



San Jose ♦ Peninsula Newsletter

April 2008

www.pflagsanjose.org

P.O. Box 2718, Sunnyvale, CA 94087

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President's Message

A few weeks ago I was looking through our newsletter archives for the history of our participation in the July 4th Redwood City Parade. On July 4, 1995, 76 PFLAGers marched the parade route (in step as I recall, directed by Marti Wright) singing "We are the People in Your Neighborhood" (Sesame Street). In the August Newsletter for that year, there was a full page letter written by Chris Kryzan, who you old timers will remember. He has given me permission, with greetings to you all, to reprint a few portions of that letter which I found very moving.

"I was surprised at how affected I was by PFLAG's participation in the Redwood City Fourth of July Parade. No preaching to the choir here, as with the Lesbygay Pride Celebrations where we have come to expect some of the mutual outpouring of love and affection. This was a walk through Middle America with everything that represents.

No matter that many in the crowd were silent, some open-mouthed, perhaps not quite sure what to make of these seventy-six people proclaiming their love for gays and lesbians. These spectators have been made aware of our existence now, perhaps something that they never quite had to deal with before, unconsciously transformed in a way in which they're not yet quite aware. But innocent spectators they are no longer - for now the subject of lesbians and gays is real, more personal.

I have to believe that they were surprised, too, when they saw moms, dads, brothers, sisters, grandparents and even children there. Not exactly what they're fed on the evening news. How wonderful, to have opened some eyes, even if the hands and mouths didn't quite know what to do.

Chris talked about being touched by the crowds- a few people in particular -

An Hispanic woman in her early thirties, standing in the back of a pickup truck, shouted "Thank you, thank you, thank you" over and over. Was this the first time she saw parents loving their queer children? Had she recently come out herself, and was rejoicing in finding acceptance on the unlikely streets of Redwood City?

A teenage boy was huddled in one of the doorways, nervous, but clapping in spite of it. He had a look on his face... that admits queerness, but that is held tight by the closet door. I like to believe we gave him hope.

A woman in her late teens or early twenties was yelling with force and emotion such as I'd never seen. Maybe still trying to find acceptance and love from her own parents? Seeing it was possible in the smiles, the love and the warmth from the PFLAG contingent as it marched down the streets.

...to the hundreds of children and teens that lined the parade route, who may understand that diversity is perhaps just a bit broader than they imagined it when they woke up this morning, I believe that PFLAG left the world a better place today, by bushel barrels, and quantum leaps and bounds.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS APRIL

- April 9 San Jose Meeting - 7:30 PM
First Congregational Church
1980 Hamilton Ave. (at Leigh)
(2nd Wednesday of the month)
- April 14 Redwood City Meeting - 7:30 PM
Sequoia Union H.S. District Offices
480 James Ave., Redwood City
(2nd Monday of the month)
- April 16 Board Meeting - 7:30 PM
at Mike Raymond's office
(3rd Wednesday of the month)
ALL ARE WELCOME!
- April 17 Straight Spouse Support - 7:30 PM
Call San Jose Helpline for info.
(3rd Thursday of the month)
- Gilroy — Call the Helpline for support and
information: (408) 846-9105
- May 1 Newsletter Stuffing at Joyce Miller's
2008 Schedule
1st Thursday of May, Oct;
Last Thursday of May, July, Aug, Oct.

▼
→ **May Newsletter Deadline:**
Thursday, April 24

More than anything, I was inspired by my hope for humanity. As we sang our words from Sesame Street- tame by our standards, but "in your face" in a way never seen before in the Redwood City parade - I began to believe not only that "We are the people in your neighborhood," but that the neighbors are pretty good people, too.

Things have changed quite a bit in the last 13 years, but I know our presence in this Parade still makes a big difference to a lot of people. Save the morning of the 4th and be watching for details about our 13th annual "Make a Difference" march.

As always, thanks for all you do.

Laurie

PFLAG Support Meetings

Wednesday, April 9 in San Jose
Monday, April 14 in Redwood City

We will show an excellent film, *For the Bible Tells Me So*, at both support meetings.

Can the love between two people ever be an abomination? Is the chasm separating gays and lesbians and Christianity too wide to cross? Is the Bible an excuse to hate?

Winner of nine awards, including the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the Seattle International Film Festival, Dan Karlslake's provocative, entertaining documentary brilliantly reconciles homosexuality and Biblical scripture, and in the process reveals that church-sanctioned anti-gay bias is based almost solely upon a significant (and often malicious) misinterpretation of the Bible. As the film notes, most Christians live their lives today without feeling obliged to kill anyone who works on the Sabbath or eats shrimp (as a literal reading of scripture dictates).

Through the experiences of five very normal, very Christian, very American families — including those of former House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt and Episcopalian Bishop Gene Robinson — we discover how insightful people of faith handle the realization of having a gay child. Informed by such respected voices as Bishop Desmond Tutu, Harvard's Peter Gomes, Orthodox Rabbi Steve Greenberg and Reverend Jimmy Creech, *For the Bible Tells Me So* offers healing, clarity and understanding to anyone caught in the crosshairs of scripture and sexual identity.

Since the film is one and a half hours in length, we will first have introductions, announcements and support groups, and then show the film. At 9:30, we will break to allow those who need to leave to do so, then resume the film. ▼

“Senator, when you took your oath of office, you placed your hand on the Bible and swore to uphold the Constitution. You did not place your hand on the Constitution and swear to uphold the Bible.”

Jamin Raskin, getting to the point, in a debate over a proposed constitutional amendment to the Maryland state constitution to prevent gay couples from having legal marriage rights

* Mark your Calendars *

April 25	12th Annual National Day of Silence
May 2	Kulture Kulcha 2008
May 2 - 5	Queer Youth Advocacy Day
May 8	Out to Eat
May 14	PFLAG Scholarship Awards Ceremony
May 18	Northern California/Nevada Regional PFLAG Meeting in Modesto. Open to all.
June 29	True Colors Concert Tour

PFLAG Speakers Bureau Report

by Stephen Boniface

Here are some highlights from the Speakers Bureau progress report presented at our Annual Meeting. To date, the PFLAG Speakers Bureau:

- Presented 82 panels, to 2992 people [since recording began in 2/2006]
- Upgraded our Speakers Training Program
- Developed a 100-page “Cookbook” – a consolidation of documents from approximately 10 different LGBT education groups and speakers bureaus from Massachusetts to California, containing tools and guidelines developed from over 30 years of use.
- Presented a workshop “Speak Now! Starting & Developing a Speakers Bureau” at the 2007 National PFLAG Convention in Washington D.C.
- Collaborates with other Bay Area and U.S. PFLAG chapters, Outlet, Triangle Speakers, Community United Against Violence (CUAV), Pro Latino, the Transgender Law Center, and others.
- Is planning upcoming training for San Francisco.

Also, we received this letter from a student at De Anza College:

Hi,

PFLAG came to my human sexuality class at De Anza College on the first of February. He talked about a lot of things - he talks about how he came out as a homosexual on his own personal experience and also explained about how PFLAG is helping the society. He also discussed some very controversial issue existed about homosexuality, transgender and everything.

It had been a wonderful class because all of the questions are answered and all of the doubts have been lost. [The panelists] really help[ed] me and the class understood of how hard is it to be different and how hard it is to be accepted. And the most important thing of all that he and the other tell us is be yourself and free yourself to who you want to be. Don't be afraid and don't be scare[d] you are not alone.

I just wanted to say that I will support PFLAG because I believe that no one [should] be afraid to be themselves to let go and be yourself. I will fight for the right of those who have been discriminated [against] unfairly. I will vote to allow gay marriages in every election because I believe that we human[s] are suppose[d] to be able to marry whoever [we] want regardless gender and sex. If I have homosexual or transgender children I will never turn my back on them, but I will open my hands and accept them.

Thank you very much and I hope that other people can be as inspired and convinced as I am that PFLAG is part of the great future of our next generation. ▼



PFLAG Annual Meeting Report

An enthusiastic group of 30 PFLAG members attended the San Jose/Peninsula Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 1 at the Belmont Congregational Church. Highlights included a catered dinner (provided at cost by a friend of PFLAG), fabulous raffle prizes, a great slide show, and sparkling piano music provided by Stephen Boniface.

Inspirational accounts of the chapter's achievements during the past year were presented by Maribeth Ament who spoke about the Scholarship program; Stephen Boniface, who reported on the Speakers Bureau; and Windsor Smith, who described the work of our award-winning Cable TV Committee. Laurie Carter was the M.C. and chief organizer of the evening's program.

All event and raffle proceeds went to the PFLAG Scholarship Fund - a total of \$1,788. ▼

Results of Board Election

The following new officers were elected at the March 1st Annual Meeting:

- Peter Van der Pas, Secretary
- David and Linda Goldstein: Membership Co-chairs
- David Worthington: Member at Large

In addition: Howard Shen was appointed Acting Vice President at the March 19 Board meeting.

These positions remain vacant: Advocacy Chair, Publicity Chair, 2nd Member at Large. ▼

SUPPORT OUR SCHOLARSHIPS

It's never too late to donate to the Scholarship Fund! You can donate online on our website: click the "Pay Now" button in the box on the left (below "Donations: General / Scholarship / Endowment"). Or use the form on the back page of this newsletter to mail a donation. Thank you!

The Important Things (a poem)

What is really important to you
Is probably what is important to me
To have someone to love and share your time with
Someone to understand who you really are
A person to share your day with
Someone to sit in the quiet of the night with
And gaze at the stars

We are all just people trying to make a home in this life
Trying to grab some happiness and make our stay in this world
A pleasant one, with little strife

So, the next time you look at your neighbor
Who may appear different, in lifestyle, religion or color
Remember that we are all just people trying to get by
They are really not that much different
Than you or I

from "A Memory Placed in the Heart" by Ramona Louise Skidmore (available through amazon.com)

PFLAG Scholarship Award Ceremony

May 14

Please join us on Wednesday, May 14 for our Annual PFLAG Scholarship Award Ceremony. This year the ceremony will be held from 7-9 PM at our San Jose PFLAG meeting location: First Congregational Church, 1980 Hamilton Ave (at Leigh), San Jose 95125. Cake, cookies and beverages will be served immediately after the ceremony.

We will be awarding \$2,000 scholarships to four Santa Clara and San Mateo County high school seniors. The evening promises to be heartwarming and fun! Each year I am amazed at the time and dedication that these wonderful students give to enrich our community. Help us celebrate with these vibrant young students, who have done so much to promote equal rights and justice for the LGBT community.

Thank you for all your support of the PFLAG Scholarship program, and I hope to see all of you there!

Maribeth Ament,
Scholarship Chair

PFLAG Scholarship History

by Maribeth Ament

Our scholarship program was started in 1992 when Ron Schmidt of BANGLE asked PFLAG to participate in the Bobby Griffith Scholarship Fund. The first scholarship was \$250.00.

In 2002 PFLAG partnered with GLSEN and combined our resources to have one big scholarship program. When this chapter of GLSEN disbanded in 2005, they gave PFLAG their remaining scholarship funds. PFLAG continues with GLSEN's "Joyce Palmer Fulton Memorial Scholarship." It is my hope that our scholarship recipients will follow Joyce's example and become life-long activists for human rights.

Since we started our scholarship program, we have awarded over \$88,000 to young people whose educational history, personal plans and activities demonstrate support for justice and equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons.

I also want to acknowledge the financial support we have received from several organizations who have contributed thousands of dollars to our scholarship program over the years: IRLM, GLSEN, and BayLands FrontRunners. I especially want to thank Eleanor Sue and Wendy Mines who organize the Annual Mid-Peninsula Women's Dance to benefit PFLAG and the Peninsula Women's Group. We wouldn't be able to award a total of \$8,000 in scholarships this year without your generous financial assistance.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say a big THANK YOU to all of the individuals who have generously donated their time and money over the years. There are too many to list, but I would also like to thank them. This program would not be able to continue without their generous support!

Thank you! ▼

"Silence kills the soul; it diminishes its possibilities to rise and fly and explore. Silence withers what makes you human. The soul shrinks, until it's nothing."

Marlon Riggs / Filmmaker

The PFLAG Newsletter

Published monthly by San Jose/Peninsula Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, P.O. Box 2718, Sunnyvale, CA 94087, Phone: (408) 270-8182.

Peninsula Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays is a tax-exempt, volunteer, community based nonprofit organization. The San Jose/Peninsula chapter is a member of National PFLAG which is headquartered in Washington, D.C.. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the full extent provided by law.

Would you like to volunteer?
Call the information lines.
We need your help — Call today!



What is PFLAG?

“PFLAG” is Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians & Gays. We are a national support, education and advocacy organization for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people, their families, friends and allies. With 200,000 members and supporters, and local affiliates in more than 500 communities across the U.S. and abroad, PFLAG is the largest grassroots-based family organization of its kind. PFLAG is a non-profit organization and is not affiliated with any religious or political institutions.

Your financial support makes PFLAG’s work possible. As a chapter member you can also become engaged in the vital work of providing support, education and advocacy in your community. Even if you’re not sure that you need PFLAG, remember that PFLAG NEEDS YOU!

MEETING TOPICS ♥ 2008



Meetings are from 7:30—9:00 PM
Small groups for support are held at all meetings.

Redwood City & San Jose:
Movie: For the Bible Tells Me So



Please bring a food donation for AIDS services providers.

▼ PFLAG’S MISSION

We provide love and support for all family members and friends. We work to create an environment of understanding so that our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender loved ones can live with dignity and respect. These are our goals:

SUPPORT · EDUCATION · ADVOCACY

Sequoia Union H.S. District Office
480 James Avenue
REDWOOD CITY

1st Congregational Church
1980 Hamilton Avenue
SAN JOSE



MEMBERSHIP IN SAN JOSE/PENINSULA PFLAG - 2008

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Make checks payable and mail to: PFLAG - PO Box 2718, Sunnyvale, CA 94087. Your donations & membership are tax deductible.