

**HELEN & BOB BRILL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED
TO FIVE DESERVING STUDENTS (See page 5 for details)**



The Voice of PFLAG Hartford
Caring

Volume 17, No. 4

July/August 2008

IN THE PFLAG HARTFORD FAMILY:

HOT, HOT, HOT! That's what it was like on PRIDE Day, June 7, at Elizabeth Park in Hartford. Thank-you to all who set up, took down, or staffed our steamy booth. Special thanks to Gary G. for getting there early and setting up and to Rose & Larry for closing up shop at the end of the day. Other booth volunteers were: John B., Karen P., Donna G., Joe R., Jean & Bob C.

THANK YOU TO JOHN CURRIE for his inspiring sermon at the Unitarian Society of Hartford on Sunday, June 8. His sermon title was, "Of Pink Triangles and Gray Rainbows," which provided a contemporary look at the Bible stories of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son. John's message was truly meaningful, particularly in light of the weekend celebration of Hartford PRIDE.

PFLAG is a welcoming place for parents and friends of lesbians & gays, but we are much more than that. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people are also encouraged to attend our meetings. GLBTI people come with or without their family members, and parents and friends come with or without their GLBTI loved ones. PFLAG is for YOU!

PFLAG HARTFORD MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUP MEETS: Third Wednesday of each month, 7:30 p.m., Immanuel Congregational Church House, 10 Woodland Street (Just North of Farmington Ave.), Hartford. For more information, please call Marie & Bob at (860) 633-7184 or Becky & John at (860) 633-5111.

REFRESHMENT REMINDER:

July 16 – Karen P.

August 20 – Connie & Mike

September 17 – Rose & Larry

October 15 – Joan J.

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Student/Limited Income: \$10

Household Membership: \$40

Individual Membership: \$25



*Please make your check payable to **PFLAG Hartford** and Send it to:
Joan Jansen, 12 Colchester Commons, Colchester, CT 06415*

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and their families and friends through:

SUPPORT: To cope with an adverse society

EDUCATION: To enlighten an ill-informed public

ADVOCACY: To end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.

PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

UPCOMING /ONGOING EVENTS

- **RAINBOW ROOM** (a program of the **Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective**) – a welcoming place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning “LGBTQ” teens and young adults (up to 21 years old). Sundays, 3-6 p.m., 1841 Broad Street (the Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective building). For more information please visit our website at www.hglhc.org or contact us at sensae@aol.com or call 860/278-4163.
- **TRANS SOFFA SUPPORT GROUP IN CONNECTICUT:** This is a group specifically for Significant Others, Family, Friends and Allies of Transgendered, Transsexual and Gender Variant people (SOFFAs). Trans people who are SOFFAs are welcome. Meetings will be held on the second Sunday of each month and are facilitated by Kristal Barnes and Kasha Ho. Contact Kristal - u2kristal@yahoo.com (860) 878-5256 or Kasha - kho@afsc.org or call (860) 523-1534 for more information.
- **HGLHC TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP:** This professionally facilitated group offers an affirming non-judgmental environment for Transgender folk to explore issues and concerns that matter to them, and to give and take support. Each participant decides what to do with emotions and personal life-choices or body image, sexuality, relationships, HIV issues and anything else of concern. As with all other HGLHC Support groups, all participants must register in advance to determine whether this group is right for you. Location: Hartford. Contact HGLHC at (860) 278-4163 X21 or e-mail lizy@hglhc.org
- **FUNDRAISER** to benefit St. Philips House, True Colors and the Hartford Boys & Girls Club. On July 13 & August 10, Nelson Roman, “Mr. Polo 2008,” will present “**RENT-A Musical Review**” at Hartford Polo Club, Maple Ave., Hartford, 9 pm. Tickets-\$10. For information, call 860/816-3404 or e-mail Eros1687@aol.com.



CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT SAYS SAME-SEX COUPLES CAN MARRY!

Today, (May 15) in a historic decision, the California Supreme Court affirmed the dignity of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people, by ruling that same-sex couples can marry in that state.

This momentous judgment profoundly supports same-sex couples and their families, and recognizes that two loving, committed people deserve the rights, respect, and equality that come with the freedom to marry. The decision is also a victory for every American who visualizes a country of inclusion, fairness, and opportunity for all its citizens.

The impact of this decision is enormous, directly affecting over 36 million people who reside in California, well over 10% of the total population of America.

Today’s win energizes our work in Connecticut more than ever. We await a decision in our own marriage case, *Kerrigan and Mock v. the Connecticut Department of Public Health*. And our advocacy, lobbying, and educational efforts continue intensely around the state...

California’s highest court did its job today and ensured all Californians are treated equally under the law. We look forward to the day when we can say the same for Connecticut, and, with your help, we will break down the door of marriage discrimination in *this* state. And that day is coming very soon.

Anne Stanback
Executive Director
Love Makes A Family

The majority opinion, authored by Chief Justice Ron George, concluded "that in view of the substance and significance of the fundamental constitutional right to form a family relationship, the California Constitution properly must be interpreted to guarantee this basic civil right to all Californians, whether gay or heterosexual, and to same-sex couples as well as to opposite sex couples."

THE GAY-FRIENDLY CAMPUS CLIMATE INDEX, launched in September 2007, has quickly become a trusted resource for finding a welcoming college. To learn more about the schools on the Index, go to <http://www.campusclimateindex.org/search/>.

In less than ten months since its launch in September of 2007, the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index has grown to include over 150 college campuses and is the only online national tool of its kind. The index was developed by Campus Pride (www.campuspride.org) with a team of national researchers in the field of higher education and LGBT issues including Susan R. Rankin, Brett Genny-Beemyn and Shane L. Windmeyer. The index is in response to the increasing demand for tools and resources to support campuses in assessing LGBT-Friendly policies, programs and practices. The Index not only provides a mechanism for colleges to measure their LGBT-friendly policies, programs and practices but also a way for the public to learn more about campuses interested in supporting LGBT and ally students.

Free of charge, the LGBT Friendly-Campus Climate Index allows college campuses to showcase positive efforts and to continue improving their LGBT campus climate. Participation by a campus also sends a powerful message that LGBT students are welcome and their needs are important to college administrators, staff and faculty. The index tool includes 50+ self-assessment questions, which correspond to eight different LGBT-Friendly factors. Public users may search colleges and universities based on their LGBT-Friendly campus life (academics, policies, student organizations & activities, campus safety, health services, housing & residence life, recruitment & retention efforts, etc). Individuals may "Bookbag" campuses to compare and request referral information about LGBT campus life.

More information about the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index is available online at www.campusclimateindex.org. If you or your college or university are interested in participating in the LGBT-Friendly Campus Climate Index, please inquire about how to get started by email at info@campuspride.org or go online to www.campusclimateindex.org/getstarted.

Believe In -- Campus Pride. Campus Pride is the leading national nonprofit organization 501(c)(3) for student leaders and campus organizations working to create safer, more LGBT-friendly colleges and universities. It exists to give "voice and action" in building future LGBT and ally leaders. More info online at www.campuspride.org.

THE SAME PEOPLE

by Anna Quindlen - Newsweek - June 9, 2008

Scream, shout, jump up and down. No matter. The gay-marriage issue is over and done with.

The upshot: love won.

During his sophomore year in high school, one of our sons mentioned at the dinner table that a classmate had come out of the closet. I can't even remember which of the two boys it was, and that's not only because my memory is now so bad that I can reread mystery novels and not recall whodunit. It's because the announcement was such a big nothing among the kids that it was only slightly more noteworthy than "pass the mac and cheese." Unlike my own high-school friends, these kids took gay for granted.

One of the most transformative social movements over our lifetime has been the battle for gay rights, and the key to its great success has been the grass-roots phenomenon of exploding stereotypes by simply saying, "Yes, I am." Each time the woman at the next desk or the guy down the street lets it be known that he or she is gay, it takes another brick out of the wall of division. Or, as Ellen DeGeneres told John McCain on her show recently, "We are all the same people, all of us."

That's what the California Supreme Court said when it ruled that gay couples should have the right to marry as a matter of basic equality. Before you could say "Jonathan and Andrew request the honour of your presence," opponents were suggesting that civilization would crash and burn if two guys could register at Pottery Barn and raise kids in a ranch house. All those wailing that gay marriage is an invention of amoral modernism might want to consider these lines from a Roman poem of the second century A.D.:

"The bearded Callistratus married the rugged Afer/Under the same law by which a woman takes a husband/Torches were carried before him, a bridal veil covered his face." And afterward everyone sat down to salmon, rice pilaf and chocolate mousse. Well, actually, I made up that last part just as surely as some people are making up the dire consequences of same-sex troth-plighting.

In the wake of the court's decision, those folks vowed to find a way to protect the sanctity of hetero marriage, that time-honored staple of sitcom mockery and savage custody fights. Polls showing opposition to gay marriage

were proffered to prove that the court had overstepped its bounds, ignoring the fact that the most sacred business of judges is not to ratify the will of the majority but to protect the minority from its tyranny.

It is true that the California Supreme Court is something of a Scandinavia of jurisprudence, willing to get out front on social issues. But it's not really courts and legislatures that will settle this issue. It's the neighbors, friends and family members who have come out and made the political personal—and lovable. Jennifer? Smart, funny Jennifer? Of course she should be able to marry Anne. They're perfect together.

If only coming out could be used in other areas that remain unsettled and contentious. The stereotype of the feckless woman who has an abortion and then a pedicure is a sub rosa staple of the opposition, and there's no question that it could be counteracted by real people talking about making a difficult but necessary choice. But since abortion has always been couched, quite properly, as an issue of personal privacy, that feels discordant. Immigrants face bigotry that grows directly out of the swamp of ignorance, but the impulse—and the pressure—to fit in means that they don't often testify to where they come from and what their lives are really like.

Gay men and lesbians have prospered because they've refused to acquiesce to the notion that they should hide their lives from public view. Two by two they've adopted children, bought homes, volunteered in their communities and slogged through life together just the way hetero couples do, except without preferential tax codes, inheritance rights and the automatic assumption that they can make decisions for one another in emergency situations. Too often, without legal protection, they have found themselves dependent on the kindness of those who were not kind, like the man in Indiana who became severely disabled and whose parents prohibited his partner of 25 years from visiting him in their home.

Here's what I don't understand: is there so much love and commitment in the world that we can afford, as a society, to be contemptuous of some portion of it? If two women in white want to join hands in front of their families and friends and vow to love and honor one another until they die, the only reasonable response to that is happy tears, awed admiration and societal approval. And—this part is just personal opinion—one of those big honking KitchenAid mixers with the dough hook.

Before we know it that will be the response everywhere, not just in Denmark and the Netherlands and Canada and California: approval, appliances. The polls predict the future. The younger you are, the more likely you are to know someone who is gay. The more likely you are to know someone who is gay, the more likely you are to support gay marriage. The opposition is aging out.

Someday soon the fracas surrounding all this will seem like a historical artifact, like the notion that women were once prohibited from voting and a black individual from marrying a white one. Our children will attend the marriages of their friends, will chatter about whether they will last, will whisper to one another, "Love him, don't like *him* so much." The California Supreme Court called gay marriage a "basic civil right." In hindsight, it will merely be called ordinary life.



Thank-you to Watkinson School's Gay-Straight Alliance for this wonderful recognition of PFLAG Hartford.

Dear Becky & John:

I am very pleased to announce that – for the third year running –Watkinson's Gay-Straight Alliance (SAFE Club) has chosen PFLAG as the recipient of our yearly donation drive.

Clearly your wonderful work continues to make an impact on our kids, and we remain grateful for everything you do. Although this school year is winding down, if anyone in your organization would be available to consider a visit to us next year we'd love it.

Please accept the enclosed check with our thanks and warmest regards.

Sincerely,

Tom Gromak
Watkinson School
Faculty Advisor to SAFE

“IF GOD, AS THEY SAY, IS HOMOPHOBIC, I WOULDN'T WORSHIP THAT GOD.” – Archbishop Desmond Tutu

NEW YORK TRANSGENDER RIGHTS BILL ADVANCES

The New York Assembly passed the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA) on Tuesday by a 102–33 vote. The measure, which moves to the Senate, would prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression in housing, employment, credit and public accommodations and would add gender identity or expression to the state's hate crimes law. New York extended protections on the basis of sexual orientation in 2002 and the Task Force has worked with the Empire State Pride Agenda and others since then to amend the law to add gender identity or expression protections, including by helping draft GENDA.

“This is a very exciting victory for the people of New York, particularly transgender people. Legislation of this sort is not only responsible public policy, it also shows the nation that New York is unafraid to join the ranks of states that value all of their citizens, including those who are transgender or who express their gender in ways that reflect the broad and beautiful spectrum of humanity.”

Task Force Acting Executive Director Rea Carey From the National Gay & Lesbian Task Force, June 5, 2008

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S BRILL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

DaJavon Davis, Greater Hartford Classical Magnet School. DaJavon will attend Emmanuel College. DaJavon was president of his senior class; president of the student senate; director of the youth choir; a Gay/Straight Alliance (GSA) founding member; a member of Students of Color for GLBT Youth; and a True Colors participant.

Alexandra Mancini, Killingly High. Alexandra will attend Fitchburg State College. She has been an active member of her school's GSA since her Sophomore year. She organized her school's successful Baggy Plaid concert, which raised funds for students to attend the True Colors Conference, where she has participated for 3 years. Alexandra was also an organizer of the Day of Silence at Killingly High.

Jane Marie Piselli, Jonathan Law High School and Bridgeport Aquaculture School. Jane will attend the College of the Atlantic. She founded her school's GSA her junior year. Jane was a Day of Silence organizer for 3 years, and she is a True Colors participant.

Erik Matthew Peterson, Bacon Academy. Erik will attend the Art Institute of Boston/Lesley University. He is involved in his school's GSA and the community of Colchester with his Youth Action Committee participation. Erik hopes to become a therapeutic arts educator at a school for the deaf.

Farron Harvey, Greater Hartford Classical Magnet School. Farron will attend Bay Path College. She is a founding member of her school's GSA, and volunteered at the True Colors Conference. Farron is also a member of A.C.T.I.O.N. (Awareness Creates Togetherness in Our Neighborhood).

Congratulations to all of our scholarship recipients. It was certainly our pleasure to learn of your wonderful accomplishments. We wish you all a very bright future.

Remarks made by Louise Brill (daughter of Helen & Bob Brill) at the Scholarship Presentations:

Last night we were in the living room playing music and singing for my 97 year old mother-in-love and her two-year-old great granddaughter. Somehow I was reminded of Pete Seeger, now 88 years old, who once said: remember to thank the organizers. So these scholarships are to thank each of the five of you for all you have done.

As you know, organizing is some of the most exciting work there is. It can be hard and lonely. Homophobia is not an accident, nor is it random. Like racism and classism it helps the powerful stay in power by keeping people divided. It is systemic. At the root of homophobia is sexism. This, along with pornography, helps those in power train men and women to go to war and keep their power. "What are you, a wimp?"

Bob and Helen Brill were organizers, lifelong. Organizing is a lifelong career. So thank you all for all that you have done, and may you always find the energy and the rage to keep it going. Take good care of yourself, and don't forget to sing and dance while you're at it.

AN ARCHBISHOP FOR ALL*Excerpts from an article in the June '08 Advocate by Regina Marler*

Desmond Tutu sees gay and lesbian rights as part of the larger struggle in the fight for freedom and dignity for all.

It looked like bad math: four reporters and five cameramen wedged into a small conference room with one renowned South African Anglican archbishop and only 15 minutes for questions. Desmond Tutu was at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco to accept the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission's Outspoken Award, and "every minute of his time is mapped out," warned IGLHRC's communications coordinator, Hossein Alizadeh. Luckily, as befits a man wearing a deep-pink cassock, Tutu had a sense of humor about the need to stay on schedule. "I'm not as young as I look," he quipped. "I'm about to expire here."

The 76-year old may have come to be honored for his support of gay and lesbian rights, but the big news on the evening of April 8 was Tibet. That morning protesters had scaled the Golden Gate Bridge to unfurl a pro-Tibet banner, and more protests were expected the next day when the Olympic torch was to arrive in the city. Archbishop Tutu would speak later that night at a candlelight vigil downtown with Richard Gere.

...From his early days, when South African police killed at least 69 unarmed black demonstrators in the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, to his momentous appointment as the first black Anglican dean of Johannesburg in 1975, he has used the pulpit to articulate the "aspirations and the anguishes of our people." Tutu again made history when he became the first black archbishop of Cape Town, in 1986. He hosted Nelson Mandela on his first night of freedom after 27 years in jail in 1990, and he later served as chair of the post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission at then-president Mandela's request. Through it all he suffered death threats against himself and his family.

"I never doubted that ultimately we were going to be free," Tutu has said while tipping his hat to the global support that helped end apartheid. "We are beneficiaries of an incredible amount of love. People were ready to be arrested. They were demonstrating on our behalf."

Tutu draws a connection between the fight for freedom in South Africa and human rights struggles of every kind. For him, it is all the same struggle for dignity and equality. With a mild manner and charm that belies incredible tenacity, he continues to speak out against gross economic disparity and human rights abuses worldwide – including homophobia. Equating the persecution of gays with apartheid, he told a group of church leaders that he was "deeply disturbed that in the face of some of the most horrendous problems facing Africa, we concentrate on 'what I do in bed with whom.'" He supports the ordination of gay clergy – a rare and controversial stance in highly conservative Africa. And on BBC Radio last November he said that "if God, as they say, is homophobic, I wouldn't worship that God."

At the press conference... I finally broke in... to ask what he would say to gays who feel judged and excluded by their churches. "I would apologize for the way our church has often treated gay and lesbian people," he responded without hesitation. "And then I would say to our sisters and brothers, 'You are members of this family and are people of great worth. God didn't make a mistake with respect to your sexual orientation. God created you because God loves you. And God will continue to love you whatever other people might say or think about you.'"

I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE GOOD WORKS OF PFLAG HARTFORD WITH A TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF:

\$ _____ My name: _____

Please cut out this coupon and mail it with your check (made payable to PFLAG Hartford) to: PFLAG Treasurer, 12 Colchester Commons, Colchester, CT 06415.

PFLAG Hartford has been available as a resource for support to families and friends of GLBTI people in Greater Hartford, and beyond, for over 20 years. We are staffed solely by volunteers, and depend heavily on contributions to enable us to continue to educate and advocate for an end to discrimination and to make this a safer world for our GLBTI loved ones.

Your help is greatly appreciated.

Connecticut PFLAG Meetings

PFLAG HARTFORD: Information on front page or at www.pflaghartford.org

PFLAG NORWALK/SOUTHWESTERN CT

When: First Wednesday of every month, 7:30 pm
Where: Triangle Community Center
 16 River Street Norwalk
Help Line: (203) 226-0257 or (203) 438-0530
Email: PFLAGSWCT@yahoo.com

PFLAG NORTHWESTERN CT:

Contact: Diane (860) 435-2738

PFLAG MADISON/SHORELINE

No Meetings
Email: davidwinthropknapp@yahoo.com
Help Line: (203) 453-1395

PFLAG GROTON (NOANK) /SOUTHEASTERN CT

When: Second Monday of every month, 7:00-8:30
Where: Noank Baptist Church, 18 Cathedral Heights
Helpline: (860) 447-0884
Email: robertmarrion@sbcglobal.net
 or www.pflagsect.org

PFLAG GREATER NEW HAVEN

When: Third Tuesday of every month, 7:30 pm
Where: Church of the Redeemer
 Corner: Whitney Ave./185 Cold Spring St., NH
Help Line: (203) 458-0493
Email: greaternewhavenpflag@yahoo.com

Central and Western Massachusetts

Williamstown Area:

When: Second Sunday of every month, 2 pm
Where: First Congregational Church, Williamstown
Contact: (413) 243-2382

Springfield Area:

Where: Agawam
Contact: (413) 732-3240 or (413) 783-7709

Greenfield, MA

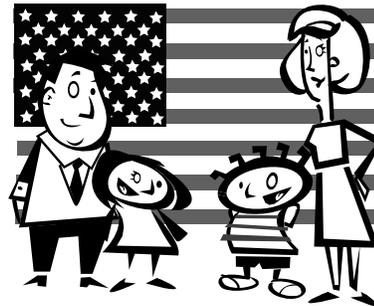
Help Line: 413/625-6636
E-Mail: PFLAGPV@valinet.com

CARING IS THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PFLAG HARTFORD

Editor: Jean Cormier

Caring welcomes articles, letters and other submissions for publication.

Deadline: 15th of even numbered months. Send articles to PFLAG EDITOR, 156 Randal Ave., West Hartford, CT 06110 or via e-mail editor@pflaghartford.org.



PFLAG VALUES ALL FAMILIES

STRAIGHT SPOUSE SUPPORT NETWORK:

***In Connecticut and Western Massachusetts
Monthly Support Group, Third Sunday,
West Hartford, CT.***

**Contact Jane Harris at (413) 625-6636 or
janenrosie48@yahoo.com or at
www.straightspouse.org**

In Southern Connecticut

**Call Joan Rolnick at (203) 438-0530) or
janenrosie@hotmail.com**

FOR OTHER PFLAG LOCATIONS

**Contact a Hartford Chapter Board Member or
call the National PFLAG office at (202)638-
4200. You may also sign onto PFLAG's Home
Page at www.pflag.org.**