residents were thinking, "Gee, I sure hope no one eggs my car." Sadly, the entire town of Cape Girardeau had to endure the month-long hate campaign, and very likely every citizen in that town felt somewhat diminished by it.

PFLAG FLYER



September 1995
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PFLAG Volunteers Round-Up

Calling all volunteers!!!!

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Each month the newsletter will now feature requests for volunteers in a different area. There are many different and exciting areas that we will be moving into in the near future. In order for all of us to be effective in these ventures, we will need the efforts of many volunteers with different skills.

So here is this month's list....

- ▼ PFLAG Houston has always been a very social group. Two upcoming events: the Winter Holiday Party (early December) and the all new PFLAG Fall Picnic (mid-October). If you would like to help with the organization and/or planning of either of these two events, please contact Doug Upchurch or Tyler Reeves at (713)528-3684.
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Texas Freedom Alliance Mtg

Group to Battle Radical Right

On September 21, Cecile Richards, daughter of former Gov. Ann Richards, will be presenting information on how we can battle the grass roots movement of the radical right in upcoming local elections in Houston. This presentation of the Texas Freedom Alliance will be held at St. Paul's United Methodist Church, near the Museum of Fine Arts, from 6:30pm-9:30pm. A viewing of the short film "In Their Own Words" will also

gay and lesbian children than the PFLAG moms? Not true you say? "I'm OK with it, I just don't see any reason to talk about it" might be a typical statement. My feeling is that if we aren't willing to talk about it, we're not really OK. In some cases, the dads will readily admit they have some serious problems with their children's disclosures that they are gay or lesbian. Of course there are exceptions, as some of our most active and supportive members are the dads, but we are definitely in the minority.

Maybe dads have more rigid views of what is acceptable in how their kids should turn out. Maybe we think it's manly to "keep a stiff upper lip" and not talk about things that are on our minds. Maybe we just simply have more trouble saying "I love you" when our kids, gay or straight, need it the most. Maybe I'm all wet, too. Right or wrong, it's a feeling I have had for some time. PFLAG needs more dads who realize that their children did not choose to be gay, can never change, and need our active support to feel OK about themselves and to lead as normal a life as possible in our homophobic society. I don't pretend to be any expert, but I'd like to offer a few thoughts for whatever they might be worth to any of you other dads.

- ▼ When your child comes out to you, remember he or she is the same wonderful kid you always thought they were. Nothing has changed except your information.
- ▼ Get some information. (I think dads are more hung up on facts than moms). PFLAG has a great lending library, or help line volunteers can make suggestions about good reading material.
- ▼ Talk to somebody about how you feel, even if it's hard. (If you don't know anyone to talk to, try me. I promise I'll be a good listener. Tell the help line volunteer to ask Pat Rickey to call you as promised in this note).
- ▼ Give yourself some time. We're all taught to be homophobic, so it's a rare dad who doesn't have some initial problems to work through. I know I did.
- ▼ Please remember to tell your kid you love them -- out loud -- in those words. They really need it a lot, and you probably do too.

Hang in there dads! I'll see you at PFLAG!

Pat Rickey, proud father of a wonderful lesbian daughter and a wonderful straight daughter.

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All acts of violence and vengeance leave us feeling weakened and vulnerable, quivering bundles of raw emotion—fear, anger, desperation.

We don't, however, have to become victims of such divisiveness. If we really mean what we say about putting the family first, then it seems imperative that we act as if we know what a family is. We need to rally around one another. When injustice happens to any one of us, in what ever form, we must respond as if it had happened to a parent, sibling, spouse, or child.

Calling all volunteers!!!!

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Make an effort to attend this unique meeting and learn more about fighting the radical right with grass roots action!

Together, We Will

by Gail Rickey

ENDA--Employment Non Discrimination Act--is the prime issue that PFLAG Houston is focusing on. The bill seeks an end to employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. At the July meeting, we announced an ambitious plan to send a busload of moms and dads to Washington in support of this national legislation. At present we are working with the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) to set a date for this trip, which we now expect to take place in early 1996 (NOT fall, 1995, as originally announced).

I urge each person reading this newsletter to make a call and/or write a letter to your Members of Congress, letting them know that you are strongly supportive of the passage of ENDA. The goal is to get as many co-sponsors of the bill as possible. If the Member is not a co-sponsor, ask him or her to become one. For the Members who are already a co-sponsor, let them know of your support for their stance.

Houston-area Members of Congress Who Are NOT Co-Sponsors:

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison
Senator Phil Gramm
Rep. Bill Archer
Rep. Jack Fields
Rep. Steve Stockman
Rep. Tom DeLay
Rep. Ken Bentsen

Houston-area Members of Congress Who ARE Co-Sponsors

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee
Rep. Gene Green

You CAN Make a Difference!

How to Contact Your Legislators!

Consider it your "Advocacy Address Book"

President Bill Clinton (D)
The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500
(202)456-1414

Vice President Albert Gore (D)
The Vice President
Old Executive Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20501
(202)456-2326

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R)
283 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202)224-5922
1919 Smith, Ste. 800
Houston, TX 77002
(713)653-3456

Senator Phil Gramm (R)
370 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202)224-2934
712 Main St., Ste. 2400
Houston, TX 77002
(713)229-2766

Rep. W.R. (Bill) Archer (R)
1236 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202)225-2571
10000 Memorial, Ste. 620

Rep. Steve Stockman (R)
417 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202)225-6565
Cotton Exchange Bldg.
2102 Mechanic, Ste. 107
Galveston, TX 77550
(409)766-3608

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D)
1520 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202)225-3816
1919 Smith, Ste. 1180
Houston, TX 77002
(713)655-0050

Rep. Tom DeLay (R)
203 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-5951
12603 Southwest Freeway, Ste. 285
Stafford, TX 77477
(713)240-3700

Rep. Ken Bentsen (D)
128 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202)225-7508
515 Rusk, Rm. 12102
Houston, TX 77002
(713)229-2244
1001 East Southmore, Ste. 810
Pasadena, TX 77502-1296

PFLAG FLYER



September 1995
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"Reality Check" cont'd from pg. 2

Several national organizations have championed their cause, most notably, the Anti-Defamation League. Moore says that the good people of Cape Girardeau also have responded very positively. After 15 years in the funeral industry, Moore has served a lot of people. "I'm very well known," he brags. "To my surprise, the community has been overwhelmingly supportive. Not one additional act of violence and not even one hang up call has been directed toward me. A lot of the older gentlemen I know come up to me and shake my hand. Most of them didn't even know I was gay, but they don't care. They like me for who I am. They tell me they don't understand about my being homosexual, but they say, 'What happened to you is wrong.'" Like a father comforting his son who has just been roughed up by the schoolyard bully, the old guys know what really matters.

Note: The telephone numbers of the two Ford & Sons funeral homes in Cape Girardeau, Missouri are (314) 334-1313 and (314) 334-1211. The town newspaper is the Southeast Missourian, Box 699, Cape Girardeau, MO 63702, FAX (314) 334-7288

Toll Free Number to Congress!

Courtesy of Radical Right

Now you can call Capitol Hill to tell your Congressperson or Senator what you think AND have the religious right pay for your call. Far-right Traditional Values Coalition leader Rev. Lou Sheldon paid for a toll-free number so anti-gay supporters could call congressional members and express their political views. Well, anyone can use the same number and give opposite views directly to DC.

The **1-800-768-2221** phone number connects you directly to Capitol Hill. Spread this information and the phone number as far as possible. The number does get you through to the "Capitol" receptionist. Just ask for the Congressperson by name and you will be

DID YOU KNOW?

Monitoring the Radical Right

"Vice President and Tipper Gore recently had a party at their official residence in Washington for approximately 150 members of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, a radical homosexual

PFLAG FLYER

The Official Newsletter of
Parents, Families, and Friends of
Lesbians and Gays of Houston, TX
PO Box 53796
Houston, Texas 77052-3796
HelpLine: 713-867-9020

October 1995

Next Meeting October 1

Coming Out:

What does it mean?

"Coming Out." We use and hear this term used all the time. For many PFLAGers, it defines an event that changed their lives. Whether as a gay or lesbian or as the parent, family or friend of one. But what does it actually mean to "come out?" Join us this month as psychologist Dr. Bob McLaughlin explores the experience of "coming out" from the perspective of a gay or lesbian. Bob is a favorite PFLAG speaker. His presentations at our "Healing the Hurt" conferences are always well received. His experience working with gay and lesbian teenagers has allowed him to become well acquainted with the "coming out" process.

PFLAG small group discussions, including a special group for family members and friends that have recently found out that a loved one is gay or lesbian and groups geared towards HIV Concerns as well as the Spouse Support Group, follow the program. These sessions are the heart of P-FLAG, with families sharing their journeys and learning from each other. We look forward to seeing **you** at the next meeting! Come join us!

Houston PFLAGer Receives Highest National Award

Ann Chapman, 1995 Starr Award

During the 1995 PFLAG National Conference, one of PFLAG Houston's most active members will receive the 1995 PFLAG Starr Award. The National PFLAG Board voted unanimously to recognize Ann Chapman's "contributions as a friend of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people in advocating to make schools more gay-positive and accessible for gay youth."

Here is a quote from the letter notifying our chapter of the award:

"The Board feels it is important to recognize friends as well as parents and family members for their commitment and dedication to PFLAG's mission. Ann is a role model for others in her dedication to PFLAG's mission. Ann is a role model for others in her dedication to



1995 Black Tie Dinner

Fundraiser for PFLAG and
Human Rights Campaign Fund

Each year, the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF) hosts the Black Tie Dinner in an effort to raise funds for their advocacy efforts as well as local gay and lesbian organizations. Last year, PFLAG Houston received **\$9,700** from the Black Tie Dinner. This was the largest amount received by any of the local organizations.

This year, the Dinner is November 4 from 7:00pm until 12:00am at the Westin Galleria. With entertainment from comedians and local band Ezra Charles & the Works, this year's dinner will begin with a cocktail period followed by a formal dinner, a silent auction and dancing.

The tickets are \$150 per person, \$50 of which goes to HRCF. You can choose to have the remaining \$100 go to PFLAG Houston. Support the national work of HRCF and the local work of PFLAG Houston. For ticket information, call Pete Filippone at 785-8505 or Pat Rickey at 440-0353.

Come Out in the News!

Full page ad in Dallas paper

The National Coming Out Day committee is sponsoring a FULL-page ad to run on Wed., Oct. 11 (National Coming Out Day) in the state's largest newspaper, The Dallas Morning News. The ad will list the names of individuals and organizations who support an end to discrimination against gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, their families and friends.

PFLAG Houston is going to have a listing. FYI, PFLAG Dallas was on the planning committee for this project. Pat and I have sent in our \$\$ to be listed as individuals, and we invite you to join us!!

Write a check for \$10 per person to National Coming Out Day. Mail to Tim Palmer, 1006 W. Monroe, Austin, TX 78704-3704

The newspaper **REQUIRES** the following info be included with your check:

Full legal name (first, middle initial, last)

Address

Phone number

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Oct. 1 | PFLAG Meeting
2:00 PM-4:30 PM
St. Francis Episcopal Church
345 N. Piney Point Rd. |
| Sept. 28 - Oct. 1 | PFLAG National Convention in Indy, IN |
| October | National Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual History Month |
| Oct. 8 | "A Family Outing at the State Fair of Texas" |
| Oct. 11 | National Coming Out Day 1995 |
| Oct. 14 | PFLAG Fall Picnic
3:00-6:00pm,
Memorial Park, See article page 2. |
| Nov. 3 | PFLAG Meeting |
| Nov. 4 | Black Tie Dinner
Westin Galleria,
7:00pm-12:00am |



Gay Day at Texas State Fair

A Family Outing at the Fair

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Driving in each month from Victoria, Ann has given selflessly of her time to support PFLAG Houston and fight for gay and lesbian rights. Thanks, Ann, for being the friend that you are to all of us!

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Address
Phone number
Driver's license number

Tim requests that you be **SURE** to include your daytime and evening phone number in case he needs to call you. **The deadline for Tim to receive names is October 8. Act now!**

St. Francis Episcopal Church
345 N. Piney Point Rd.

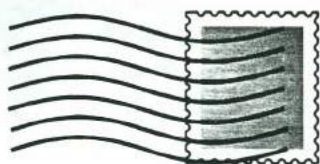
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The event is scheduled from 10:00am until 8:00pm on Sunday, October 8. For more information about tickets and the "Family Outing," call 214-522-5533.



News

from Around the Nation

Maine Governor Joins Fight Against Anti-Gay Referendum

Maine Governor Angus King, Ind., joined gay-rights activists this past month in a campaign to fight a state referendum seeking to block laws prohibiting discrimination against gays and lesbians. Promoted by a group called Concerned Maine Families, the question on the November 1995 ballot asks, "Do you favor the changes in Maine law limiting protected classification in future state and local laws to race, color, sex, physical and mental disability, religion, age, ancestry, national origin, familial status and marital status and repealing existing laws which expand these classifications as proposed by citizen petition?"

"I regret that this matter is even going to take place," King told the Portland (Maine) Press Herald Wednesday. "I would hate to see the headline of an out-of-state newspaper saying, 'Maine legalizes discrimination.' That's not a message that a state partially based on tourism wants to send out to the rest of the country." Pat Peard, chair of a group called Maine Won't Discriminate, says the measure also would exclude groups such as smokers, low-income housing recipients and union organizers from protection against discrimination. Gay community leaders in Maine say they will fight against losing the protective measures they have fought for.

Maine House Speaker Dan Gwadosky, D., also supported the anti-referendum campaign. "The referendum is the work of extremists, many of whom have vowed that they will not stop here," Gwadosky said. He also said a Virginia attorney who had been active in the anti-gay campaigns in Oregon and Colorado wrote the initiative.

But Larry Lockman, a Concerned Maine Families spokesman, called the opposition's statements a desperate ploy by gay-rights groups to get lawmakers on their side.

Editor's Note: To contact Maine Won't Discriminate, (800)761-1788 or via email: MECAMPAIGN@AOL.COM.

PFLAG Houston receives John Kelleff Award from H.A.T.C.H.

Chapter recognized for service in the community

Just before press time, I received notification the PFLAG Houston will receive the John Kelleff Award for Outstanding Service in the Community from H.A.T.C.H. (Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals). The Annual Awards night will be on Saturday, October 21 at 7:30pm. The ceremony will be held at Grace Lutheran Church, 2515 Waugh Drive. Also presented that night will be the Trish Morgan Award for an individual's contribution to H.A.T.C.H. and the H.A.T.C.H. Youth Awards. Tickets for the event are \$10 for adults, free for youth and available at Crossroads Market, Inklings, & Lobo. Tickets will also be available at the door. Entertainment will be provided by Heartsong, Gay Men's Chorus, and H.A.T.C.H. members.

H.A.T.C.H. provides a unique and valuable place for teenagers who are discovering their homosexuality. The youth can come together with caring facilitators and find an honest and safe place to ask questions and talk about issues regarding homosexuality. PFLAG is honored to receive this award from such a wonderful organization such as H.A.T.C.H.. We encourage you to get your tickets early for this exciting night of celebration and encouragement!

PFLAG Family Day and Picnic at Memorial Park

Did someone say a PFLAG Social Event!?!?!?

Come on out to the Memorial Park Picnic Area, south of Memorial Drive, on Saturday, October 14 from 3:00pm until 6:00pm. Apparently someone out there thinks PFLAG Houston needs to have a little fun! So join us at the park for games, fun, and a BYOE (Bring Your Own Everything) picnic! We will be organizing games and events for those that want to enjoy the wonderful fall weather. (OK, so it's fall somewhere!) There will be more information at the October meeting, but look for the PFLAG signs at Memorial Park and the folks wearing PFLAG shirts and hats. If you have a PFLAG shirt or hat, feel free to wear them to the park. Bring friends, family and anyone that wants to enjoy a great afternoon in the park.

Greater Westend Progressive Voter Initiative Meeting

PFLAGer launches a local advocacy group in the Heights area

Patrick McIlvain, a PFLAG member and resident in the Heights area, has had enough.

PFLAG FLYER



October 1995
Page 2

Healing the Hurt Conference Receives National Award

At the National PFLAG Conference at the end of September, PFLAG Houston will be awarded the Local Chapter Achievement award in Education for our efforts at the "1995 Healing the Hurt Conference on Homophobia." Conference videos and materials will be on display at the national conference in Indianapolis.

This award recognizes more than just the event, the coordinators, or the local board. Of particular interest was the impact we have on the community we live in beyond our chapter meetings. It also recognizes an entire chapter's efforts to educate their community about homosexuality and the issues that surround it.

PFLAG Houston received this award due to the efforts of each volunteer who stuffed a letter, greeted an attendee, collected an evaluation, or worked on a committee. This award belongs to each of the members of PFLAG Houston. The 1995 Healing the Hurt Conference was one of the largest events of its kind, and its success is the result of our local chapter working together for a common goal. If we can host a conference for over 600 attendees, imagine what else can we do to educate our community

AIDS Benefit Concert

Northwest Houston Church

On Sunday, October 8 at 7:00pm, Northwoods Presbyterian Church will host a classical concert with a free-will offering to benefit the Bering Community Service Foundation. This Champions-area church is making a great step forward in its conservative neighborhood in effort to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS related issues.

Northwoods Presbyterian is the church that several PFLAGers attend including past-presidents Gail and Pat Rickey. Gail would love to see the church filled with supportive individuals as a sign to the local church community.

Featuring a woodwinds quintet, trumpet, and piano, this benefit concert coincides with Presbyterian HIV/AIDS Awareness Sunday. The concert is free, but an offering will be taken for Bering Community Service Foundation.

Northwoods Presbyterian Church is

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But Larry Lockman, a Concerned Maine Families spokesman, called the opposition's statements a desperate ploy by gay-rights groups to get lawmakers on their side.

Editor's Note: To contact Maine Won't Discriminate, (800)761-1788 or via email: MECAMPAIGN@AOL.COM.

PFLAG Houston receives John Kelleff Award from H.A.T.C.H.

Chapter recognized for service in the community

Just before press time, I received notification the PFLAG Houston will receive the John Kelleff Award for Outstanding Service in the Community from H.A.T.C.H. (Houston Area Teen Coalition of Homosexuals). The Annual Awards night will be on Saturday, October 21 at 7:30pm. The ceremony will be held at Grace Lutheran Church, 2515 Waugh Drive. Also presented that night will be the Trish Morgan Award for an individual's contribution to H.A.T.C.H. and the H.A.T.C.H. Youth Awards. Tickets for the event are \$10 for adults, free for youth and available at Crossroads Market, Inklings, & Lobo. Tickets will also be available at the door. Entertainment will be provided by Heartsong, Gay Men's Chorus, and H.A.T.C.H. members.

H.A.T.C.H. provides a unique and valuable place for teenagers who are discovering their homosexuality. The youth can come together with caring facilitators and find an honest and safe place to ask questions and talk about issues regarding homosexuality. PFLAG is honored to receive this award from such a wonderful organization such as H.A.T.C.H.. We encourage you to get your tickets early for this exciting night of celebration and encouragement!

PFLAG Family Day and Picnic at Memorial Park

Did someone say a PFLAG Social Event!?!?!?

Come on out to the Memorial Park Picnic Area, south of Memorial Drive, on Saturday, October 14 from 3:00pm until 6:00pm. Apparently someone out there thinks PFLAG Houston needs to have a little fun! So join us at the park for games, fun, and a BYOE (Bring Your Own Everything) picnic! We will be organizing games and events for those that want to enjoy the wonderful fall weather. (OK, so it's fall somewhere!) There will be more information at the October meeting, but look for the PFLAG signs at Memorial Park and the folks wearing PFLAG shirts and hats. If you have a PFLAG shirt or hat, feel free to wear them to the park. Bring friends, family and anyone that wants to enjoy a great afternoon in the park.

Greater Westend Progressive Voter Initiative Meeting

PFLAGer launches a local advocacy group in the Heights area

Patrick McIlvain, a PFLAG member and resident in the Heights area, has had enough. Frustrated with the trend in anti-gay political maneuvering, Patrick has started the Greater Westend Progressive Voter Initiative in order to focus efforts on "electing progressive officials who can and will acknowledge sexual orientation as a worthy, identifiable class of inclusion in human rights." The group's first meeting will be on Monday, October 2 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at the West End Multi-Service Center (170 Heights Blvd.). There will be small group breakouts to discuss ways of increasing voters' participation in the process of electing candidates. Discussion will include efforts by groups such as OutVote and Texas Freedom Alliance. For more information, call 869-0982.

Healing the Hurt Conference Receives National Award

At the National PFLAG Conference at the end of September, PFLAG Houston will be awarded the Local Chapter Achievement award in Education for our efforts at the "1995 Healing the Hurt Conference on Homophobia." Conference videos and materials will be on display at the national conference in Indianapolis.

This award recognizes more than just the event, the coordinators, or the local board. Of particular interest was the impact we have on the community we live in beyond our chapter meetings. It also recognizes an entire chapter's efforts to educate their community about homosexuality and the issues that surround it.

PFLAG Houston received this award due to the efforts of each volunteer who stuffed a letter, greeted an attendee, collected an evaluation, or worked on a committee. This award belongs to each of the members of PFLAG Houston. The 1995 Healing the Hurt Conference was one of the largest events of its kind, and its success is the result of our local chapter working together for a common goal. If we can host a conference for over 600 attendees, imagine what else can we do to educate our community

AIDS Benefit Concert

Northwest Houston Church

On Sunday, October 8 at 7:00pm, Northwoods Presbyterian Church will host a classical concert with a free-will offering to benefit the Bering Community Service Foundation. This Champions-area church is making a great step forward in its conservative neighborhood in effort to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS related issues.

Northwoods Presbyterian is the church that several PFLAGers attend including past-presidents Gail and Pat Rickey. Gail would love to see the church filled with supportive individuals as a sign to the local church community.

Featuring a woodwinds quintet, trumpet, and piano, this benefit concert coincides with Presbyterian HIV/AIDS Awareness Sunday. The concert is free, but an offering will be taken for Bering Community Service Foundation.

Northwoods Presbyterian Church is located on FM 1960 between Veterans Memorial and Kuykendahl at 3320 FM 1960. For more information, you may call the church at 444-8861.



Together, We Will

If you have been at one of the recent meetings, you have probably heard information about a bus full of PFLAG parents heading to Washington, DC to oppose ENDA. Well, the bus trip is happening! The dates have been set and the bus will leave Houston on Saturday, March 16, 1996 and return the following Saturday, March 23. The trip will be announced at the PFLAG National Convention at the end of September with the hope that other chapters will sponsor buses from their local areas. So now is the time for us to commit to go on the trip. The bus will be filled with Moms, Dads, and Supportive Friends. We want to make sure we have lots of moms and lots of dads!

We've started a committee called The Bus Bunch. If you are interested in going, supporting, or helping with the organization of the bus trip, be sure to come to the next meeting of the Bus Bunch on Tues., Oct. 3 at 7 PM at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church, 1440 Harold, Fellowship Hall.

The overall goals of the trip are to put a "face" on the parents of gays and lesbians, advocating for equal rights for their sons and daughters, to focus national attention on ENDA specifically, and gay/lesbian issues in general through press coverage and through speaking to lawmakers. More specifically, the goals are to gain publicity, increase the visibility of P-FLAG parents, encourage parents who don't know about P-FLAG, lobby for ENDA specifically, and gay/lesbian equality in general, educate the general public, raise awareness of the issues, and by our very presence, let the country know that there are voices of "good Americans" that are very different from the voice of the Radical Right.

P-FLAG Houston will sponsor a Bus Through The South, going within 100 miles of 22 chapters. The purposes are to pick up passengers along the route, interact with chapters along the route, and get publicity along the route. We will try to get a Houston newspaper reporter and/or TV reporter to ride the bus.

P-FLAG Houston's Vision: Hundreds of parents on the Capitol steps, in some type of media event that captures national attention.

Calling all creative types!!!

Logo & slogan contest for bus trip

We have a date, we have a planning committee, and we are starting the fundraising. All we need now is a really cool logo!!! So the Bus Bunch is sponsoring a logo contest!

The contest is open to all, and all entries must be turned in by November 8. Mail all entries to Norma Graves, 2419 Lexford, Houston, TX, 77080. The winner might be used on the exterior of the bus itself, T shirts, and other communications.

The logo needs to identify who we are (parents and families of gays and lesbians), and it needs to be attention-getting and colorful. It should convey the message of parents standing up for the rights of their gay and lesbian children.

So all you creative types, put your heads together and come up with a creative slogan and logo for the bus trip to Washington!

YOU'RE CORDIALLY INVITED

**Deck Party
Home of Barbara Winston
4627 River Point Drive
Sunday, October 15
5PM-7 PM**

"Getting on Deck With LGRL"**

***The Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby of Texas,
committed to eradicating legal discrimination
against gays and lesbians**

**Meet Dianne Hardy-Garcia,
Executive Director of LGRL**

**Speaker at Healing the Hurt '95
Pioneer Who Demanded National Awareness
of Crimes Against Gays in Texas**

PFLAG FLYER



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Page 3

A CALL TO ACTION!

P-FLAG MOMS AND DADS GO TO WASHINGTON

**To Focus National Attention on ENDA
(Employment Non-Discrimination Act)**

Visualize the steps of the U.S. Capitol...

Imagine hundreds of Moms and Dads...

from across the country standing on those steps

- ▼ Showing the nation who the parents of gays and lesbians are,
- ▼ Telling the world that we love our gay and lesbian children,
- ▼ Proclaiming their right to employment without discrimination
- ▼ **STANDING TALL FOR OUR GAY AND LESBIAN CHILDREN**

Moms and dads, brothers and sisters, grandmothers and granddads,
PUT YOURSELF in that picture.

MAKE IT HAPPEN—March 19 and 20, 1996

**HOWEVER YOU WANT TO TRAVEL,
GET TO WASHINGTON, D. C., MARCH 19-20**

The Goals:

Hundreds of Moms and Dads of Gays and Lesbians Gathering in Washington to tell lawmakers and the rest of the nation, "Our children are entitled to equal rights in the workplace." With representation from MANY towns and cities so that our message can be,

**"Moms and Dads From Across The Nation
Go to Washington To Stand Up For Their Children."**

When: Tuesday, March 19 and Wednesday, March 20, 1996

Why: To focus national attention on ENDA, Employment Non-Discrimination Act

Who: Moms & Dads, Brothers & Sisters, Grandparents of Gays and Lesbians, Supportive People—Ministers, Teachers, Counselors, Plumbers, Retirees, The Straight Community, Standing Up For Justice

How: Whatever works from your part of the country. One bus, departing from Texas, will weave through the South and pick up participants along the way. Some chapters may raise funds to fly one or more members to Washington. Others can organize car caravans. P-FLAGers are creative!

PFLAG FLYER

The Official Newsletter of
**Parents, Families, and Friends of
 Lesbians and Gays of Houston, TX**
 PO Box 53796
 Houston, Texas 77052-3796
 HelpLine: 713-867-9020

November 1995

Next Meeting November 5

Hear Dianne Hardy-Garcia
 of Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby

In March of this year, one of Texas' most repulsive traits made the pages of the national magazine "Vanity Fair." In fact, it made just about all the major press and local press thanks in large part to Dianne Hardy-Garcia, executive director of the Lesbian and Gay Rights Lobby (LGRL) of Texas. Dianne was almost solely responsible for bringing this attention to the hate crimes against gays and lesbians in Texas. Now LGRL is launching an all new campaign to let Texans and our legislators know that we won't tolerate these hateful acts in our state anymore.

Join us this month to hear Dianne speak about LGRL and this all new campaign. We will also be showing a short video shot during the 1995 Healing the Hurt Conference on Homophobia. This is a must see, so plan on attending. **PLEASE NOTE** that we will be meeting in the Fellowship Hall instead of the Sanctuary.

PFLAG small group discussions, including a special group for family members and friends that have recently found out that a loved one is gay or lesbian and groups geared towards HIV Concerns as well as the Spouse Support Group, follow the program. This month the Advocacy Group will also host Dianne Hardy-Garcia after her talk at the regular meeting. (See "Together, We Will" on page 3.) These sessions are the heart of P-FLAG, with families sharing their journeys and learning from each other. We look forward to seeing **you** at the next meeting! Come join us!

Special December Meeting

Small Groups Only Meeting
 Held Before Winter Party

Each December, PFLAG Houston celebrates with a "Winter Party." Last year there were several PFLAGers that missed having the small groups during the month. It turns out that as the holiday season opens up, so do many closets of gays and lesbians home for the holidays. So this year we will be having a brief "Small Groups Only" meeting for those wishing to attend. Since our Winter Party falls on the first Sunday of December, the small groups meeting will



Project Open Mind Training

Last Chance: November 4th!

With Project Open Mind (POM) only days away, Jeffery Garrett, POM Coordinator from PFLAG National, will be conducting one last training session THIS Saturday, November 4th at Bering Church from 9:00am - 4:00pm. If you were unable to attend the previous training in mid-October, then this is the last chance for you to get involved in this very exciting media campaign being organized by PFLAG National.

Project Open Mind is a major media and public awareness campaign designed to confront the nation with the truth about the effects of intolerance and hatred directed toward lesbian and gay Americans. With over \$425,000 raised nationally, this TV, radio, and print campaign will launch on November 8th, just one day after the elections.

With a new message that has been designed for this campaign, it is important that PFLAGers know how to respond to people that ask about the ads. Therefore, PFLAG National is conducting training on how to respond to the radical rhetoric as well as confrontations about the advertisements.

Here are some thoughts from Jane and Irv Smith who attended the October training. "This training prepared us to answer questions from friends and acquaintances who next month may see the P-FLAG commercials on local TV stations. We role-played as if we were being interviewed on radio or TV. It really was fun, as well as having a very serious purpose."

So, if you still aren't sure whether or not this is for you, IT IS! I strongly encourage you to attend if you are available on this day. Houston is one of only 3 cities where this campaign is being launched and therefore will get a lot of national and local attention. Please plan on attending the training session on November 4th at Bering UMC from 9am-4pm.

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Nov. 4 | Project Open Mind Training Session, 9am-4pm at Bering Methodist Church (See Article) |
| Nov. 5 | PFLAG Meeting 2:00 PM-4:30 PM St. Francis Episcopal Church 345 N. Piney Point Rd. |
| Nov. 7 | Election Day: Be Sure to Vote! |
| Nov. 8 | Project Open Mind Commercials Begin. |
| Dec. 3 | PFLAG Small Groups Only Meeting, 2:00pm-3:00pm |
| Dec. 3 | Winter Party, 3pm-5pm Pete & Judy Filippone's Call Susan Upchurch at 995-9777 to RSVP. |
| Jan. 7 | PFLAG Meeting |

Houston City Council Address by David N. Morales

We are your neighbors, doctors, attorneys, policemen, teachers and psychologists. We are your children and your grandchildren. We do not discriminate when we donate to social support networks, yet we are denied many services these agencies provide. We pay taxes into a system that still treats us as second class citizens.

Distinguished members of the Council, I am here to request that a serious dialogue be established regarding passage of a non-discrimination ordinance that will protect all citizens of Houston from discrimination in employment and housing. Twenty years ago on October 1, 1975, Hugh Crell made this request and Houston still doesn't have an ordinance. Austin unanimously passed its non-discrimination ordinance in August of 1975 and Dallas has since adopted an ordinance of its own effective January 1995. These ordinances specifically mention sexual orientation in their wording. Currently, nine states have passed comprehensive equal rights legislation, and an additional 64 counties have done

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Project Open Mind Stop the Injustice

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Houston City Council Address

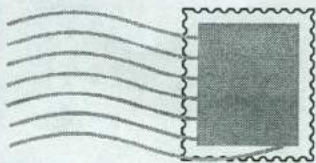
by David N. Morales

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Many minority groups still suffer from various forms of under the table discrimination, and they have legislation to protect them from the discrimination they experience. The gay and lesbian com-

(Continued on page 2)



News from Around the Nation

Clinton States Support for Employment Non-Discrimination Act

Sen. Edward Kennedy receives letter of support from President

COLUMBUS, Ohio, Oct 20 (Reuter) - President Bill Clinton signaled support on Friday for legislation that would protect homosexuals from discrimination in the workplace, two years after his policy on gays in the military rocked the country. "Individuals should not be denied a job on the basis of something that has no relationship to their ability to perform their work," Clinton said in a letter to Massachusetts Democratic Sen. Edward Kennedy, a chief sponsor of the bill.

Clinton, in Columbus for a regional economic conference, got himself into trouble with many Americans early in his presidency with a policy aimed at allowing gays to serve in the military. Now, heading into his re-election campaign, he is still chided in the South and elsewhere for the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. In an apparent attempt to shore up his support in the politically active gay community, Clinton threw his weight behind the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which still faces an uphill battle in the Republican-controlled Congress. Top White House adviser George Stephanopoulos publicly announced Clinton's support for the measure Friday in a speech to the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association.

"The president has announced his explicit support for legislation to protect all Americans from discrimination in the workplace," Stephanopoulos told the Washington conference. "No one should lose their job for reasons that have nothing to do with the job they do," he added. Clinton said in his letter, sent to Kennedy on Thursday and later released to reporters, that discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation is currently legal in 41 states. "Men and women in those states may be fired from their jobs solely because of their sexual orientation, even when it has no bearing on their job performance," Clinton said.

"Those who face this kind of job discrimination have no legal recourse in either our state or federal courts. This is wrong," he said. He said the proposed legislation is careful to apply some essential exemptions in certain areas -- small businesses, the armed forces and religious organizations, including schools and other educational institutions substantially controlled or supported by religious organizations. In addition, he said, the bill specifically prohibits preferential treatment on the basis of sexual orientation, including quotas. It does not require employers to provide special benefits, he said. "The bill, therefore, appears to answer all the legitimate objections previously raised against it, while ensuring that Americans, regardless of their sexual orientation, can find and keep their jobs based on their ability and the quality of their work," Clinton said.

"The Employment Non-Discrimination Act is designed to protect the rights of all Americans to participate in the job market without fear of unfair discrimination. I support it." The Human Rights Campaign, the largest national U.S. homosexual political group, applauded Clinton's move. "People should not be fired from their jobs for a reason that has nothing to do with their abilities," the group's executive director, Elizabeth Birch, said in a statement. "The president stands with the majority of Americans in supporting equal rights in the workplace for lesbian and gay citizens."

Reuters 16:10 10-20-95

(Continued from page 1)

munity is the only minority group that does not have legislation with which they can legally confront the discrimination they experience. What we are asking for is not special rights, but rather a form of legislation that will protect the rights that are already ours. Everyone deserves the right to protect themselves from the ugly realities of discrimination. Giving us legislation that will protect us from discrimination will not promote more homosexuality. Nothing can change a person's sexuality.

We, as a minority group, have demonstrated our positive influences on the city of Houston. Our revitalization of the Heights area and the Montrose District, which in 1966 was a district of dilapidated houses, has increased that district's tax base ten fold since 1966. Those accomplishments have shown our ability to rebuild abandoned neighborhoods. Our leadership as the early crusaders in the battle against AIDS, and the safety net that we created to support people from all walks of life who are afflicted with this disease, has demonstrated our social consciousness. What more can we do to illustrate the fact that we are caring, loving people, deserving of protection from discrimination?

We ask this with sincerity, because we truly want to know what else we can do in order

PFLAG FLYER



November 1995
Page 2

US Supreme Court reviews anti-gay Amendment 2

by Timothy Phelps

Washington - Oral arguments at the Supreme Court are a little like championship boxing, where the spectators keep track of who lands the punches but don't know how the judges score the match until it's all over. Going into yesterday's historic battle between the state of Colorado and gay rights advocates, most legal handicappers were betting heavily against the gays, who want the court to strike down an amendment to the state constitution forbidding any community from protecting gays against discrimination.

However, after precisely 60 minutes of argument yesterday, the odds had shifted, because two key conservative justices had joined four of their more liberal colleagues in expressing some skepticism about the validity of the state's case. Unlike in boxing, the scorecards will not be tallied immediately. The results of this contest will not be announced until a decision is handed down, probably next year. And it is often dangerous to predict the votes of a justice from his or her questions.

But gay rights advocates, some of whom had said before hand that they did not expect to win, were cheered, particularly by Justice Anthony M. Kennedy's tough questioning of state Solicitor General Timothy Tymkovich.

In a courtroom packed with gays and other spectators who had slept overnight on the court's marble steps in order to get a seat, Tymkovich began by asking the justices to overturn a ruling by the Colorado Supreme Court that the amendment violates the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal protection of the laws to all persons.

The amendment forbids any state agency, or any city or county, from protecting people of homosexual, lesbian or bisexual orientation or conduct from discrimination. It would overturn existing ordinances in Denver, Boulder and Aspen. The Colorado court said the amendment violates homosexuals' fundamental right to participate in the political process.

Kennedy interrupted Tymkovich's argument almost immediately to challenge his assertion that the outcome of this case should be governed by a 1971 Supreme Court decision that ruled a California constitutional amendment requiring that public housing be approved by referendum was not discriminatory. Kennedy said this

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We ask this with sincerity, because we truly want to know what else we can do in order for the City of Houston to adopt a non-discrimination ordinance. What else can we do to get us all past this divisive issue?

Editor's Note: The above address was presented to the Houston City Council on October 3, 1995 by David N. Morales, a PFLAGer and founder of AHA, Anti-Homophobia Alliance. 5 PFLAG parents attended the council meeting in support of David. Let's hope that this is the beginning of a serious dialogue with our local elected officials.

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Kennedy interrupted Tymkovich's argument almost immediately to challenge his assertion that the outcome of this case should be governed by a 1971 Supreme Court decision that ruled a California constitutional amendment requiring that public housing be approved by referendum was not discriminatory. Kennedy said this case was different and probably unique because it separated out a particular group of people for a broad range of purposes. "I've never seen a case like this," said the former constitutional law teacher from Sacramento. Justice San-

(Continued on page 3)

Together, We Will

At the beginning of October, several of our PFLAGers were at the National PFLAG convention to announce the Bus Trip to Washington DC in support of ENDA. We already have 20 local moms & dads signed up. There are even folks from Michigan considering a Northern bus trip. We've had calls from Arizona, Florida, New York, and Maine. Along with other mailings and phone calls, parents across the nation are calling us for information. If you haven't attended one of the Bus Bunch meetings, show up for our next one at Bering Church on November 14th at 7:00pm. Don't forget the bus logo and slogan contest. (See last month's newsletter.)

We are especially proud to have Dianne Hardy-Garcia with the Lesbian Gay Rights Lobby at both our monthly and Advocacy Group meetings this month. Dianne will be announcing an all new campaign in order to fight hate crimes in Texas. She will be showing a video and talking to us about how we can get involved in this exciting new campaign. If you know of anyone else interested in the Advocacy Group, November will be the month for them to attend.

Short Takes!

- ▼ Gail Rickey has a tape of the congressional hearings on hate crimes that she needs typed into a word processing file. If you or someone you know has the transcription skills to do this, please call Gail at 440-0353.
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(Continued from page 2)

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Other justices seemed to have considerably more difficulty with the law. David H. Souter, normally relatively genteel in his questioning of the advocates, seemed downright agitated by the state's arguments. Why, asked the former state court judge from New Hampshire, was discrimination against gays valid when discrimination against others is not? Stephen Breyer asked pointedly whether a police department would be prohibited from announcing a policy against gay bashing.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg asked whether a public hospital, under the amendment, could announce that due to scarce resources no gays or lesbians could use its kidney machines. "Under this amendment, that's OK, right?" she asked.

In many cases, Tymkovich did not have time to answer before the next question was fired at him. Only Justice Antonin Scalia and Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist leaped to the defense of the state, with Scalia repeatedly giving suggestions to Tymkovich as to how to parry the hostile questions of the other justices. Scalia said that nothing in the amendment allows people to bash gays. And why, he asked, are the people of the state not entitled to decide who should get protection and who should not.

Scalia told Jean Dubofsky, the lawyer for the gay rights advocates, that most people have no inherent right to protection from private discrimination. "If I walk into a bed and breakfast and they tell me they don't like Italian-Americans, that's my tough luck," said Scalia, whose father emigrated

LOOK OUT WASHINGTON! HERE COMES MAMA!



PFLAG FLYER



November 1995
Page 3

Discrimination & Injustice

We want to hear your story!

As a part of Project Open Mind, we will be called upon to talk to audiences about discrimination and other injustices against gays and lesbians. One of the items discussed at the POM training was the idea of having several true stories about injustices that would get the point across that there really is a problem. So, if you have a story that you don't mind being shared, please send it in to the PFLAG Houston PO box. Your name will be kept anonymous in any publication of your story. Of a special interest are stories involving workplace or residential discrimination, hate crimes, or other acts that show the injustices being perpetrated due to the climate of hate in our society. Simply write down your true story and send it to PFLAG Houston, Attn: POM Stories, P.O. Box 53796, Houston, TX 77052-3796.

PFLAG Houston

Fourth Annual Winter Party

Join PFLAG Houston at our
1995 Winter Celebration!

When: Sunday, December 3, 1995
3:00pm-5:00pm

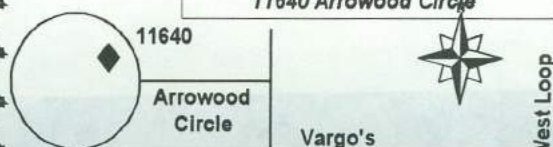
Where: Pete & Judy Filippone's Home
11640 Arrowood Circle
(See Map Below)

Reservations are \$10.00 per person and
must be purchased by November 18

Call Susan Upchurch at 995-9777
for reservations and information

*Volunteers are needed, if you would like to
volunteer please call Susan Upchurch at 995-9777.*

Map to PFLAG Winter Party
Pete & Judy Filippone's
11640 Arrowood Circle



Lobby at both our monthly and Advocacy Group meetings this month. Dianne will be announcing an all new campaign in order to fight hate crimes in Texas. She will be showing a video and talking to us about how we can get involved in this exciting new campaign. If you know of anyone else interested in the Advocacy Group, November will be the month for them to attend.

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Reprinted from New York Newsday

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PFLAG FLYER

The Official Newsletter of
**Parents, Families, and Friends of
 Lesbians and Gays of Houston, TX**
 PO Box 53796
 Houston, Texas 77052-3796
 HelpLine: 713-867-9020

December 1995

Winter Party & Small Groups December 3

Join us for a time of sharing,
 family, and friends

Each year at this time, we gather for a time of fun, family and friends at our annual Winter Party. This year the Winter Party will be from 3pm - 5pm at Pete & Judy Filippone's home. Reservations for the Winter Party are \$10 and must be made in advance. Call Susan Upchurch for last minute reservations at 995-9777.

Last year there were several PFLAGers that missed having the small groups during the month. It turns out that as the holiday season opens up, so do many closets of gays and lesbians home for the holidays. So this year we will be having a brief "Small Groups Only" meeting for those wishing to attend. So this year we will be having small groups at St. Francis Episcopal from 2pm - 3pm. The Spouse Support Group will be meeting as well as 3 general interest small groups. We will meet in the church entry way for maps to the small groups. The Winter Party is only a few miles from the church making it easy to join other PFLAGers at the Filippone's.

The other small groups will resume at the January 7th meeting. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting! Come join us as we begin a new year of Support, Education, and Advocacy.

LGRL Launches Pledge Project Training Scheduled for Dec. 7

Dianne Hardy-Garcia will be in Houston on December 7 from 7pm - 9pm for a special training session on LGRL's new "Pledge Project." The Pledge is a new campaign to get Texans across the state to sign a pledge to help end hate crimes in Texas. With a great logo and a message that all Texans can commit to, LGRL is hoping to get thousands of signed pledge cards returned before the next legislative session.

This friendly campaign will allow us to talk to our neighbors, family members, friends, and co-workers about the hate crimes issue in a way that will make sense to people of all political and philosophical backgrounds. There will be plenty of extra Pledge cards at the Winter Party for you to pick up and use during the next few months.



Project Open Mind Update

A Successful Outreach Project?

It was only 1 month ago that PFLAG Houston hosted a news conference announcing the beginning of "Project Open Mind (POM)." POM is an education and outreach campaign designed to raise the public's awareness of the negative effects of hate speech.

POM began with the 2 television commercials "Bashing" and "Innocence." These ads portray 2 examples of the negative effects of hate speech: gay bashings and suicide. Since the ads contain examples of hate speech from various public figures including Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, and Jesse Helms, virtually every tv station refused to air the ads on the grounds of legal concerns. Pat Robertson and the Christian Broadcasting Network issued threatening letters and faxes to all of the local tv stations warning that lawsuits would be filed against any station airing the ads. Needless to say, the ads did not run in Houston. But does that mean POM is not a success? BY NO MEANS!!!

Project Open Mind is not about ads on TV! It is about raising the public's awareness of hate speech and its negative effects. So what do we do now? Now we reach out. It is our turn to reach out to different community groups, our friends, neighbors and others with the message of Project Open Mind. With the commercials to begin the discussion, we must tell the facts about hate speech and its negative effects. It is illegal to yell "Fire," in a crowded theater due to the potential danger that can occur. It is just as wrong to allow the hate speech to continue to flow unchallenged in public forums. PFLAG has said we won't let it continue. We cannot remain silent.

So what can you do as a member of PFLAG Houston? Talk about the ads. Alert the Helpline about potential speaking opportunities for POM spokespersons. We have copies of the advertisements and can bring them to speaking engagements for viewing. If you or someone you know is interested in hearing more about Project Open Mind and its message, leave a message on the Helpline so we can get in touch with

Upcoming Events

- | | |
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Pete & Judy Filippone's
Reservations Required
Call Susan Upchurch
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| Dec. 7 | LGRL's Pledge Project Launch Event & Speaker Training by Dianne Hardy-Garcia, 7-9pm at Bering UMC. |
| Dec. 12 | Bus Bunch Meeting Bering UMC, 7:00pm |
| Jan. 7 | PFLAG Meeting |

Call for Support of Channel 20 Taking a Stand on Hate Speech

Some of you may remember several months ago when our president Don Sinclair agreed to be on a radio show with a local minister named Phil Arms. Arms, who is extremely hostile to homosexuality had his own TV show on Channel 20, as well as his own church in the Alief SW Houston area.

It was announced last week that Channel 20 had canceled Arms' TV show, primarily because of the hate speech he uses against gays, lesbians, Muslims, and other minority groups. PFLAG member Sue Null called Channel 20 to thank them for this decision. In an email to Gail Rickey, Sue writes: "I called Channel 20, KTXH, to express my approval for canceling Phil Arms and they told me that I was the ONLY one who had called for 'our' side; that they had received a barrage of letters from people supporting Phil Arms and angry at the station. I asked if a letter from me would help; they said, YES! (I sent one). I think we need to let this channel know that we support their decision not to let this hate-monger on the air."

Sue encourages us all to contact the station manager, MICHAEL DUNLOP, and thank the station for its stance.

KTXH - Channel 20, UPN
 8950 Kirby Drive
 Houston, Texas 77054

Join us for a time of sharing,
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If you are interested in being a speaker for the Pledge Project, join Dianne at Bering UMC for this special training session as PFLAG supports LGRL's launch of the Pledge. If you have any questions, as always, please contact the Helpline at 867-9020.

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Project Open Mind

Stop the Hate Speech

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Call for Support of Channel 20

Taking a Stand on Hate Speech

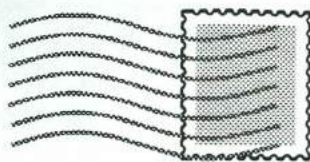
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8950 Kirby Drive
Houston, Texas 77054
Phone: 661-2020; Fax: 665-3909

FYI, Rev. Don Sinclair, our President, recently received a form letter from Arms, asking for his support, as a minister, in protesting to the station about Arms expulsion!!



News from Around the Nation

Disney Extends Benefits to Partners of Gay & Lesbian Employees

Now is the Time of Send Letters of Support

NEW YORK, Oct 6 (Reuter) - Walt Disney Co has extended health benefits to partners of its gay and lesbian employees, after resisting the trend among its competitors to provide the benefits, the Wall Street Journal reported Friday. The company announced the news quietly this week in a benefits newsletter, though gay employees at Disney said the reversal was a major event after years of lobbying, the paper said. It added Disney would not estimate the costs of extending the benefits, scheduled to be available starting January 1.

Reuter/Variety

Editor's Note: Disney has become the subject of numerous boycotts as a result of this decision. Most recently, the Florida Southern Baptist Convention issued a statement recommending that churches no longer support Walt Disney World or Walt Disney Corporation. Hmm...I think we should show our support. So now more than ever, take time to show your appreciation to Disney by writing a letter of support to Michael Eisner, 500 South Buena Vista St., Burbank, CA 91521.

PFLAG FLYER



December 1995
Page 2

Check Your Bookshelves

PFLAG Library Needs Your Help

In a recent note from Dick and Norma Graves, our PFLAG Librarians, Norma wanted to remind everyone to check your bookshelves, video cabinets, cars, and homes for any books, videos, or tapes from the PFLAG Houston Library. We seem to be somewhat behind on our returns, so there will be a box at the Winter Party to return library items. Next month, look for descriptions of some exciting new additions to our PFLAG Library. Don't forget to check for those overdue books, after all, we don't charge late fees. ☺



Recyclable Reprint

The Short and Tragical Life of a Neighborhood "Sissy"

By Victoria Brownworth

Note from an email friend: *The next time somebody suggests that homosexuality is an inappropriate subject to be taught in the schools, you might want to pass along this article. In this instance a child was murdered. In other cases, the result is suicide. There are lessons to be learned here...teaching diversity and acceptance in schools can save lives...pretending that children don't need to learn such things will perpetuate the ongoing dangerous climate for gay youth. This child may or may not have been gay. But homophobia made his life and subsequent death an undeservedly living hell.*

Tonight, kids will be going door to door in Halloween costumes. There will be the usual high-pitched shrieks of laughter and shouts of "Boo" as children run through the streets, bags of candy swinging. In Middletown, Del., neighbors caught up in the excitement of the holiday may actually stop thinking about 9-year-old Steven Wilson for a while. For Karen Wilson, the boy's mother, the pain of hearing the happy voices of other children may be almost unbearable. Her son won't be among the revelers. Her son is gone for good. The shrieks she hears in the streets outside may make her wonder again what the last moments of her son's life were like. May make her want to scream out her own anguish.

It's been two weeks since little Steven disappeared; two weeks since he was murdered not far from the apartment complex where he lived. Fifteen-year-old Lamont Harden has been charged with the murder. Police say Harden has confessed. But that is only part of the story of the short and terribly sad life of Steven Wilson. The rest of the tale is just as grim.

Steven wasn't like other boys. He had a learning disability, he was shy - a loner, his mother told reporters when he was still missing. And he liked to play with dolls, with girl's toys. "They teased him a lot," said one neighbor who admitted her child was among his persecutors. "He would hide in my house," said one of his baby sitters. Steven was afraid of the children in his neighborhood. Afraid of the taunts, afraid of being "picked on," afraid of how being different had made him a target. Steven was right to be afraid.

There was shock in Middletown when Steven's little, battered body was found in a nearby creek. There was horror a few days later when police announced Harden's arrest at a town meeting and told a packed hall how brutal Steven's murder was. But while Steven was missing, and in the days afterward, as Harden and other children were questioned about his murder, the mothers of Middletown worried: Had their children been involved in the boy's death? Because apparently they had all been involved in the daily torture he endured in life. Several mothers admitted their fear; others found it difficult to believe Harden committed the killing alone.

"Steven didn't go with people," said one mother, adamantly. Whether or not Harden had accomplices who helped him fracture Steven's skull in several places, break his jaw, crack his teeth, viciously rape him and drown him in the creek, we may never know. But if Steven hadn't been a "sissy" who liked to play with dolls, if he hadn't been the target of nearly every child in the neighborhood, perhaps he would not have become the victim of murder.

Homophobia has many guises. A boy who likes girl's toys or clothes gets taunted, hit, assaulted or raped. The perpetrators often say they were trying to teach the victim a lesson, teach him the difference between masculine and feminine. Perhaps that's what Harden wanted to do to Steven. Perhaps the kind of "games" the neighborhood children played with Steven - taunts, bullying, violence - just got out of hand and he was killed.

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Harden will be tried and likely convicted. But while what Harden stands accused of doing to Steven is certainly the most awful of the many crimes committed against this child, there were many others. There was a climate in Middletown that made Steven afraid every day of his short life. And that climate may have contributed to his death; made Harden believe no one cared what happened to Steven, that his death was no one's loss. The climate in Middletown has changed since Steven's murder; mothers say they are afraid, but don't say of what. Something happened in this small town, but it could have happened anywhere. This Halloween night, a ghost hovers over Middletown. His name is Steven Wilson, and he's seeking the justice and peace he never found in life.

Reprinted from PHILADELPHIA DAILY NEWS, Tuesday, October 31, 1995

Together, We Will

Well, winter is here and 1995 is almost over. Soon January will be here and the Bus Trip to Washington, DC will be right around the corner. Since the announcement at the PFLAG National Convention in Indianapolis, more than 30 chapters have contacted us to indicate their interest in this nation-wide project.

More than 20 Houston PFLAGers will ride the bus, which departs Sat., March 16, and returns March 23. We will be in Washington, DC on March 19-20. If you are interested in joining us on the Bus or just want to help us get ready for this exciting project, attend the next Bus Bunch meeting on Tues., Dec. 12, at Bering Methodist Church.

We are anticipating more Moms & Dads joining us from Houston and around the country. There are also plans to have a group of our sons, daughters, friends and supporters meet us in DC on the 19th. We have already received requests from the Houston Chronicle and TriAngle Video to provide print and video documentary coverage of the trip. This trip in support of ENDA and our children, friends, and family is going to be a historical event for PFLAG parents across the nation. Make plans now to join us in this exciting journey to our nation's capital.

Community Rallies to Support First Texas Honda

Dealer Withstands Call to Pull Texas Triangle Ads

AUSTIN-- Community leaders, business owners and gays and lesbians came together this week to support an Austin car dealership that is being picketed by a conservative Christian group--the American Family Association--for advertising in the Texas Triangle. The controversy has been ongoing for several months. It began when Wyatt Roberts, who hosts a talk show on Christian radio station KIXL-AM on Saturday mornings, began reading a list of Austin advertisers in the Triangle on the show. Advertisers were urged to pull out of the Triangle; when one car dealership, First Texas Honda, refused, it was picketed by the American Family Association.

Initially, gays and lesbians and their supporters ignored the pickets. That changed last weekend, when a group of business leaders, politicians, and gays and lesbians decided to demonstrate their support for First Texas Honda on two fronts: First, community leaders signed a statement pledging that discrimination will not be tolerated in Austin. Second, gays, lesbians and their supporters picketed KIXL-AM Saturday morning. The "nonverbal picket" was covered by the Austin American-Statesman.

Lew Aldridge, owner of the City Grill, an Austin restaurant in the entertainment district, invited area business owners, newspaper publishers and political leaders to sign a resolution stating that there is "no place in Austin business for those who advocate discrimination." In a letter attached to the resolution, Aldridge said he hoped that "Austin's mainstream business and community leaders can make it clear that this kind of hatred and oppression has no place in our city. Both personally and as a citizen of Austin, I will be deeply grateful for your assistance," Aldridge said. "But in the end it is for everyone that this statement should be released: One cannot stand silently by while others are oppressed without becoming one of the oppressors."

Among those who had signed the statement at press time were Austin Mayor Bruce Todd, County Judge Bill Aleshire, Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos, Reps. Sherri Greenberg, Glen Maxey, and Elliott Naishtat, City Councilmembers Gus Garcia, Jackie Goodman and Brigid Shea, longtime Austin businessman and former Mayor Roy Butler, and the publishers of the Austin Chronicle and the Texas Triangle. Declining to sign the statement were the Texas Automobile Dealers Association and Roger Kintzel, publisher of the American Statesman.

While Aldridge worked to gather signatures, gay and lesbian activists demonstrated. "They (the American Family Association) have vowed not to remove their pickets at First Texas Honda until First Texas Honda pulls their advertisements," said Kirk Rice, an Austin lawyer who organized the picket at KIXL-AM. "And First Texas Honda has wholeheartedly said, 'No, we're not pulling our ads'....This is more of a support-First Texas Honda, support-free-speech sort of rally."

Mark Haworth, the First Texas Honda salesman who began placing ads in the Triangle 14 months ago, addressed the picketers before the rally began. "We're not backing down," he said. "It is with the support of you By David Elliot, TRIANGLE Staffall that's going to help us stand strong. They've got to be stopped, because if it doesn't stop here, who's next?" Haworth said that since AFA protests began, the agency has signed another 26-week contract with the Triangle, a statewide weekly.

Support for the picket was diverse. Amy Carter, spokeswoman for the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, explained why she became involved: "Sometimes it is best to ignore them (the American Family Association) and go on, but we felt this time that

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person. But I don't want anybody deciding on the basis of her sexual orientation, on the basis of who she chooses to love, whether she's a worthwhile person or not. I certainly don't want a radio station who doesn't know her deciding that."

Meanwhile, Roberts acknowledged the presence of the picketers during his radio show. "For the last couple of months, we have announced the names of mainstream advertisers appearing in the Triangle," he told his listeners. "Well, that apparently has upset some folks."

On the air, Roberts denied that he instigated the protest against First Texas Honda. At the same time, however, he read the Honda dealership's address to his listeners three times and reiterated why the American Family Association is picketing them.

In a Triangle interview last Saturday, following the radio program, Roberts initially said that his radio show "didn't organize any kind of protest out there" at First Texas Honda. However, Roberts acknowledged that his words on the radio--as well as the fact that he had attended the protest the previous Saturday--might be viewed by objective sources as a statement of support. "I think it would be fair to characterize my presence there as a protest," he said. "I did not orchestrate the protest."

Here is the resolution released by Lew Aldridge, owner of the City Grill. Those signing the resolution were the publishers of the Austin Chronicle and the Texas Triangle, Austin Mayor Bruce Todd, County Judge Bill Aleshire, City Council members Gus Garcia, Jackie Goodman and Brigid Shea, Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos, Reps. Sherri Greenberg, Glen Maxey and Elliott Naishtat, and Austin businessman and former Mayor Roy Butler.

The Texas Resolution

We support the equal rights of every Austinite, including our lesbian and gay citizens, to fully participate in our city's economic life--as employees, as consumers and as business people. We support the equal right of every Austin business to conduct its business in a manner that includes all of Austin's people.

We deplore actions of any group designed to force or intimidate businesses into discriminating against gays and lesbians or any other group. We commend, applaud and support First Texas Honda

supporters meet us in DC on the 19th. We have already received requests from the Houston Chronicle and TriAngle Video to provide print and video documentary coverage of the trip. This trip in support of ENDA and our children, friends, and family is going to be a historical event for PFLAG parents across the nation. Make plans now to join us in this exciting journey to our nation's capital.

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Sally McIntosh, president of the Austin chapter of PFLAG, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, said she came out to protest because of talk show host Wyatt Roberts' anti-gay rhetoric. "I don't like somebody telling me that my lesbian daughter has any less value to society than my heterosexual daughter has to society," McIntosh said as she held up a banner against a gusty wind. "If she's not a

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We affirm that: Austin business won't discriminate or tolerate in-

(Continued on page 4)