



San Jose ♦ Peninsula Newsletter

August 2008

www.pflagsanjose.org

P.O. Box 2718, Sunnyvale, CA 94087

♥ NEED HELP? ♥ Call the Help/Info Lines:

♥ (408) 270-8182 ♥ Gilroy: (408) 846-9105

Jerusalem Gay Pride Parade

by Ann D.

Waving rainbow streamers, thirty five PFLAG folks marched in Redwood City's Fourth of July parade. Kids in wagons and dogs wearing bandanas lined the route. Curbside families clapped and cheered. Only a few onlookers gestured thumbs down, and frowned. Some newly-married couples marched too; I heard their happy wedding stories while we walked.

This was the 14th year that PFLAG has marched in this parade. Announcers enthusiastically shouted our mission into mikes as we passed:

... rainbows celebrate the wide spectrum of people making up our wonderful nation. PFLAG's work to support families, educate, and advocate for liberty and justice for all is represented by these bright colors...

Exactly one week earlier in Israel, I had walked in the Gay Pride Parade in Jerusalem. This ancient, stone city, home to three major world religions, is a different scene.

Hours before, 2,000 uniformed Israeli policemen, armed with revolvers and rifles, surrounded Independence Park with barricades and temporary metal fences. The only access to the park was through three security lines they set up.

One by one, people filed through security checks, then milled about the park, quietly greeting friends, clustering into small groups. Except for an arch of colored balloons, I saw few signs, banners, costumes or floats. People dressed in ordinary clothes. I saw only one couple snatch a kiss.

Not knowing a soul, I timidly went through the security check and entered the park. In my primitive Hebrew, I searched for the parent group I'd heard was there. Finally I found four mothers, holding two small hand-written signs in Hebrew: "*We love ALL our children*," plus a telephone number. These brave women spoke English, and greeted me warmly. We exchanged stories. Two other mothers joined, and a sister. Suddenly I felt totally at home.

My friend Dvora had urged me to go. A dynamic mother of a gay son, Dvora has co-led the Tel Aviv group, and helped start other groups in Haifa, Jerusalem, then Beer Sheva. She edits newsletters, answers phone lines, speaks to schools, psychologists and rabbis, writes educational materials.

I'd read earlier in the English newspaper, *The Jerusalem Post*, that the parade was highly controversial. Violence had erupted. Last year, hundreds of ultra-Orthodox religious extremists had protested, blocking streets and setting fires to rubbish bins. The year before that, three people were stabbed. Many believe that a gay pride parade should not happen in highly conservative Jerusalem, a holy city.

MEETING CALENDAR AUGUST

- Aug. 11 Redwood City Meeting - 7:30 PM
Sequoia Union H.S. District Offices
480 James Ave., Redwood City
(2nd Monday of the month)
- Aug. 13 San Jose Meeting - 7:30 PM
First Congregational Church
1980 Hamilton Ave. (at Leigh)
(2nd Wednesday of the month)
- Aug. 14 Straight Spouse Support - 7:30 PM
Call San Jose Helpline for info.
(2nd Thursday of the month)
- Aug. 20 Board Meeting - 7:30 PM
(3rd Wednesday of the month)
ALL ARE WELCOME!
- Gilroy — Call the Helpline for
support and information:
(408) 846-9105
- Aug. 28 — Newsletter Stuffing
2008 Schedule
1st Thursday of Oct;
Last Thursday of Aug & Oct.



→ **September Newsletter Deadline:**
Thursday, August 21



**Help
Defeat
Proposition 8**

- Sign up!
- Donate!

www.NoOnProp8.com

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

PFLAG Support Meetings—August

Redwood City and San Jose:

This month, at both the Redwood City and San Jose support meetings, we'll give you an update on the **NO on Proposition 8—Equality for All** campaign. Come hear the latest news and learn about how you can help to defeat this initiative and help ensure that all families have equal protection under the law.

Following the discussion, we'll break into our small groups for support. ▼

Shannon Minter @ BAYMEC Annual Dinner September 19

BAYMEC, The Bay Area Municipal Elections Committee, will hold their annual dinner/celebration/award night at the Fairmont Hotel, San Jose. **This year's keynote speaker is Shannon Price Minter, Esq., Legal Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and the lead counsel before the California Supreme Court on the same-sex marriage case.**

The following will also receive awards: **PFLAG member and activist Judy Rickard**; Donald Kassing, Former President of San Jose State University; Vanessa Cooper; George Duran; Julie Emede; Jonathan Noble; and Patrick Soricone. Cindy Chavez, former Vice Mayor of San Jose, will emcee. Tickets, including a fabulous dinner, are \$150 each. Don't miss this wonderful evening!

PFLAG is hosting a table at this event and we need to sell at least 10 tickets! If we sell more than 10, we'll have multiple PFLAG tables. To sit at a PFLAG table, please contact newslettereditor@pflagsanjose.org or phone the Help Line and leave a message: (408) 270-8182. This year's event will be well-attended - so don't delay!

To purchase tickets, go to <http://www.baymec.net/TicketsWithPayPal.htm> where you can either pay online or print the form to mail in. If mailing a check, you must include your name, full address, occupation and name of employer. Make checks payable to BAYMEC at PO Box 6296, San Jose, CA 95150-6296.

BAYMEC is a South Bay LGBT political action group - advocating for the civil rights of LGBT people since 1984. BAYMEC is the only political action committee (PAC) of its kind serving the Counties of San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Monterey. To subscribe to BAYMEC's online newsletter, send an email to info@baymec.net ▼

**The vitality of thought is in adventure.
Ideas won't keep.
Something must be done about them.**

Alfred North Whitehead

PFLAG Scholarship Fund Update

We have a goal of raising \$10,000 this year for the PFLAG Scholarship Fund. As of June 30, 2008, we were only about \$2,800 away from meeting that goal, with a total Fund balance of \$7,238.38. Last year the Board directed that all interest earned on our Chapter deposits go into the Scholarship Fund. We received \$4,261.00 in general scholarship donations, \$1,000 in honor of Joyce Fulton and \$1,977.38 in interest earned this year.

Donations to the Scholarship Fund can be made by check sent to our PO Box, or online via credit card at our website, www.PFLAGSanJose.org. Make checks payable to PFLAG, and write "Scholarship Fund" on the Note line. We especially encourage donations in honor of Joyce Fulton. With six months left to go, we should be able to meet our goal with everyone's help. Also, remember to take advantage of your employer's corporate matching programs.

Thank you for your support! ▼

Tapestry Arts Festival August 30—September 1

Help spread the word about PFLAG at the Tapestry Arts Festival!

San Jose's Tapestry Arts Festival will take place on Labor Day weekend, August 30 - September 1, and once again PFLAG will host a booth on Non-Profit Way. This is one of the largest Art Festivals in the SF Bay Area, with tens of thousands in attendance over the course of the weekend. Tapestry Arts promises to be one of PFLAG's best vehicles for mainstream exposure, with plenty of opportunities to Support, Educate and Advocate on behalf of our gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual friends and family members.

If you would like to help wo/man the booth for a 2-hour shift, please contact pflag-info@pflagsanjose.org and include your preferred shift time. The Festival runs from 10 AM - 6 PM Saturday and Sunday, and from 10 AM - 5 PM on Monday. Please visit www.tapestryarts.org/ for details regarding the Tapestry Arts Festival itself.

Let's make PFLAG a household name! ▼

* Mark your Calendars *

Aug. 2, 6 & 13 - El Camino Reelers Free Intro Nights
www.reelers.org

Aug. 30-Sept. 1 - Tapestry Arts Festival
Sept. 19 - BAYMEC Annual Dinner

Dec. 14 - NCLR receives the ACLU Civil Liberties Award (S.F.)

NO on 8—What You Can Do

We have an amazing opportunity to make history in the next 100 days.

On July 23rd, Carol and I attended a meeting with some of the directors of the No on 8 campaign.

The immediate need right now is for people to join the phone banks to recruit volunteers. The Bay Area is committed to contact 90,000 undecided voters between Labor Day and Election Day, and we need to have volunteers on board and trained to hit the phones — running!

Carol and I have vowed that we will do our very best to have at least one carload (4 people) a week for a phoning session. This involves a 45 minute training and then 2 hours or so of phoning. Right now we're phoning supporters, not general voters.

Will you join Carol on Tuesday nights 6:30-9:30, or join me on Thursday nights 6:30-9:30 or Saturday mornings 10-2? We'll provide transportation. You can also select another time and we can hook you up with other people.

Other ways to help:

Loans or donations of tables, chairs, computers, copy machines and fax machines are needed to fill Equality For All's donated office space. Right now there are some empty rooms. If you have anything to donate or loan, contact Laurie or Carol. All loans will be returned after November 3rd.

Monetary donations are still needed! Donate online at www.NoOnProp8.com. It is not tax deductible, but a good investment in our Country's future.

Finally, if you work in an office here in San Mateo County with at least 10 phone lines, and could offer your facility for local phonebanks, please contact Laurie or Carol.

Despite all the polls you read about in the newspapers, this is going to be a very tight race. Thanks for anything you can do to help!

You're all wonderful and I know PFLAG is going to make a big contribution to this effort.

Laurie Carter



The right to marry whoever one wishes is an elementary human right . . . Nearly all other rights enumerated in the Constitution, are secondary to the inalienable human rights to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence; and to this category the right to home and marriage unquestionably belongs.

Hannah Arendt, 1959

Jerusalem Gay Pride Parade

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So parade organizers, religious groups and police compromised: religious groups would not demonstrate or protest. Gay pride groups would be modest, respectful and non-provocative. That accounted for the muted atmosphere, so different from the festive San Francisco Gay parades I am used to, different, too, from the colorful gay parades in more secular Tel Aviv.

The Jerusalem marchers finally exited the park, slowly walking down major roads closed to traffic, lined with barricades and armed police. No crowds watched, except a few tourists standing outside hotels. No cheering. No applause. No music. The only noise I heard was the chanting of young trans-people who marched behind us mothers. The march ended at another park, also fenced and barricaded, where a rally took place, with speeches, cheers, singing, music and dancing, all of it invisible to the public.

"Staid gay parade sashays through capital unassailed" *The Jerusalem Post* headline read the next day.

Dvora wrote in her newsletter that 3 days before the Jerusalem march, the Israeli Lawyer's Association met to discuss "Forbidding the Gay Pride March in Jerusalem: For and Against." Dvora attended, learning that three bills had been presented to the Knesset (Israel's parliament) demanding that the march be forbidden. The lawyer's association opposed this discrimination against LGBT sons and daughters. Only two days before the parade, the High Court voted in favor of the march.

Yet, hard as it is to be "out" in Jerusalem, it's much harder to be LGBT in other Middle Eastern countries, I learned. Some countries punish homosexuals with prison or death. Israel is the most tolerant and accepting of LGBT persons in that region, despite the heavy rejection of Orthodox Judaism. "Israel is the only country in the Middle East that supports gay rights," according to a pamphlet I received (www.gaymiddleeast.com).

Just home from Jerusalem, I strolled with PFLAG in Redwood City, with school bands, fire engines and decorated bikes, applauded by friendly families. I remembered when PFLAG first marched in the July 4th parade: we were greeted by stunned silence and a few boos.

It's heart-warming to see the change after 14 years. LGBT human rights are far from perfect. Our loved ones still encounter hardships and pain; new California marriage laws are fragile and threatened. Discrimination and homophobia still exist.

But the warm welcome in Redwood City makes me hopeful that change can happen: that coldness can grow into warmth, that fear can grow into an embrace — and that all our LGBT loved ones will one day be welcomed in all the world's cities. Alas, it may take longer in some countries than in others.

