



San Jose ♦ Peninsula Newsletter

February/March 2014

www.pflagsanjose.org

P.O. Box 2718, Sunnyvale, CA 94087

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Equality in the Culture and Equality in the Courts

In the last 25 years or so, the attitude of Courts toward people making rights claims about sexual orientation has undergone a stark reversal. The Supreme Court of 1986 in *Bowers v. Hardwick* thought it “at best facetious” to claim that the constitution prevented states from making the intimate relationships of gay people a crime. By 2003, the Court said gay people had the right not to have their relationships “demeaned” by laws that did just that (*Lawrence v. Texas*).

It might be nice to think the change reflects a deeper understanding of the constitution and how it ought to work. But while there may be some of that going on here, it’s probably not most of the explanation. More than anything else, the evolution in the thinking of courts reflects a deep change in society’s understanding of gay people. Until quite recently, it was widely accepted that gay people were totally different in kind from heterosexuals. We were thought to be unstable, immoral, and incapable of serious emotional commitment.

Cases about same-sex marriage from the last generation show the thinking in sharp relief. In 1974 the Washington Court of Appeals in *Singer v. Hara* famously turned away a marriage case by explaining there was no discrimination involved in refusing to let a same-sex couple marry; the very nature of marriage (not its legal definition) required a man and a woman.

What a difference a generation makes. The Lawrence Court ruled that gay people have the same right to sexual intimacy that straight people have. Twice it drew explicit parallels between heterosexual and homosexual intimacy. And Justice O’Connor, who signed the majority opinion in *Bowers*, said in so many words that the only difference between same-sex and opposite-sex intimacy was the participants. *Windsor* came even closer to saying there is no difference between gay people and straight people. It allowed that states could conclude that the relationships of same-sex couples were entitled to the same dignity as heterosexual relationships.

Once it began to seem clear that as a matter of fact there was no real difference between gay people and straight people, the legal success of gay rights claims became virtually certain. That is why courts increasingly agree on the outcome if they can’t quite agree on the constitutional reasoning.

Convincing America that gay people and straight people are fundamentally the same was the great challenge the gay rights movement faced. The lawsuits that made that point, through the stories the cases told about the lives of the people involved, were a critical part of that job of persuasion. But it was that change in understanding about who gay people are, not so much the law, that’s gotten us here, both in court and out.

Matt Coles, Deputy National Legal Director, ACLU (*excerpt*)

Meeting Calendar

◀ FEBRUARY/MARCH ▶

- Feb. 10 Redwood City** Support - 7:00 pm
Mar. 10 Sequoia Union H.S. District Offices
480 James Ave., Redwood City
(2nd Monday of the month)
- Feb.12 San Jose** Support - 7:30 pm
Mar.12 First Congregational Church
1980 Hamilton Ave. (at Leigh)
(2nd Wednesday of the month)
- Feb.20 Straight Spouse** Support-7:30 pm
Mar.20 Call San Jose Helpline for info.
(3rd Thursday of the month)
- Feb.20 Board Meeting** Teleconference
Mar.20 (3rd Thursday of the month)
ALL ARE WELCOME!



GILROY and other locations:
Call the Helpline
for support and information:
(408) 270-8182



April/May Newsletter Deadline:
Friday, March 21

San Jose/Peninsula PFLAG Annual Membership Meeting and Election

Wednesday, March 12
7:30 PM

at the San Jose meeting

All are Welcome!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PFLAG Support Meetings

Redwood City, February 10 — 7:00 pm
San Jose, February 12 — 7:30 pm

Dice, the Bible, Sexual Orientation & Gender Variance:
This upbeat presentation by PFLAG Oakland/East Bay's Co-Chair Ed Ness will help us understand that Jewish and Christian texts do not oppose lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people. In fact they fully support all these minority groups. Ness is a licensed instructor on Judeo/Christian faiths, sexual orientation & gender.



Redwood City, March 10 — 7:00 pm

Susan Berland will speak about strategies to improve communication and build a bridge to acceptance and understanding when loving parents struggle to accept their LGBT children. Susan's son came out to her in 1989 and knows what it's like to be told your child is gay, and what it means to adjust expectations and deal with a roller coaster ride of emotions.

Susan guides parents and their kids to communicate effectively, trust one another and accept one another where and as they are. With seven years of experience working with clients, Susan's commitment is to provide the support and tools to bring families back together. Read more: <http://susanhopeberland.com/>

San Jose, March 12 — 7:30 pm

Program to be announced—please check our website for updates: www.pflagsanjose.org

Small group support is offered at all meetings. ▼

PFLAG Board Meetings via Teleconference

Our PFLAG Chapter Board meets monthly via telephone conference call. We welcome new, creative ideas for helping families, getting our message out, raising money for scholarships, and just having fun together. We'd love to have you become part of the Board, attend a tele-meeting, or send us your ideas. For more information, email Ken Klucsor: kenklucsor@yahoo.com ▼

We are on Facebook!

Do you know that our San Jose/Peninsula PFLAG Chapter is on Facebook? We post our meetings and other events there. Group members may also post news and events of interest to our PFLAG chapter members.

Check it out!

www.facebook.com/groups/5194326139/

Then click on **About** for more information. ▼

2014 PFLAG Membership — Time to Renew!

It is membership renewal time again! So far we've only received about half of our usual number of renewals by this time of year. Please take a moment now to start or renew your membership for 2014.

If you can, please consider the Benefactor, Angel, or Diva level. Donations to our Scholarship Fund are deeply appreciated. Many employers offer matching programs that could double your contribution. If you ask your employer to make a matching gift, you will need to give them our EIN (Employer ID Number): 7702544991. Other ways to support PFLAG can be found in *The Gift of Giving* brochure on our website.

Mail your contribution with the form on the last page of this newsletter, or renew online at: www.pflagsanjose.org. On behalf of our chapter, we thank you for your commitment to the mission of PFLAG and all you do to help us achieve our goals of support, education and advocacy.

Sincerely,
Your Finance Committee ▼

Straight For Equality Gala April 10, 2014

Save the date! The Straight for Equality Gala honors and celebrates our amazing straight allies. Their selfless support of the LGBT community truly embodies the spirit of Straight for Equality and PFLAG. Our work could not continue without them. Please join us in New York City! More information: www.straightforequality.org/2014gala# ▼



▶ Mark Your Calendar ◀

- Feb. 15 — PWG/Community PFLAG Benefit Women's Dance
- Feb. 15 — OFC Año Nueva Elephant Seal Walk
- Mar. 12 — PFLAG Chapter Annual Meeting
- Apr. 10 — Straight For Equality (NYC)
- May 12 — PFLAG Scholarship Awards

San Jose/Peninsula PFLAG Chapter Annual Membership Meeting March 12

All are invited to attend our 2014 Annual Meeting! This event will take place at the beginning of the San Jose support meeting. We will celebrate our chapter's accomplishments and elect new Board members. We need a Vice President and three more Board members. We're also looking for Publicity, Advocacy and Program Chairs, and a Librarian. As you can see, there are a number of excellent volunteer opportunities! Please contact Ken for more information: kenklucsor@yahoo.com

Agenda

- Review and Approval of 2013 Annual Meeting Minutes Officers' and Committees' Reports
- Call for Nominations
- Board Elections
- New Business

Advocacy, Program and Publicity Chairs are welcome to serve on the Board, but Board membership is not required.

You must be a member in good standing of San Jose/Peninsula PFLAG in order to serve on the Board. ▼

Año Nuevo Elephant Seal Walk February 15

Año Nuevo State Reserve, Pescadero, CA

Join Our Family Coalition for a guided tour of the largest mainland breeding colony of northern elephant seals in the world! Pack a lunch for a picnic after the tour! Due to conditions and cold weather this event is recommended only for older children. Walks last about 2.5 hours, and consist of a moderately strenuous 3 mile hike over sand and sloping terrain.

Be prepared for windy, rainy conditions, as well as muddy trails. Layered clothing, sturdy shoes, and hooded rain gear are recommended. Bring bottled water for drinking as there is none available during the walk.

Pets are not allowed in the park and cannot be left inside vehicles in the parking lot. No eating is allowed on the walks.

Admission: \$7.00 per person. Space is limited and RSVP is required — so RSVP today!

Register online for this and other OFC events:

www.z2systems.com/np/clients/ourfamily/publicaccess/eventCalendarBig.jsp?year=2014&month=1 ▼

**We cannot all do great things, but we can do
small things with great love.**

Mother Teresa



Our PFLAG Scholarship Awards Committee Needs You!

Many thanks to Rosemary, Janet and Nina for organizing our 2014 Scholarship Awards program. Extra thanks to Rosemary who stepped up to chair the project this year, following Nina's footsteps and excellent leadership.

Many small volunteer jobs support this inspirational event. You can make a huge difference with a little gift of your time!

April: application reading and winner selection (takes less than a day)

April-May: Party Planner and helpers for the **May 12 Awards Ceremony in Redwood City** (arrange food, gift bags, decorations.)

Please let us know today how you can help: email us at pflag-info@pflagsanjose.org or phone (408) 270-8182. ▼

Seeking a New Treasurer

We are seeking a replacement for our exemplary Treasurer who has served our PFLAG Chapter for the past 7 years. He is planning to retire in about a year, and welcomes the opportunity to train a new volunteer to take his place in this critical position. Please contact us for more information and a copy of the job description:

pflag-info@pflagsanjose.org ▼



Annual Community/PWG PFLAG Fundraiser: Women's Dance with DJ Page Hodel February 15

Twin Pines Senior & Community Center, Belmont
1223 Ralston Avenue (2 blocks west of El Camino)
6:30 – 11:00 PM

6:30-8:00 pm — lower volume and pace.

8:00-11:00 pm — volume and pace pick up!

You can bring your own dinner. Beverages and snacks will be available. (No outside beverages allowed.)

\$10 advance purchase

\$15 after February 9 (mail or walk-in)

Include a stamped self-addressed envelope so that your tickets can be mailed to you. Otherwise they will be held at the door. No refunds.

Questions? Contact Wendy or Eleanor: wene@comcast.net
For information about PWG (Peninsula Women's Group):
<http://peninsulawomensgroup.org> ▼

